## Report of the 56th Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs
## to the Governing Body and Summary Record of Proceedings

### 1. Preamble

The 56th Workshop Meeting (WSM) of Heads of National Productivity Organizations (NPOs) was held in Singapore, 20-22 October 2015. It was attended by 19 NPO delegates, 16 Agriculture delegates, 19 advisers, and eight observers.

APO Director for Singapore Chew Mok Lee extended a warm welcome to all delegates. Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Education Low Yen Ling delivered the inaugural address.

After considering all the documents and reference papers placed before the meeting, the delegates discussed and unanimously adopted/endorsed the following documents/reference papers for submission to the 58th Session of the Governing Body (GBM) scheduled to be held in Indonesia in the 3rd week of April 2016.

### 2. Adoption of the Evaluation of 2014 Projects (Doc. No. 2)

The Secretariat presented Document No. 2: Evaluation of 2014 projects. The APO implemented 57 multicountry projects covering 1,250 participants and four e-learning courses attended by 852 participants in 2014. The total number of multicountry projects increased significantly compared with the ones in 2012 and 2013.

The feedback from participants indicated that their overall satisfaction with the multicountry projects in 2014 increased compared to the projects in 2012 and 2013. The number of participants who evaluated the projects as "more than expected" increased in major areas, especially program content, physical arrangement and more importantly in overall satisfaction.

Top three highpoints in multicountry projects were: 1. good program content with relevant topics and comprehensive coverage, 2. knowledgeable and experienced resource persons with good materials, and 3. good methodologies with mix of presentation, group activities, site visits and action plan formulation.

The high points for e-learning courses included good program content and design with appropriate coverage of topics; good mix of online and offline sessions; interactive sessions among participants from various countries; good selection of resource persons and good local coordinators.

The Secretariat also shared evaluation of individual country projects in 2014 that included I-OSM, TES, BCBN, DMP, and DON that had approximately 3,233 beneficiaries in total. Overall, individual country projects were well received by member countries.

Based on these evaluation results, the Secretariat shared major recommendations that were: 1. hosting NPO's and the Secretariat should factor the time related issues into the program design for multi country projects; 2. the APO should continue to improve the technical quality of e-learning programs and repeat well-received courses; 3. NPOs are strongly encouraged to host at least one project per year for I-OSMs and BCBN; 4. NPOs are obliged to submit reports on individual country projects for the benefit of other countries; and 5. all member countries are strongly encouraged to fully utilize the TES opportunities and other individual country programs.

The meeting adopted the Doc. No. 2 with the following comments:  1) Total number of TES projects over the past 3 years had declined. The APO should plan and implement more TES projects as it was beneficial to all MCs and very cost effective. 2) Evaluation project could become the guiding principles for an organization for the future improvement of the programs. The evaluation process thus needs to be reviewed and revised so that it would add more value to APO programs. 3) Specific changes to projects in line with the recommendations of the impact evaluation study of 2012/2013 were needed.

## 3.  Report of the Strategic Planning Workshop for APO Liaison Officers (Reference Paper 1)

The Secretariat reported on the 5th Strategic Planning Workshop for Liaison Officers held in Tokyo, 1–3 July 2015, attended by 19 Liaison Officers and two observers from 19 member countries. The workshop received updates from the Secretariat in terms of the status of the roadmap, new program approach for the 2017–2018 project planning, survey results and ranking of 2017–2018 projects, issues in implementing projects both at the country and Secretariat levels, and new initiatives of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat shared its new initiatives such as IT initiatives in terms of: development of the in-house videoconference facility; new self-e-learning courses; features of the revamped APO website, program approach with 16 programs covering the APO projects, the APO certification system of productivity practitioners which was well received by member countries, NPO staff attachment scheme, the national follow-up program to expand participation of a particular project at the national level, and collection of success story.

Main suggestions made by the meeting were: The Liaison Officers' Meeting should be held annually in other countries to observe and learn from local best practices, and also include competency building sessions in the program. It concluded with a message that proposed adjustments to the APO operations may be made if: 1) it was of help for NPOs and for the membership; 2) it helped strengthen collaboration between the Secretariat and NPOs; and 3) if helped increase the APO's visibility on a global scale.

There being no comments, the report was well received.

## 4.  Report on the Roadmap to Achieve the APO Vision 2020 - Revision 4 (Reference Paper 2)

The Secretariat reported on the current status of the proposed Roadmap to Achieve the APO Vision 2020.

