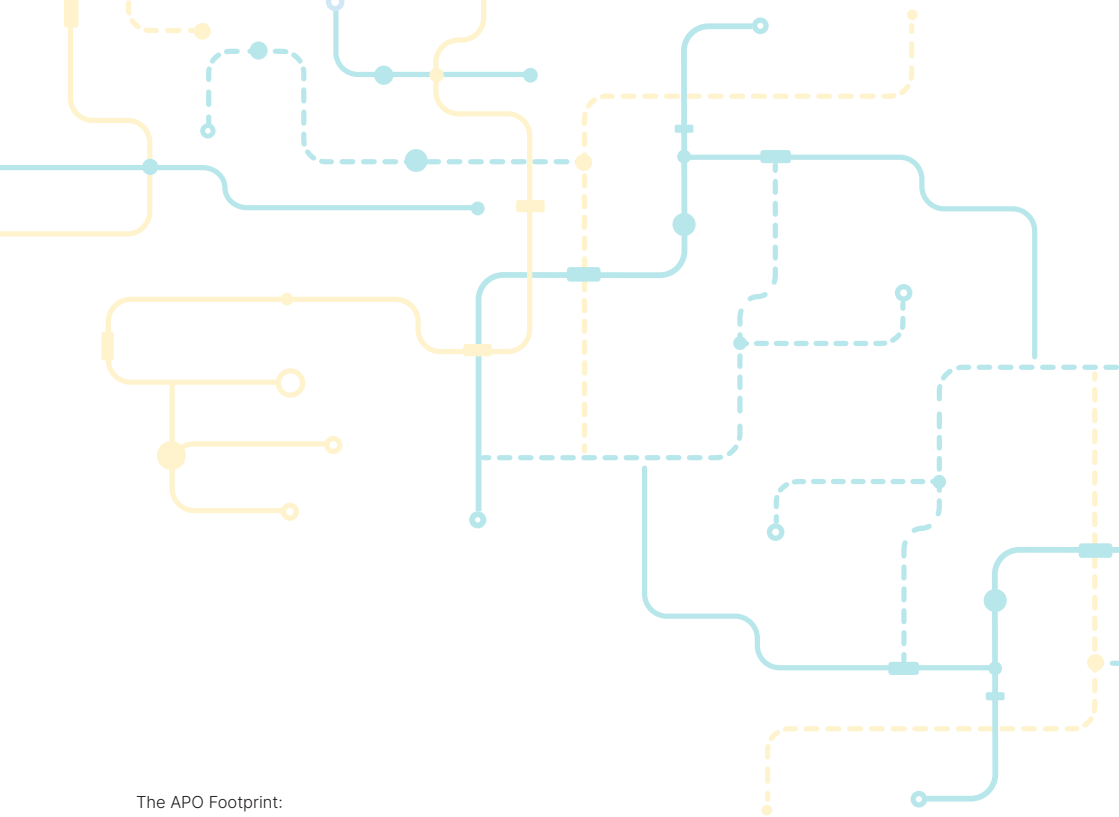




The APO Footprint:

Mapping Success One Step at a Time



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Mapping Success One Step at a Time

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A MESSAGE FROM APO SECRETARY-GENERAL



“Every project, initiative, and collaboration undertaken by the APO is based on the goal of creating ripple effects that will pave the way for a more productive, resilient, sustainable future.”

I am happy to introduce *The APO Footprint: Mapping Success One Step at a Time*, a collection of real-life stories showcasing the tangible impacts of APO initiatives across its member economies.

The APO was founded with the mission of contributing to sustainable socioeconomic development in the Asia-Pacific region through enhanced productivity. This mission has remained

consistent over the past six decades, but the way we approach this mission has evolved to meet the challenges of a changing world. Every project, initiative, and collaboration undertaken by the APO is based on the goal of creating ripple effects that will pave the way for a more productive, resilient, sustainable future.

This booklet contains narratives of transformation, resilience, innovation, and tenacity. The APO has left indelible footprints across the landscapes of its member economies, representing not just figurative steps forward but tangible marks of progress and innovation.

“These stories are testaments to the efforts of countless individuals, enterprises, and communities that have embraced the productivity revolution. More than just numbers and figures, these stories reveal the human aspects behind our mission of lives uplifted, opportunities created, and futures secured.”

