

The ISO 9001 quality management system

An effective quality management system (QMS) can help any organization to improve its quality approach and productivity regardless of area of operations, size, or whether it is in the private or public sector. ISO 9001:2008 is the standard among the ISO 9000 family which provides specific requirements for a QMS, and organizations can be certified for it by a third party. The APO has been organizing various projects focusing on quality management and quality awards to help industries and organizations incorporate their criteria in business activities.

In 2011, the APO revised its three strategic directions, one of which is strengthening SMEs. An ISO 9001-based QMS can help SMEs develop products that are globally acceptable in terms of quality in a cost-effective manner, allowing them to be more competitive. Therefore, the APO decided to renew its focus on ISO 9001 and organized a five-day intensive training course for NPO and industry professionals in Nadi in association with the National Training and Productivity Center, Fiji National University, 16–20 July. The course was attended by 27 participants from 14 member economies.

The course covered QMS scope, application, normative reference, management responsibility, resource management, measurement, analysis, improvement, certification, and accreditation. On the first morning, participants completed a questionnaire assessing their understanding of ISO 9001. After five days of interactive sessions and group exercises to fill their knowledge gaps, an exam was given on

the final day to determine how much was learned. An observational visit was made to Punja & Sons Ltd, an SME that produces laundry and bath soap, on day 3 to illustrate practical applications of a QMS and examine related documentation. Participants were asked to develop a QMS for a hypothetical industry on day 4. Day 5 was filled with thought-provoking group presentations facilitated and reviewed by the APO experts from Singapore and Malaysia before the exam.

Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, and Employment Jone Usamate distributed certificates to all successful participants while appreciating the individual voluntary commitments to follow-up actions made by them. The course received wide media coverage on national TV and in newspapers. “This course helped me to improve my understanding of QMS with clear examples on specific points,” said Wanwisa Prasattammaporn, a quality assurance officer from Thailand. Mongolian participant Uranchimeg was confident that she would be able to provide consultancy to SMEs in her country after the course. 🌀



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