The 55th GBM held in Tokyo in 2013 recommended the development of a roadmap with an action plan and measurable indicators to help the APO achieve its collective vision to be more productive and competitive by 2020. The development of the roadmap has been an inclusive, collaborative process involving member countries including WSM held in Fiji in 2013, GBM in Hanoi, Liaison Officers' Meeting in Tokyo, and WSM in Sri Lanka all held in 2014.

In February 2015, a special meeting of the working group for the review of the APO Roadmap convened at the Secretariat to further revise the roadmap. The final draft, Revision-2 was submitted for the approval by the 57th GBM held in Bangkok, in April 2015. The roadmap received comments from some member countries for further refinements, the APO Chair announced that the GBM would give additional 60 days for the roadmap to be finalized. Since then, there had been two rounds of revisions by the Secretariat and comments from member countries. It was currently under a final review by the Secretariat and would be soon submitted to the GB for its approval.

The key components of the Roadmap consisted of setting symbolic, collective APO productivity targets, strengthening capacity-building programs including intensification of e-learning programs, sector-focused programs and establishment of a best-practice network, establishment of the APO Guiding Principle of Productivity Enhancement and review mechanism, and strengthening the policy advisory function.

The WSM endorsed Reference Paper 2 with the suggestion that APO should not set the targets for member countries but should set targets for its own activities and achievements, and develop roadmap to achieve them.

## 5. Criteria for and Prioritization of 2017–2018 Project Lineups (Reference Paper 3)

The Secretariat explained the criteria for and prioritization of 2017–2018 project lineups, which would serve as a reference to assist APO Directors in determining the total APO membership contributions for the 2017–2018 Biennium at the upcoming GBM in 2016.

In developing the program and projects, the Secretariat adopted the Program Approach. The Secretariat described that a program was a set of activities or projects that had common goals and objectives contributing to achieving the mission and vision of the APO.

The Secretariat explained the process and criteria of coming up with the lineup of 104 projects for both 2017 and 2018, which were sent to NPOs to rate the relevance of the projects. The project ideas were further reviewed and additional points were given based on the following criteria: 1) policy directives of GBM in 2014–2015; 2) priority actions in the proposed APO roadmap 2020; 3) capacity-building elements; and 4) significant multiplier effects. The prioritization was applied only to multicountry Category A and B projects. Based on the above criteria, the priority lists of 80 projects for 2017–2018 was presented to the 56th WSM.

The Secretariat explained that the WSM was expected to discuss the lineup of projects for 2017/2018, as well as endorse the new program approach used to develop 2017/2018 projects. After receiving feedback and suggestions at the WSM, the Secretariat would make necessary revisions to the program plans for 2017 and 2018 that would be submitted to the Governing Body for its consideration. Depending upon the total membership contributions approved by the 58th session of the GB, the final program plans for 2017-2018 would be decided.

There being no comments, the Reference Paper 3 was endorsed by the WSM.

## 6. Proposed Expansion of the APO Digital Learning Program (Reference Paper 4)

The Secretariat presented the APO Digital Learning Program which covered video-conference-based courses, web-based on-line courses and self-learning e-courses. The APO started offering e-learning courses in 2006. The videoconference-based courses were delivered through the facilities of the Tokyo Development Learning Center of the World Bank until the APO developed its own facility in 2015.

The Secretariat said that with two pilot projects implemented in 2006, the number of courses conducted each year eventually increased to six by 2010. By the end of 2014, a total of 36 courses had been conducted, with participants totaling 8,182.

The Secretariat reported that for the self-learning e-course program from 2006 to 2010, nine courses were offered with an average of 450–500 participants enrolled per course. In 2011, the delivery system was improved and the number of participants enrolled in each course more than doubled over the previous years. Participants from APO members who passed the final exams were

given a certificate of completion. From 2011 to 2014, these courses were taken by between 800 to 3,200 registered individuals per course who came from 30-70 countries.

The Secretariat explained that the objective of the proposed expanded DLP was to extend the reach of APO beyond the region. The courses that will use the LMS platform and its latest technologies with interactive and animated multimedia content will make these more attractive to prospective participants. However, the use of more interactive and animated courses will increase the cost per course from current level of USD10,000 to about USD25,000.