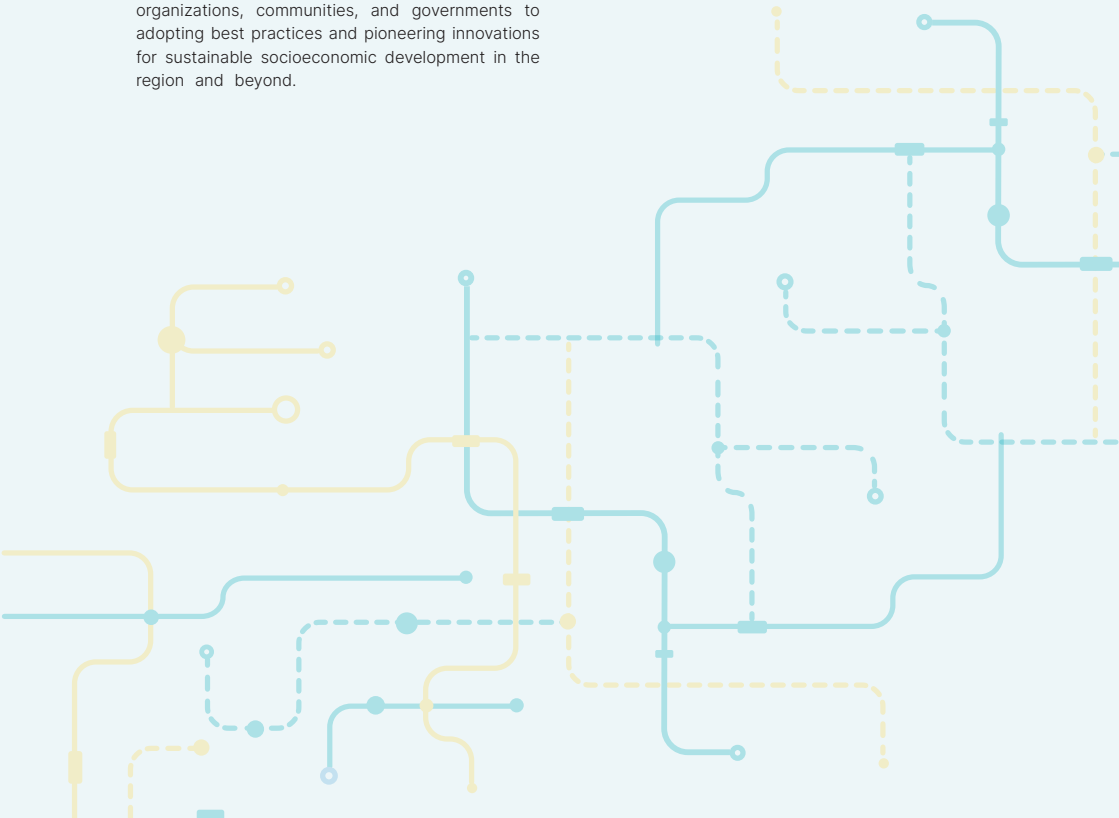
The positive impacts illustrated in this booklet are the results of collective efforts. They highlight the enduring collaborations and partnerships within the APO, including the unwavering dedication of Secretariat staff, resource persons, and member NPOs as well as the commitment of organizations, communities, and governments to adopting best practices and pioneering innovations for sustainable socioeconomic development in the region and beyond.

It is essential to point out that these stories represent only a fraction of the achievements made possible through APO initiatives. However, they provide snapshots of the immense potential that can be unlocked when we work together with a shared purpose.

I hope that *The APO Footprint* inspires you to continue contributing to productivity enhancement. We should all look forward to more collaborative successes, innovative solutions, and shared growth among APO members.

Dr. Indra Pradana Singawinata

Secretary-General
Asian Productivity Organization
Tokyo, December 2023



APO FOOTPRINTS: NARRATIVES OF TRANSFORMATION



Bright Horizons: Illuminating Rural Indonesia with Sustainable Technology

Powering Indonesia's Productivity and Progress

Indonesia comprises more than 18,000 islands and vast rural areas. In recent years, the electrification rate in the country has increased significantly to about 97%, but the rates in rural and disadvantaged regions are still lower than the national average, especially in the Papua and Nusa Tenggara regions. Considering the high level of solar irradiation and geographic conditions, the NPO Indonesia is promoting the adoption of off-grid solar photovoltaic (PV) systems to provide electricity to rural villages, empower local communities, and raise their productivity.

Inspired by a previous APO demonstration project in Indonesia, in which a demonstration PV system and training curriculum for solar energy utilization was developed in Serang, the NPO Indonesia proposed another pilot PV site in Sorong Regency, West Papua province, to demonstrate how rural villages could utilize solar energy resources and generate electricity to improve their standards of living and productivity levels.



Harnessing Solar Irradiation

Solar irradiation refers to the electromagnetic radiation, or radiant energy, emitted by the sun. This radiant energy can be captured and converted into electricity or thermal energy using various technologies, such as an off-grid solar photovoltaic (PV) systems.

An off-grid solar PV system offers reliable electricity from sunlight, eliminating dependence on central grids. Ideal for remote locations, this self-sustaining setup ensures continuous power, reduces energy costs, and promotes sustainable living.



Setting the Stage for Productivity Improvement

The mission of an APO Development of Demonstration Companies (DMP) project is to develop model organizations that showcase good practices for productivity improvement. With capacity building, documentation of improvement processes, and result dissemination, this program seeks to demonstrate good practices for other organizations to learn from.

This DMP project was a collaborative effort involving several key entities: the Industrial China Productivity Center, Technology Research Institute (ITRI) of the ROC; Tatung Company (TC); Tatung University (TU); Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Region and Transmigration; Vocational Training Center (VTC) of Sorong Regency; Ministry of Manpower; and Sorong Regency Government of Papua province. The ITRI, TC, and TU offered consultancy services and supplied PV solar demo systems and equipment.

The tasks performed and objectives set were to:



Establish an off-grid solar PV system for demonstration of and training in utilizing solar energy in rural areas;



Develop a training curriculum and certification program on solar energy and technologies and operation and maintenance of off-grid solar PV systems;



Build the capacity of local technicians and specialists in utilizing solar energy; and



Promote suitable applications of solar energy for rural electrification.



Overview of Project Stages

The project was implemented in three stages: planning; implementation; and dissemination. All stages of the project were carried out through close collaboration and consultation with all parties involved to ensure the ownership and sustainability of the project.



The COVID-19 pandemic significantly hindered the implementation of the Sorong DMP project, with international travel restrictions barring experts from the ROC, causing delays in onsite installation, training, and increased equipment shipping costs. Fortunately, the NPO Indonesia adeptly coordinated virtual training sessions and engaged former seed teachers from the VTC Serang to ensure continued progress. Drawing on previous partnerships from the 2018–19 DMP project with the VTC Serang, local experts bridged the training gap when the Sorong DMP project stalled, eventually leading to successful completion in 2021.

