

Concept Note: Entrepreneurship Development Program with a Special Focus on Design

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, November 18-21 2013

I. Background

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) play a vital role in the export growth and economic development in developing countries. Although most low-income countries have recognized the importance of SME for 2 decades, their policy frameworks supporting SME growth are still at a trial-and-error stage. To address the challenge, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed project on “South South and Triangular Cooperation for SME Development in Asia” implemented by the UNDP Country Office in Malaysia which aims at refining the institutional framework for SME growth based on inter-country experiences.

As part of the regional initiative, UNDP Malaysia has recently conducted 5 national training sessions and consultations across the region. Two key findings were drawn from these sessions: (1) SMEs have very limited capacity in product and process design (2) there is a lack of a consistent policy framework that supports design among SMEs. These conditions impose a barrier to SME growth. Although many SMEs in developing countries have adequate manufacturing capacity, it is the missing link of adequate product design and engineering that handicap their products’ ability to penetrate the international market, hampering their international competitiveness and growth potential.

Some of the underlying reasons why design is neglected in developing countries:

- (1) Design is aesthetic or fashion oriented, and hence less serious and important.
- (2) Investment in design is understood to increase the product price which will make the product unaffordable in low income countries.
- (3) Less competitive markets leads to private SMEs to be less demand oriented, thus leaving little room for product design and innovation.

However, economies may be missing out by adopting such a mindset. Investment in product and process design, where local products are upgraded through innovative thinking, resulting in increase in marginal product of labor, can augment profits and wages and also ensure products of SMEs in developing countries are better customized to fit the needs of export markets. The lack of awareness of the importance of product design in international competitiveness, as well as the limited capacity in product design, has become one of the bottlenecks for SME development in low-income countries.

II. Objectives

UNDP Malaysia will organize a four-day workshop with the specific purpose of:

1. To create awareness of the vital role of design in international market penetration and provide basic design training and knowledge to the participants.
2. To strengthen SME capacities in design issues and application as well as address the significance of adequate design policies.
3. To further South-South cooperation through the sharing of resources, expertise and learning specifically from the Malaysian experience.

III. Program Overview and Application Criteria

The program will consist of two components catered for both entrepreneurs and policy makers. The first component will provide fundamental know-how of design and the second component will address the importance of design policies, share good case practices of design policy briefs, and facilitate delegates to adapt these good case practices in their local context.

The program is targeted at developing countries in Bhutan, Bangladesh, East Timor, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Cambodia and Vietnam. Each participating organization is invited to nominate a maximum of five candidates to attend the workshop, a mix of SME entrepreneur and policy maker. The selection of participants will be on a competitive basis and managed by an independent panel. The nominated candidates should ideally meet the following criteria:

- A relevant basic degree. Candidates with no relevant degree but good track record of SME policy-making, entrepreneurship and designing can be considered.
- Practical and hands on experience of at least five years in the SME sector, ideally with SMEs who are exporting or nearly export ready.
- Candidates can be from NGOs, Government organizations or the private sector at mid-level management with substantive knowledge of SME development between five-to-ten years of working experience. Private sector nominations should preferably have experience in exports and work with a variety of production companies.
- Preference will be given to candidates who can demonstrate awareness of challenges facing exporters from their countries and SMEs in their portfolio should include non-commodity products.
- Good command of the English language with both spoken and written abilities.

IV. Tentative Agenda

Day 0 (17th November 2013)

Arrival

Day 1 (18th November 2013)

0800 – 0900	Welcome Coffee/Tea
0900 – 1000	Opening Session Welcoming Remarks: Resident Representative, UNDP Malaysia Opening Remarks: Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia Introductory Remarks: Expert Facilitator
1000-1030	Tea/Coffee Break Photography Session
1030 – 1230	Design Workshop Session 1: Design, What Is It and Why Is It Necessary?
1230 – 1330	Lunch
1330 – 1530	Design Workshop Session 2: Hidden & Technical Elements of Design
1530 – 1600	Coffee/Tea Break
1600 – 1730	Design Workshop Session 3: Design and Market Linkages

Day 2 (19th November 2013)

0900 – 1030	Design Workshop Session 4: The Importance of Packaging
1030-1200	Design Workshop Session 5: Results Oriented Design Programs for SMEs
1200 – 1300	Lunch
1300– 1500	Design Workshop Session 6: Interactive Program Design
1500 – 1530	Coffee/Tea Break
1530 – 1700	Design Workshop Session 7: Good Branding Practices

Day 3 (20th November 2013)

0900 – 1200	Site Visit I (TBC)
1230 – 1400	Lunch
1400 – 1630	Site Visit II (TBC)
1630 – 1730	Debriefing

Day 4 (21st November 2013)

0900 – 1200	Design Workshop Session 8: Panel Discussion- SIRIM's Groom Big Programme, MRM's Good Design Mark, SMECorp's Design Promotion Activities
1200 – 1300	Lunch
1300– 1430	Design Workshop Session 9: Putting It All Together
1430 – 1500	Coffee/Tea Break
1500 – 1700	Design Workshop Session 10: Design Program Presentations
1700 – 1730	Closing Synthesizing Summary

Day 5 (22nd November 2013)

Departure