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Sub: 23-CL-30-GS-OSM-A: Study Mission on Overseas Business Development Assistance to SMEs for Innovative Products and Services from 06-08 December 2023, Tokyo, Japan (Visit www.npcindia.gov.in/NPC/User/InternationalServices for detailed Project Notification).

Dear Sir,

We invite your kind attention to NPC <https://www.npcindia.gov.in/NPC/User/InternationalServices> with regard to above Asian Productivity Organization (APO) project. The project notification and the APO bio data form are available on the above mentioned page and the same are also attached herewith. The duly filled in **single copy** of Performa enclosed (in excel form only) of the suitable officers for participation as per the para (**Qualifications for Participants**) of the project notification may kindly be forwarded to reach us latest by **25th, September 2023**. In this regard, the following points may be noted.

- **Financial Arrangement**

The APO/host country would meet round trip economy class international airfare by the most direct route from the international airport nearest to the participant's place of work, hotel accommodation, and the per diem allowances charges of the participants, as per the project notification issued by APO. However, the travel insurance, visa fees, and airport taxes are to be borne by the participant. An Application fee (NON-REFUNDABLE) of **Rs. 500/-+ 18% GST** for the MSME Sector, Trade Unions, and NGOs and **Rs. 1000/-+ 18% GST** for others is payable along with the nomination form, for each participant. In case of selection by APO, NPC will charge **Rs. 3,000/-+ 18% GST** for the MSME Sector, Trade Unions, and NGOs, **Rs. 12,000/-+ 18% GST** for profit-making organizations, and **Rs. 6,000/- + 18% GST** for others per participant is payable towards handling charges and membership fee for the APO Alumni Association of India (AAAI). The requisite amount can be paid through a demand draft/cheque/ECS drawn in favor of the National Productivity Council, New Delhi. In the absence of an application fee, the nominations will not be considered. Kindly e-mail the details of the ECS/RTGS/NEFT payment made to isg@npcindia.gov.in. In this regard, the bank account details are attached herewith. It is the responsibility of the candidates to complete all the official formalities required by their organizations/departments before proceeding abroad.

- **Nomination Procedure**

All nominations should be routed through the proper channel and as per the attached APO bio data form. The nominations received after the last date will not be considered. You are requested to send nominations by e-mail (application in excel format) and hard copy by post. All information pertaining to nominations will be treated as confidential and classified. The nominated officers may be invited as faculty in programs on the relevant subject/s, organized by NPC. We look forward to receiving of nominations from your esteemed organization.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

-sd
(K.D. Bhardwaj)
Director & Group Head (Int'l Serv.)
for Director General
e-mail: isg@npcindia.gov.in



PROJECT NOTIFICATION

Reference No.: 198

Date of Issue	21 August 2023
Project Code	23-CL-30-GS-OSM-A
Title	Study Mission on Overseas Business Development Assistance to SMEs for Innovative Products and Services
Timing	6 December 2023–8 December 2023
Hosting Country(ies)	APO Secretariat
Venue City(ies)	Tokyo
Modality	Face-to-face
Implementing Organization(s)	APO Secretariat
Participating Country(ies)	All Member Countries
Overseas Participants	20
Local Participants	Not Applicable
Closing Date	6 October 2023
Remarks	Not Applicable

Objectives	Learn about the latest Japanese sustainable products and services through visits to an exhibition and SMEs; enhance ecobusiness cooperation in the region through sharing the latest status of the circular economy, sustainable business models, and Green Productivity (GP) initiatives of selected APO members; and encourage business matching, networking, and a follow-up meeting.
Rationale	With the support of a special cash grant from the Government of Japan, this project aims to provide the opportunity to share and learn the latest status of the circular economy and sustainable business models that will contribute to revitalization of SMEs in the region through international cooperation with special attention to sustainability. This is in line with the APO Vision 2025, which emphasizes GP, innovation, and SME development.
Background	<p>According to the Asia and Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), SMEs accounted for more than 97% of all businesses in the Asia-Pacific region, employing over half of the workforce in 2022. Many SMEs have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, although they are gradually recovering from the economic losses. Japan is facing a population decline and shrinking domestic market in addition to damage caused by the pandemic, requiring its SMEs to seek new international business opportunities.</p> <p>Sustainability is increasingly important in the Asia-Pacific region for many reasons, including environmental concerns, social responsibility, and economic benefits. Sustainable business models are needed to create a comparative advantage. With a culture of innovation and history of enforcing environmental laws, Japan has a strong focus on sustainability and is a leading producer of sustainable goods and services. Japanese SMEs play an important role in developing sustainable green products.</p>
Topics	Introduction of Japanese goods and services for sustainable businesses; The circular economy and GP; The status of ecobusiness in APO members; and Visits to the Eco-Pro 2023 exhibition in Tokyo and Japanese SMEs for business-matching and networking opportunities.
Outcome	Introduction of Japanese SMEs' sustainable products and services; Japanese SME owners and participants understand the GP status of selected APO member economies; and Japanese SME owners and representatives from other APO members are introduced for potential international business collaborations.
Qualifications	Heads of chambers of commerce or heads of associated economic organizations; heads of trade and investment bodies; government officials overseeing the SMEs' trade and investment or environmental businesses; or corporate legal staff specializing in international SME business expansion.