The planning stage, lasting two months, consisted of:

- ▶ A diagnostic survey of the level of readiness of the demonstration organization, the VTC of Sorong Regency;
- ▶ Developing a master plan for the strategy and implementation of this project, including a preliminary plan for disseminating materials and a launch event; and
- ▶ Capability building of all stakeholders engaged in the implementation.

The implementation stage, lasting eight months, involved:

- ▶ Following the steps in the master plan and refinement of the plan, if necessary, referring to practical, action-oriented, onsite activities involving international and local experts, NPOs, and all other stakeholders; and
- ▶ Demonstration companies carried out the plan with the guidance of the experts.

The dissemination stage, lasting two months, included:

- ▶ Evaluation of the improvement efforts and initiatives implemented;
- ▶ Extracting the main lessons learned to provide a practical guide and encourage other organizations to follow it in the future; and
- ▶ The finalization and production of a practical manual, multimedia record, and dissemination workshop.

Staying Resilient amid Challenges

Since 2020, the NPO Indonesia, VTC Serang, VTC Sorong, and Ministry of Village have held multiple training sessions and dissemination workshops as initiatives to strengthen the capacity of locals. Practical manuals and guidelines to facilitate the training were also produced.

In early 2022, an off-grid solar PV system was successfully installed in the Klayili district. Using the knowledge and skills gained from the DMP project, local residents have been maintaining the solar PV infrastructure and equipment, ensuring a stable source of electricity for the region.

Access to a stable electricity supply has improved the productivity and efficiency of local government agencies in serving and improving the lives of the community in Sorong.



The successful conclusion of this project has ensured a consistent electricity supply for local residents. The local community health center is now able to operate for longer hours, providing care to patients even at night. Simple conveniences, like being able to charge mobile phones, have greatly benefited and supported local students in their studies. Beyond these tangible benefits, there has also been an increase in community engagement and knowledge. Regular training sessions are held by the VTC Sorong to educate the local community on the optimal maintenance and operation of the solar cells, leading to more trainers within the VTC Sorong.

This project could complement similar initiatives by other agencies in electrifying the region, particularly those located in remote, rural areas, and characterized by the low quality of public services due to electricity shortages.

Marlen Wantah
Regional Planning Agency of Sorong Regency
Person in charge of the APO DMP Project in Sorong

Indonesia, with its rapidly expanding economy and unmet electricity demand, stands at the brink of a renewable energy revolution. Earlier attempts at solar energy adoption were stymied by maintenance issues and unreliable providers. However, the APO initiative and collaboration among APO members promise a brighter, sustainable future with shared knowledge and human capability development.

This DMP project is a testament to the promising path Indonesia is taking to raise rural productivity with green energy technologies as sustainable power solutions. Future undertakings should prioritize innovative training delivery, potentially blending virtual with onsite methods, ensuring comprehensive skill acquisition.

Trailblazing:

How the Malaysia Productivity Corporation Became the First APO-accredited Certification Body

Need for Productivity Enhancement in Local SMEs

Like all countries, Malaysia is heavily reliant on the SME sector, which contributes 98.5% to the national economy and accounts for 36.6% of GDP. With that vital role, it is imperative for the Malaysian government to support and sustain the growth and success of SMEs as a central engine for overall economic development and prosperity.

The impact of the pandemic on SMEs was profound. According to a survey conducted by Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), the outbreak of COVID-19 affected nearly 87% of SME business owners. Approximately 76% were compelled to close their physical premises and plants during the Movement Control Order (MCO). Thus, there is now an urgent need for productivity improvement among SMEs in Malaysia.

87%

SME business owners affected by COVID-19 outbreak



76%

SME business owners compelled to close their physical premises during MCO



Becoming an APO-accredited Certification Body

The Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC), the National Productivity Organization (NPO), was founded to spearhead productivity efforts. It has developed numerous initiatives and strategies pivotal in national socioeconomic development.

In 2018, the APO initiated an accreditation program to expand its role as a leading productivity organization. The APO Accreditation Body (APO-AB) was established to enhance the capabilities of NPOs and empower them to conduct productivity certification programs by developing a pool of productivity professionals. The MPC Certification Body (MPC-CB) was quickly founded and underwent a rigorous training program to become the first APO-accredited CB on 14 September 2021. The MPC-CB now offers individual certification under the Productivity Specialists scheme in Malaysia, marking a milestone in the pursuit of excellence and national productivity advocacy.

The MPC-CB firmly believes that nurturing a pool of Certified Productivity Specialists (CPS) plays a crucial role in contributing innovative solutions to boost the productivity and competitiveness of SMEs. With more CPS in Malaysia, the MPC-CB is hopeful that its efforts will increase national productivity growth by 3.6% by 2025.



The main objectives of the MPC-CB are to:



Achieve the MPC's goal of becoming a reputable authority on validating productivity expertise.



Enhance MPC customers' value propositions and expand the scope of expertise available to Malaysian consultants and productivity experts.



Generate revenue while bolstering the MPC's image as a leading institution in the productivity sector.



Open up new market coverage, particularly within enterprises promoted by the government and public sector, enabling the MPC to tap fresh opportunities to drive economic growth.



Establish a new systematic framework for the Productivity Certification Program, ensuring standardized, effective assessment methods for individuals seeking productivity certification.

