

APO-METI-JPC host mission on the 3Rs

The APO, in collaboration with the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and Japan Productivity Center (JPC), hosted a multicountry observational study mission on the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) in Tokyo from 24 to 27 July. Eighteen delegates who mostly had SME backgrounds and wanted to adopt the 3Rs in their business operations participated in this interactive mission.

The concept of the 3Rs is being emphasized worldwide as an easy, effective way to protect our environment by minimizing resources and waste. Also, responding to the current global financial scenario, the mission highlighted the importance of the efficient, effective use of available resources, especially energy, to increase the competitiveness of businesses, in particular SMEs. Experts providing inputs included representatives of Tottori University of Environmental Studies, METI, and the UN Centre for Regional Development who introduced approaches, applications, management techniques, and technology related to the 3Rs in the workplace from the local Japanese and regional perspectives.

Chief Expert Professor Masaru Tanaka, Director of the Sustainability Research Institute, Tottori University of Environmental Studies, pointed out that, “Participants learned how to reduce the consumption of material and energy resources in the manufacturing, distribution, consumption, and waste management stages. For individuals, this know-how can be applied to all aspects of life. For companies, 3R applications mean decreased expenditures on material, energy, and waste disposal, with concomitant improvements in public image, operational efficiency, and competitiveness. For countries,

the 3Rs contribute to employment by raising productivity and the international competitiveness of products and services.”

The study mission examined various facets of the 3Rs including best practices in Japan, the 3Rs as an environmental management tool, and energy efficiency in Japan, focusing on building the capacity of SMEs to adopt their own 3R initiatives. The participants also drafted plans to reduce waste, recycle when possible, and reuse waste in their own organizations, leading to possible new business opportunities and increased competitiveness in private enterprises. The plans were forwarded to their organizational heads, along with requests for cooperation and assistance in putting the plans into practice. Four site visits were organized to complement the expert presentations and give new ideas: Hallo Mart Co., Ltd. (visualized management of energy efficiency and energy-efficient stores); Toyo Seikan Kaisha, Ltd. (energy saving in the production process and introduction of recyclable materials); Winroader Co., Ltd. (communization of unnecessary/unwanted goods); and Hotel New Otani (hybrid recycling and energy-saving hotel).



Participants touring the power generation facility/ integrated energy management system of Hotel New Otani.