Please refer to the implementation procedures circulated with this document for further details.



Dr. Indra Pradana Singawinata
Secretary-General

**IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES FOR APO FACE-TO-FACE PROJECTS
(MULTICOUNTRY PROJECTS WITH LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION COSTS
COVERED BY THE APO)**

1. Modality of Implementation

- a. The sessions will be conducted face-to-face.
- b. The duration of each day's sessions will be around eight hours.
- c. The detailed program and list of resource persons will be provided at least one month prior to the program with announcement of the names of the selected participants, and followed by information on the logistic arrangements.
- d. Participants are required to attend all sessions. This full participation is a prerequisite for receiving the APO certificate of attendance.

2. Financial Arrangements

i. To be met by the APO

- a. All assignment costs of international resource persons and honorarium for up to two local resource persons.
- b. Airfare
 - Round-trip discounted economy-class international airfare by the most direct route between the international airport nearest to the participants' place of work and project venue.
 - The above does not apply to participants from large, profit-making organizations attending training courses or observational study missions, except for those from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal.
 - Arrangements for air tickets for participants will be made by designated travel agents endorsed by NPOs.
- c. Hotel accommodations and per diem allowances for international participants from the day of arrival at the project venue until project completion (at the rate to be specified later).

ii. To be met by participants

- a. Airfare
 - Round-trip international airfare for participants from large, profit-making organizations attending training courses or observational study missions, except for those from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal.
 - Any expenses incurred 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.
- b. Participating Country Expenses
 - The flat rate of USD200.00/person applies for participants from large, profit-making organizations attending training courses or observational study missions.
- c. Travel-related Expenses

- Travel insurance with adequate coverage as may be required by the host country but not less than a minimum coverage value of USD10,000.00 to cover accident, illness, hospitalization, death, and specific expenses related to COVID-19 such as medical treatment, extension of stay due to quarantine, and flight rescheduling/cancellation, if applicable. Participants are required to submit copies of insurance certificates to the APO Secretariat prior to departure.
 - All expenses related to COVID-19 PCR testing and visa fees.
- d. Cancellation Charges
- Any cancellation charges for airfare and hotel accommodations arising from withdrawal of participation after letters of acceptance have been issued by the APO.
- iii. **To be met by the NPO/implementing organization**
- Transportation expenses of participants between the airport and hotel designated for the project and site visits, if any.
 - Meeting venue, including refreshments.
 - All other local implementation costs.

3. Actions by APO Members

- a. Each NPO should nominate three or more candidates in order of preference for observational study missions, training courses, and workshops, and five or more candidates for conferences.
- b. All nominations must be endorsed by an APO Director or Alternate Director and submitted by a Liaison Officer (LO) or designated officer. Self-nominations will not be accepted.
- c. Nominations should reach the APO Secretariat before the deadline.
- d. Each nomination must be accompanied by the APO biodata form and uploaded to Fieekdrive by NPOs. LOs are requested to notify the APO Secretariat once biodata forms have been uploaded. The biodata form is available on the APO website.
- e. If a selected participant becomes unable to participate, the NPO concerned should inform the APO Secretariat and host country promptly.

4. Actions by the APO Secretariat

- a. Selection of candidates will be at the discretion of the Participant Selection Committee of the APO Secretariat.
- b. Selection of candidates will be completed and announced at least one month prior to the start of the project.
- c. Slots that become available due to withdrawal of a selected candidate(s) or lack of nominations by a member country may be filled by alternates to be selected on a merit basis.
- d. The APO Secretariat will inform NPOs of the final program one month prior to commencement.

5. Requirements of Participants

i. Predeparture

- a. Passport

Please ensure the validity of the passport and its expiration date.

Please note that some countries require the passport to be valid for at least six months after entering the country before granting a visa or allowing entry. It is also important to ensure that a sufficient number of unused pages remains.

b. Visa

Please submit the APO Letter of Acceptance to the relevant authorities when applying for a visa.

Please ensure that the visa is specifically for the purpose of participating in the APO project, is valid for the entire duration of the project, and is not a tourist visa. Failure to obtain the correct visa may result in denial of entry. In that unfortunate event, either the individual or the individual's organization must bear the travel costs incurred.

c. Health Certificates

Please check with the health authorities in your country regarding inoculations or vaccinations required in the country(ies) you will visit and obtain the necessary health certificate(s) well in advance. Participants may need to check the immigration requirements in relation to COVID-19 for entry, including health certificate, vaccination/booster certificate, requirements for PCR testing, travel insurance, and application to be registered to monitor health conditions as required by the host country, transit country(ies), and their countries of residence.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the host country may allow only vaccinated foreign travelers to enter. In this case, please keep hard copies of COVID-19 vaccination and booster vaccination records with you at all times during travel and stay at the project venue.

d. Insurance Requirements

Participants must be fully insured against accident and illness, including hospitalization and death, with a minimum coverage value as stated in item 2.ii.c. Adequate COVID-19 coverage including medical and emergency evacuation and repatriation expenses, travel cancellation, travel curtailment, and quarantine allowance benefits should be included.