The MPC-CB has successfully certified 19 Productivity Specialists (CPS), with 11 hailing from the SME sector, underscoring its unwavering commitment to elevating business productivity. This milestone is a reflection of the MPC-CB's core belief: nurturing a robust pool of CPS is pivotal for injecting innovative solutions into the SME landscape, thereby enhancing their productivity and competitive edge. This cadre of skilled specialists is now poised to drive transformative strategies and practices, ensuring that SMEs not only thrive in a dynamic market but also contribute significantly to the broader economic landscape.



The MPC Certification Body's vision is to be the most respected CB in Malaysia and among APO members in the future. For 2023, the MPC-CB aims to create a community of productivity experts who can help industry, especially SMEs that were most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, increase productivity and competitiveness.

Dr. Mazrina Mohamed Ibramsah
Head of Certification, MPC-CB

Vietnam's Strategic Leap Forward through the National Productivity Master Plan

Vietnam's Advance toward Prosperity

Since the launch of economic reforms in 1986, Vietnam has undergone significant changes, transforming into a vibrant, globally integrated economy. Under the guidance of the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in 2016, the nation has taken major steps to deepen its economic reforms, resulting in an increased GDP growth rate from an average of 6.1% in the 2012–15 period to 7.0% in 2016–19. During the challenging years of the COVID-19 pandemic, Vietnam demonstrated resilience by maintaining positive economic growth and emerging even stronger from the crisis, with 8.02% GDP growth in 2022 and projected growth rates of 6.3% in 2023 and 6.5% in 2024.

Vietnam has set its sights on becoming a developed nation by 2045, when the country will celebrate the 100th anniversary of independence. This vision, which was first publicized in CPV resolution No. 23-NQ/TW issued on 22 March 2018 and reaffirmed in the CPV's 13th National Congress held in January 2021, has become the primary guideline for the government's development plans for up to 2030 and 2045.

Increased GDP growth rate from an average of 6.1% (2012–15) to

7%
in 2016–19

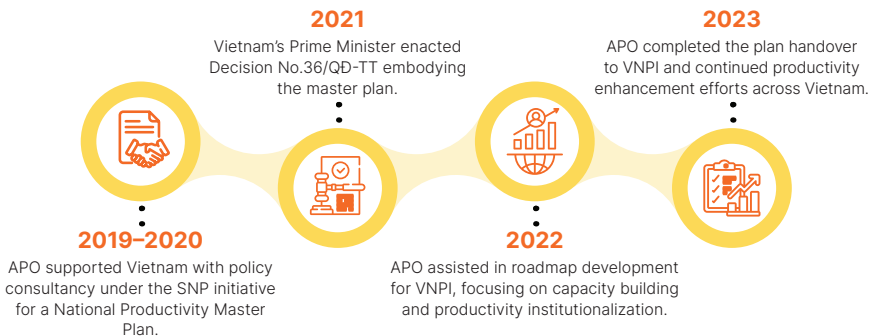


8.02%

GDP growth in 2022 despite COVID-19 crisis



Nevertheless, Vietnam's journey to prosperity still faces significant challenges. While developing countries can move from low-income to middle-income status through essential economic reforms such as trade liberalization, embracing globalization trends, modernizing infrastructure, and investing in human capital development, it is much more difficult for a country to escape the middle-income trap and transition from middle-income to high-income status.



Collaboration on the Strategic National Productivity Master Plan

Recognizing the pivotal role of productivity growth in socioeconomic advances, especially in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Vietnam government has put significant emphasis on innovation. In Directive No. 07/CT-TT dated 4 February 2020 on solutions to raise national labor productivity, the Prime Minister directed the Ministry of Science and Technology to develop and submit a National Master Plan for Productivity Enhancement based on science, technology, and innovation.

To help Vietnam in developing its National Productivity Master Plan, the APO extended assistance in policy consultancy through its Specific National Program (SNP).

Roadmap to a Stronger Nation

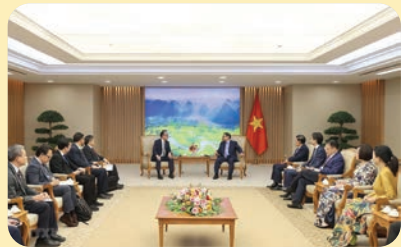
The National Productivity Master Plan aimed to support the country's long-term development as well as other relevant policy agendas. The SNP project was implemented in three key phases: assess; identify bottlenecks; and draft policy recommendations and action plans.

The APO extended its expertise, insights, and best practices through collaboration with international and local teams of experts to help craft a blueprint that would propel Vietnam higher on the productivity ladder to sustain economic growth. In 2021, Vietnam's National Productivity Master Plan to improve productivity based on science, technology, and innovation for 2021–30 was completed for adoption.



Renewing Commitment to Sustaining Productivity

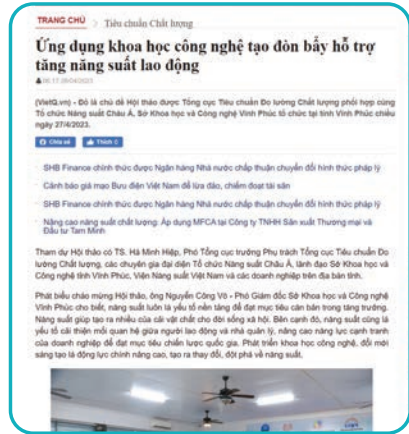
The relevance and robustness of the master plan did not go unnoticed, as it garnered high-level endorsement and support. This was exemplified by the Prime Minister's approval of the master plan and the signing of Decision No. 36/QĐ-TT on 1 November 2021. That milestone demonstrated not only recognition of the master plan's potential but also the nation's steadfast commitment to raising the standard of living through productivity enhancement and socioeconomic growth.



Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh (center R) and APO Secretary-General Dr. Indra Pradana Singawinata (center L) holding discussions in Hanoi, April 2023.

Subsequently, the Prime Minister hosted a visit by APO Secretary-General Dr. Indra Pradana Singawinata (photo), when several follow-up actions were discussed. One of those was the recommendation to enhance the institutional capacity of the Vietnam National Productivity Institute (VNPI) as the leading productivity organization in the country and facilitate synergy with other key institutions in achieving the productivity goals and targets set in the National Productivity Master Plan.

In 2022, the APO continued its support to the VNPI, offering detailed recommendations on strategies, organizational structure, infrastructure, funding models, staffing, governance, leadership, human resources, services and programs, operations, and systems. The resulting roadmap, known as the VNPI's Institutional Capacity Development Plan, also incorporated benchmarking against advanced NPOs to provide a clear illustration of achievable progress.



News source: So Khoa Hoc Cong Nghe; "Applying science and technology creates leverage to support increased labor productivity."

The APO and VNPI worked collaboratively to ensure that the policy recommendations were collectively owned, embraced, and driven forward by all segments of society. Active dissemination and coordination with diverse stakeholders were undertaken to enable productivity initiatives to reach all parts of the country.

Furthermore, the government recognized the importance of measurement in gauging the success and momentum of the productivity movement. Hence, productivity was established as one of its national key performance indicators (KPIs).

A general formula for productivity-led growth is the institutionalization of productivity enhancement within the overall development policy and the easing of institutional constraints. While the road ahead is still long, the partnership between the APO and Vietnam serves as a testament to what can be achieved when vision, collaboration, and commitment converge. Vietnam's productivity journey is an inspiration for others, as it showcases the tangible evidence of the centrality of productivity being incorporated into the national planning agenda.

APO Productivity Databook and Database: Open Access to Economic Productivity Data

Inception: Bridging the Gap in Asian Productivity Statistics

Prior to the development of the *APO Productivity Databook* and database, comprehensive, comparable productivity statistics on Asia-Pacific economies were lacking. Making international comparisons with a high degree of accuracy was not simply a matter of collecting available data. This was particularly the case in the Asia-Pacific, where available data were scarce and constant examination and adjustment of accuracy were essential. This gap in data accuracy and availability catalyzed the initiative to develop harmonized productivity accounts for the region, culminating in the creation of the *APO Productivity Database* (APO PDB). This database encompasses the 21 APO member economies, in addition to Bhutan, Brunei, PR China, and Myanmar, and features the USA as a reference economy.

To complement this resource, additional databases were constructed by the Keio Economic Observatory of Keio University, Tokyo, including the labor database Asia QALI and database on

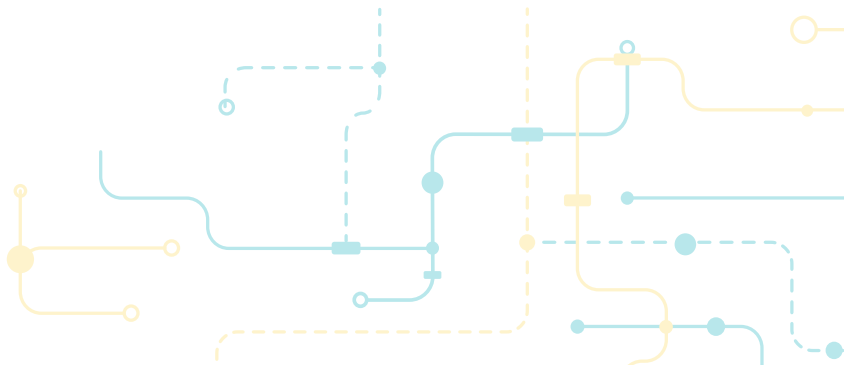
natural resources (ANRD, which encompasses land, mineral, and energy resources). These facilitated the publication of the *APO Productivity Databook*, which provides a reliable reference point for assessing the quality of economic growth and productivity, allowing comparisons among countries at different stages of development in the Asia-Pacific.



Collaborative Research and Analysis on Socioeconomic Development

Since 2007, the APO has been conducting annual productivity measurement research in collaboration with the Keio Economic Observatory, led by Dr. Koji Nomura and Dr. Fukunari Kimura, along with a cadre of researchers and national experts, who meticulously examine productivity trends and economic growth performance.

The findings of their research are rigorously analyzed and compiled in the annual *APO Productivity Databook* and database, which serve as invaluable resources for various stakeholders, facilitate informed decision-making, and contribute to regional socioeconomic growth planning.



Highlights of the APO Productivity Databook



Harmonized data construction:

The databook provides a wide range of harmonized productivity data for comparisons among APO members and reference economies, including labor, capital, and total factor productivity (TFP).



Comparative analyses:

To facilitate comparisons among APO members, the analyses identify best practices and areas for improvement.



Historical data:

Historical productivity data covering 60 years from 1970 allow for trend analyses and understanding of how productivity dynamics change over time.



Methodological insights:

Given the complexities associated with measuring productivity, the databook also explains the methodologies employed, ensuring the transparency and reliability of data presented.

On the Team's Experience and Significance of the Project

It is both a scientific quest and a contribution to the development of Asia. The role of the APO Productivity Databook is to reveal hidden features by constructing charts that can be adapted to different analytical perspectives. Importantly, well-harmonized international comparisons can help us to know ourselves better. This is where the challenges of managing one's own economy lie.