The Secretariat mentioned that if members' contribution remained at the current level, developing more self-learning e-courses will have some implications on the number of face-to-face projects and generating revenues from the selected fee–based courses might be necessary. It was pointed out that based on the experience of the Secretariat there was a possibility to increase the number of courses from the current six per year to more than double. It would also create an opportunity for a fee-based system to generate some revenue for the APO.

The Secretariat concluded its presentation by asking all delegates to identify and prioritize topics for 2016, 2017 and 2018, to suggest scheme either it is free or fee-based course with the intention to generate revenues to partly fund such expansion, and to endorse the proposed APO Digital Learning program expansion for consideration of the 58th session of the GB.

The meeting endorsed Reference Paper 4 for submission to the 58th session of the GB with these comments: The self e-learning course program could be placed in an open platform for all member countries. Local institutions and experts including NPOs could help in designing the contents and methodology of courses including developing a fee-based scheme under such system.

## 7.      Report of Strategic Planning Sessions

Two strategic planning sessions (SPS) were conducted as summarized below:

*Strategic Planning Session 1* was to prioritize productivity training topics for self-learning e-courses. The delegates and advisers participated in the three breakout sessions: Group 1 - Industry and manufacturing sector; Group 2 - General management/service and public sectors, and Group 3 - Agriculture and Food Sector.  NPO Delegate for India Harbhajan Singh chaired Group 1, NPO Delegate for Fiji Kamlesh Prakash chaired Group 2, while Agriculture Delegate for Thailand Dr. Apichart Pongsrihadulchai chaired Group 3.  All groups commenced with the presentation by the Secretariat. In each group the delegates discussed and prioritized the training topics for self-learning e-courses. They also proposed additional training topics. Some of the suggestions were:

1.  The Secretariat should develop courses based on the available budget for 2017-2018
2.  Intermediate-level courses should be considered for specific subjects
3.  Member countries should be allowed translation of the course materials into local language on their own cost
4.  Obtain contents from providers such as NPOs and other training institutions
5.  The Secretariat and member countries together should promote of the APO e-learning platform
6.  Course contents should be practical, not too theoretical
7.  Provide courses for both managerial and non-managerial staff
8.  Gain feedback from users to prioritize the courses
9.  The report triggered lively discussions on whether or not to charge fees on the self-learning e-courses. There were several different views on the fee charges such as i) the courses have to be provided for free at least at the outset to gain traffic; ii) the courses could be provided for free

but charged when certificates and/or diploma were given; iii) the courses could be provided for free to users in member countries and charged to users in non-member countries.

10. It is crucial to take stock of existing e-learning courses by NPOs and leverage them.

***Strategic Planning Session 2*** was to reconfirm the APO Program Plan for 2016, as well as review APO Program Plan for the 2017-2018 Biennium for the industry and service sectors and that for the agriculture and food sector. NPO Delegate for the Philippines Antonio D. Kalaw, Jr. chaired the session for the industry and service sector, while Agriculture Delegate for Thailand Dr. Apichart Pongsrihadulchai chaired the agriculture and food sector. Both sessions commenced with a presentation by the Secretariat on the separate program plans explaining the program plans for 2016 and project lineups for the 2017-2018 biennium. The delegates reconfirmed the hosting of projects for 2016. They also reviewed the project lineups for 2017-2018 Biennium, and confirmed hosting of some projects while some other projects dropped out of the priority list due to lack of hosting interest. The Delegates also made minor adjustments in the titles and proposed some new projects.

**Suggestions from the Industry and Service Sector Session**

1. Consider to shoulder local costs of implementing projects with duration of more than five days.
2. Urge member countries, especially large economies, to host at least two projects per year.
3. Undertake more research projects alongside with training activities as research is an important activity of any international organization.
4. Look into new trends that seriously impact productivity.
5. Review overall training courses including those being proposed under the self-learning e-course program and group related ones under a APO training program that lead to different levels of certification, from basic to expert.
6. Ensure more focus on the quality of projects and courses offered.
7. Consider best mix of program delivery such as self-learning and face-to-face to increase cost effectiveness of the APO activities.

**Suggestions from the Agriculture and Food Sector session**

1. APO should maintain the number of agriculture and food related projects at the same level as in the previous year, i.e. 18-20 projects per year considering the importance of agriculture and food sectors for the APO member countries;
2. Future Survey and prioritization of APO projects should be made by sector.
3. Delegates appreciated the offer of CIRDAP to co-sponsor some of the projects in selected member countries