Neither the APO nor the implementing organization will be responsible for any eventuality arising from accident or illness.

e. COVID-19 PCR Testing

If required by the host, participants should undergo PCR testing and obtain negative certificates before departure for the project venue. Similar arrangement may apply for participants to return to their home countries.

Neither the APO nor the implementing organization will be responsible for any costs for conducting the tests.

Please note that all costs incurred for items 5.i a–e must be met by participants or participants' organizations.

f. Travel Arrangements

The arrangements for the purchase of air tickets will be made by NPOs. Air tickets will be for the most direct route between the international airport nearest to the participants' place of work and the international airport nearest to the venue of the project.

Round-trip discounted economy-class air tickets will be arranged for international participants who are attending multicountry projects, as specified in Item 2.i.b.

ii. Arrival at the Project Venue

a. Timing of Arrival

Participants should arrive one day before the commencement of the project and depart one day after project completion. Early arrival or late departure is not permissible, unless due to unavoidable reasons such as flight availability. Consultation with APO Secretariat is necessary for this.

b. Arrival at the Airport

Upon arrival at the international airport in the project venue, participants must follow all the procedures set by the host country. The APO Secretariat will give updates on those regulations in Project Circular Letters.

Transport from the airport to the project hotel may not be arranged by the host NPO/implementing organization. Please refer to the Project Circular Letter issued prior to project commencement.

If participants' luggage is lost or misplaced, it should be reported immediately to the airline concerned and the host NPO/implementing organization.

c. Accommodations

The NPO/implementing organization in the host country will make hotel accommodation arrangements for international participants during the project. All are required to stay in the designated hotel(s) with other participants.

The APO or NPO/implementing organization in the host country will meet the costs of hotel accommodations for international participants. Phone calls, consuming mini-bar items, and laundry and other services are not included.

d. Per Diem Allowances

The APO or NPO/implementing organization will provide per diem allowances (in the local currency) for international participants. No other allowances (such as for books, clothing, or excess baggage) will be paid.

The per diem allowances are provided for the project period, starting from one day before commencement to the final day of the project. No additional allowances will be paid for early arrival or late departure.

iii. During the Project

a. Participants must attend all sessions of the project. Participants unable to attend any of the sessions due to health or an emergency must consult the APO Secretariat or NPO/implementing organization staff in advance or as soon as possible.

b. Participants must follow the instructions of moderators/presenters in asking questions, joining discussions, and answering questions.

c. Participants must follow all instructions, health protocols, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) of the host country/NPO/implementing organization.

d. Participants should wear appropriate business attire during project sessions.

6. Standard Operating Procedures and Precautionary Measures against COVID-19

The SOPs for face-to-face projects for host countries are listed in the table below.

Preventive/Precautionary Measures during Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sanitation and personal hygiene measures• Social distancing• Other basic public health and etiquette practices• Arrangement for PCR testing if resource persons/participants' countries of residence require travelers to show negative PCR test certificates for entry
Preventive/Precautionary Measures during Site Visits <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disinfection measures before entering site visit locations• Sanitation and personal hygiene measures• Social distancing• Other basic public health and etiquette practices
Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The health of resource persons/participants/NPO/implementing organization staff/APO Secretariat staff will be monitored throughout the project period• Any COVID-19-related symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty in breathing, etc. must be reported to the APO Secretariat and host NPO/implementing organization
Emergencies <p>If resource persons/participants/NPO/implementing organization staff/APO Secretariat staff experience COVID-19-related symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty in breathing, etc., they will be taken immediately to the nearest medical facility and the APO Secretariat will be informed</p>
Infection <p>In cases of possible infection, the following steps will be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation with the host NPO/implementing organization, APO Secretariat, and medical facility team on the next course of action• Inform participants' NPOs/organizations/family members of steps to be taken• All costs related to medical treatment and quarantine must be covered by travel insurance• Participants' medical status will be monitored and updates will be given to the APO Secretariat and others as soon as possible
Travel Suspension <p>If international participants/resource persons are not allowed to leave the host country due to travel suspension, the following steps will be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The host NPO/implementing organization will make arrangements with the hotel, medical facility, and/or immigration authorities for extension of stay• If travel insurance does not cover all related medical costs, any additional costs must be covered by participating NPOs/organizations/individual participants or resource persons• International participants'/resource persons' medical status will be monitored and updates will be given to the APO Secretariat and others as soon as possible
Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reports must be submitted to the APO Secretariat within five days after participants' or resource persons' departure from the host country if they subsequently test positive for COVID-19 infection• Recommendations for future APO project implementation in the host and other member countries will be reported

Note: These implementation procedures may be updated depending on the COVID-19 situation and apply to all multicountry projects hosted by member countries or the APO Secretariat.