Dr. Koji Nomura
Keio Economic Observatory, Keio University, Tokyo



Dr. Koji Nomura (3rd L), Professor, Keio Economic Observatory, Keio University, Tokyo, and some members of the APO Productivity Databook research team.

Significance of the Databook

The *APO Productivity Databook* plays a pivotal role in assisting policymakers, researchers, and economic professionals in understanding the productivity landscape in the Asia-Pacific region. By providing robust, comparable data, the databook is an invaluable resource for those working to increase productivity, improve competitiveness, and enhance citizens' quality of life in their sectors and economies.

International Organizations:

- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- World Bank



Academic Institutions:

Universities and research institutions with a focus on Asian economics, business studies, and public policy use the databook as a source in their own research. For example:

- *Attribution of Changes in Vietnam's Labor Productivity*
- *Labor Productivity Analysis of Manufacturing Sector in Turkey against EU*
- *Relevance of Middle-Income Trap (MIT) to the Vision-Based Development in Bangladesh*



On the Future Potential of the APO Productivity Databook and Database

There are no productivity statistics in the world that are as comprehensive as the databook, including detailed capital stocks, labor inputs, land, natural resources, etc. The current set of databases is so large that updating it is very costly, and further studies to improve its accuracy are also essential. In the future, APO member countries may benefit from extending the comprehensive database to the industry level and covering more non-APO member countries in Asia.

Dr. Koji Nomura
Keio Economic Observatory, Keio University, Tokyo

Government Bodies and Media Outlets:



Hadapi Tantangan Bonus Demografi di Era Digital, Ini Pesan Menaker Ida Fauziyah

Asian Productivity Organization data also shows that Indonesia's productivity per worker is still below the ASEAN average. This is because, for every 10 working people in Indonesia, there are 6 people who have junior high school education or less. "This low level of education and productivity means that the bargaining power of Indonesian workers is relatively low," he stressed.

Source: www.indopos.co.id



Intensitas Liburan dan Tantangan Produktivitas Tenaga Kerja

Referring to Asian Productivity Organization (APO) data released in 2022, it shows that the productivity level of Indonesian workers was only 24.4 thousand US dollars in 2020.

Source: www.kompas.id



Khoa học Công nghệ - Động lực tăng trưởng mới với nền kinh tế

According to the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), total factors (TFP) - often referring to scientific and technological progress, are forecast to significantly increase their contribution to GDP growth. of Vietnam, from only 1.3% in 2010-2025, equivalent to 22% of GDP growth to 2.4% in 2025-2030, equivalent to 34% of GDP growth. It can be said that science and technology is the new and most important growth driver for the Vietnamese economy.

Source: www.thitruonghanghoa.com

#APO STORY: YOUR STORY MATTERS



Journey toward Productivity Excellence

In the dynamic landscape of professional development and industry evolution, APO projects have acted as crucial catalysts. They align individual aspirations with the needs of various sectors. An online survey was conducted, collecting the experiences of APO project beneficiaries. Seventy-nine participants, representing a diverse cross-section of society, including the public sector (48%), private enterprises (39%), and educational institutions (13%), showcased the broad impact of the APO.

These beneficiaries recounted their experiences, emphasizing how their involvement led to professional growth and community impact. Their stories, enriched with personal quotes, vividly demonstrate the role of the APO in spurring change, innovation, and sustainable progress.

The narratives highlight a journey of transformation, where learning is converted into meaningful, impactful actions, contributing to a collective pursuit of productivity excellence.

Passionate Participants

- ▶ Individuals serving in organizations/governments/NPOs



The APO Experience

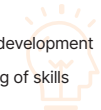
- ▶ Participate in APO programs/projects



Personal Growth

Equipped with productivity knowledge and skills

- ▶ Committed to professional development
- ▶ Lifelong learning and refining of skills



Amplifying Impact: Institutional and Sectoral Transformation

- ▶ Actively apply the skills learned
- ▶ Drive productivity improvements in organizations and industries



Personal Growth

Planting Seeds of Change



Rita Reduble Macabuhay is a testament to the transformative power of APO projects, reshaping the agricultural education landscape in the Philippines. Faced with the daunting challenge of igniting youth interest in agriculture, Rita leveraged insights from an APO observational study mission (OSM) and e-courses to create programs that engage and empower youth.

“Attracting the youth to study agriculture and entrepreneurship is a major challenge because of a mindset that is biased against agriculture.”

Her story is imbued with a commitment to bridging educational gaps. “To improve my personal capability as a trainer and mentor, I also enrolled in the online courses... so I can share more with my students,” Rita wrote. She was a participant in the multicountry OSM on Regional Business Partnerships among Farmers, Food-processing SMEs, and Research Institutes in 2014 that “broadened my perspective on how to process farm produce to extend its marketability cycle while providing convenience to consumers.”

The outcomes of her efforts are tangible. Low-income youth have been empowered to break the cycle of poverty through access to education and opportunities to produce and sell local products at affordable prices within their communities.

“It has created a significant impact on the lives of the youth from poor families who received their education, training, and certification in MFI which eventually resulted in their employment and/or start-up farm business.”

This illustrates how individual determination, coupled with ideas and observations from an APO OSM and e-courses, can lead to positive change in a community.



Rita Reduble Macabuhay
Jalajala Campus Manager,
MFI Polytechnic Institute Inc., Philippines

The Lifelong Impact of APO Projects on One's Professional Journey

Kumanduri Ranga Chari, a seasoned industrial engineering professional, has exemplified the profound impact of lifelong learning, particularly through his engagement with APO projects. His career, spanning various sectors, has been a testament to his belief that "There can always be a better way of doing things." This ethos drove him to participate in multiple APO projects, each offering unique insights and tools to enhance his professional skills.



His journey with the APO began in 1979 with the Industrial Application of Computers project in Hong Kong. That experience was pivotal, revealing the advanced state of technology globally and inspiring him to advocate for the adoption of computers in Indian industries to boost productivity. Subsequently, the Senior Management Consultants' Advancement Program in Tokyo in 1983 and Critical Problem-solving Techniques for Managers in 1991 deepened his expertise in advanced management practices and analytical tools. Those experiences enriched his skillset, allowing him to provide high-value services in various management areas.



The transformative impact of APO projects was profoundly evident in the significant advancements and contributions that Chari brought to various industries. He identified critical analysis and cause-effect diagrams as his most valuable takeaways from these projects, diligently applying them to pioneering initiatives. Chari reflected on his achievements, stating, "I could show unbelievable improvements in product design and process improvements." His accomplishments ranged from reducing plastic waste in toothbrush handles to converting agricultural biomass into energy and transforming agricultural waste into pavement bricks.

Chari's journey demonstrates the power of continuous learning, going beyond the adoption of tools and techniques to championing innovation that has redefined productivity. His experiences with APO projects not only fostered his personal and professional growth but also significantly contributed to the industries he worked with, demonstrating that with the right knowledge and tools, transformative change is possible.



Kumanduri Ranga Chari
Retired Professor, Operations
Management,
BIMTECH, India (APO National Award
Recipient, 2021)

Amplifying Impact: Institutional and Sectoral Transformation

Elevating Food Productivity, Safety, and Security

In Indonesia and Pakistan, the agrifood industry faces similar challenges. Ratih Pratiwi, Senior Industrial Patron, Ministry of Industry, Republic of Indonesia, recognized that there was a “lack of knowledge of small and medium food industries to meet the food safety requirements, limited capital, unprofessional management, nonfulfillment of business standards and legality, and limited innovation.” Meanwhile, Qazi Saddam Naseer, Regional Business Coordinator/Assistant Manager Agro Food of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, Government of Pakistan, pointed out that, “In our region, there was a pressing need to create opportunities for SMEs in the agrofood sector to thrive. However, various obstacles, including limited access to resources, a lack of awareness about modern food-processing techniques, and a disconnect between stakeholders, hindered progress.”

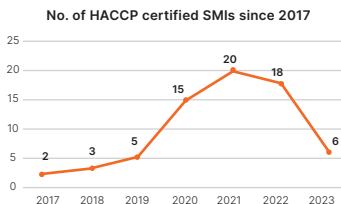
To overcome barriers like resource scarcity and knowledge gaps, they adopted APO strategies to enhance productivity in Indonesia's and Pakistan's agrifood sectors. In 2016, Ratih attended a training course on Food Safety Management Systems: Advanced Course for SMEs in the Agrifood Industry in Taipei, ROC, which enabled her to develop programs to help SMEs in Indonesia's food industry meet hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) standards.

Qazi attended a 2018 APO workshop on Innovations in Food Value Chains in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, which enriched his knowledge and professional expertise. “They continue to guide my work in promoting sustainable practices, innovation, and productivity within the agrifood industry,” Qazi recounted. Upon completion of the workshop, he took practical actions, such as integrating data analytics and IoT solutions into production processes, attaining ISO 22000 certification for a food production facility, and fostering cross-sector partnerships with governmental agencies and NGOs to promote food safety and skill development for farmers. Those initiatives have “allowed us to stay competitive, enhance our sustainability practices, and contribute to broader societal goals.”



The stories of Ratih and Qazi exemplify the profound impact that targeted training and strategic implementation of knowledge can have on the agrifood sector and beyond. Their journeys illustrate a transformative ripple effect from enhancing individual capabilities to elevating industry standards and ultimately contributing to the national economy and food security.

Number of small-scale food industries that received HACCP certification, facilitated by the Directorate General of Small, Medium, and Multifarious Industry of the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia, since 2017:



Qazi Saddam Naseer
Regional Business Coordinator/
Assistant Manager Agro Food, Small
and Medium Enterprises Development
Authority, Government of Pakistan



Ratih Pratiwi
Senior Industrial Patron, Ministry of
Industry, Republic of Indonesia

Institution Builder for NPOs to Improve Consultancy Services to Locals



The Vietnam National Productivity Institute's (VNPI's) productivity consultant Nguyen Thi Van's story is a narrative of transformation. The observational study mission on Lean and Advanced Technology in Healthcare Services to the USA motivated her to introduce lean healthcare models to Vietnam's hospitals. This not only enhanced the VNPI's consultancy services but also spearheaded a movement toward efficiency and excellence in national healthcare delivery.

"I developed new courses and a consultancy scheme on lean healthcare and was able to conduct training courses on lean healthcare to promote lean in 30 hospitals in Vietnam. It's the way to spread knowledge and experience most efficiently. The knowledge sharing with 30 hospitals in Vietnam brought new customers to the VNPI as well as enhanced the image of the VNPI in the healthcare sector."



Nguyen Thi Van
Productivity Consultant, Vietnam
National Productivity Institute (VNPI)



Revitalized Local Tourism Industry with Green Productivity

Cleto Bravo Gales, Jr., serving as the City Tourism Administrator and Tourism Officer of Island Garden City, Samal, the Philippines, from 1998 to 2014, was faced with the challenge of maintaining the integrity of the island's natural wonders while sustainably harnessing the economic potential of its agriculture and tourism sectors. The city, rich in biodiversity, was contending with a fragile ecosystem under threat from the increasing influx of tourists and urbanization pressures.

To advance his crusade for a sustainable renaissance in local tourism and address the question of “how to ensure that local constituents would benefit and become mainstream participant-stakeholders and key actors in the flourishing tourism industry,” he participated in the APO workshop on Green and Productive Tourism in Bali, Indonesia, in 2004. That experience provided him with three key Green Productivity insights: advancing green tourism without altering natural landscapes; creatively designing structures to minimize carbon footprints; and making local stakeholders central to the tourism industry.



By embracing the principles and practices imparted through APO initiatives, individuals have not only advanced their professional careers but have also set benchmarks for excellence and sustainability in their countries.

After that APO workshop, Cleto initiated several community-based ecotourism projects, such as the Taklobo (Giant Clam) Sanctuary and Eco-Tours, the Save the Sanipaan Shoal Mangrove Rehabilitation Project, and the Coral Garden Marine Park and Sanctuary. Those initiatives catalyzed a “shift from destructive livelihoods toward engaging in productive and sustainable livelihood undertakings in harmony with nature.” Through those projects, Cleto not only addressed the challenges faced by his city but also set a precedent for sustainable tourism development that balances economic growth with environmental conservation.



Cleto Bravo Gales, Jr.
City Tourism Administrator and Tourism Officer, Island Garden City, Samal, the Philippines

The Heart of Productivity: What Does Productivity Mean to Me?

Productivity, a frequently repeated term in both professional and personal realms, involves far more than mere output. It is the measure of our ability to improve, innovate, and inspire.

A steppingstone to excellence, where each day is a canvas for improvement.

Productivity means today is better than yesterday and the future is better than today.

Dialah Hokosuja Hutabalian
Indonesia

Efficiency with environmental stewardship

Productivity means producing more outputs and/or doing things more efficiently by using minimal resources, minimizing carbon footprints, and minimizing negative impacts on Mother Nature. In the face of climate crisis, our contribution to avert further catastrophe is Green Productivity.

Cleto Bravo Gales, Jr.
Philippines

A tool for social progress

Productivity is getting a timely solution for a current crisis. It benefits me and my country through helping with effective and powerful solutions.

Vikashii Prasad
Fiji

Critical metrics in organizational efficiency.

Productivity serves as a fundamental gauge of how efficiently and effectively resources are utilized within any organization. Its advantages extend to all stakeholders, including employers, employees, and customers.

Atiqu ur Rehman
Pakistan

A tool for social progress

Agricultural productivity contributes to food security, ensuring that the world's population has enough to eat.

Math Alpy
Cambodia

It helps local communities and economic development be sustainable and doubles income for local people to improve their standard of living.

Nguyen Ngoc Bich
Vietnam

These narratives from diverse perspectives illustrate that productivity is a multifaceted concept with a common goal: betterment. Whether it is improving personal well-being, protecting the environment, ensuring food security, solving crises, developing communities, or enhancing industrial efficiency, higher productivity is the foundation for progress.

APPENDIX



About the APO

Founded in 1961, the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) is a regional intergovernmental organization committed to enhancing productivity across the Asia-Pacific. It comprises 21 member economies: Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Republic of China, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, I.R. Iran, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkiye, and Vietnam.

Over six decades, the APO has been promoting socioeconomic development through capacity building, knowledge sharing, and mutual cooperation among National Productivity Organizations (NPOs), international organizations, and experts from various sectors. Its Secretariat, led by a Secretary-General, is based in Tokyo, Japan.

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- Qazi Saddam Naseer
- Nguyen Thi Van
- Cleto Bravo Gales, Jr.
- Dialah Hokosuja Hutabalian
- Atiqu ur Rehman
- Math Alpy
- Vikashii Prasad
- Nguyen Ngoc Bich

Together, we've mapped the transformative journey of the APO, one step at a time.



Our Partners in the Asia-Pacific

BANGLADESH



National Productivity Organisation,
Ministry of Industries

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



National Productivity Organization of Islamic Republic of Iran

CAMBODIA



National Productivity Centre of Cambodia,
Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation

JAPAN



Japan Productivity Center

REPUBLIC OF CHINA



China Productivity Center

REPUBLIC OF KOREA



Korea Productivity Center

FIJI



Technical and Vocational Education and Training for the Pacific (TVET Pasifika), NTPC Narere Centre, Fiji National University

LAO PDR



Department of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion, Lao National Productivity Organization, Ministry of Industry and Commerce

HONG KONG

Hong Kong Productivity Council

MALAYSIA



Malaysia Productivity Corporation

INDIA



National Productivity Council

MONGOLIA



Mongolian Productivity Organization

INDONESIA



Directorate for Productivity Development, Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia

NEPAL



National Productivity and Economic Development Centre

PAKISTAN

National Productivity
Organization
(NPO Pakistan)

PHILIPPINES

Development Academy
of the Philippines

SINGAPORE

Singapore
Productivity
Centre

SRI LANKA

National Productivity
Secretariat, Ministry
of Labour and Foreign
Employment

THAILAND

Thailand
Productivity
Institute

TURKIYE

Ministry of Industry
and Technology

VIETNAM

Vietnam National
Productivity Institute





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Prosperity through Productivity