

## Training in TQM for SMEs in the service sector

Organizations are facing growing challenges from global competition and the needs of increasingly sophisticated customers. Needing to improve product or service quality, organizations are applying total quality management (TQM) to achieve growth as well as sustainable profit. TQM is viewed as a comprehensive, structured approach to organizational management. It encompasses many aspects of operations beginning at the lowest level focusing on customer requirements and ensuring quality in all steps in the process. TQM has shown great success in manufacturing companies and is now being rapidly adapted in the service sector. TQM looks at an organization as a “system” and incorporates improvement efforts to enhance the structure so that customer needs are met and streamlined for cost-effective and service-oriented approaches.

A training course on TQM for SMEs in the Service Sector, held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 24–28 February, was a collaboration between the APO and the National Productivity Organisation of Bangladesh. Twenty-two individuals from 13 APO member countries attended. It was tailored to train participants to understand the concept, tools, and practices of TQM in the service sector. The three resource speakers assigned by the APO provided participants with both concepts and practices of TQM in the service sector. A local speaker shared experiences of implementing TQM in Bangladesh.

Malaysia Productivity Corporation Senior Director Abdul Rahim introduced the background and overview of TQM. “Customers” were identified as both internal and external, and internal customers mean the owners of the next processes. It is necessary to manage quality in every process by every member of an organization, which is the philosophy of “total” in TQM.

“Service quality is defined by the gap between ‘service expectation’ (what a customer feels a service firm should offer) and ‘perceived service’ (what the service firm actually offers),” explained Dr. Satya Narayan Nandi, former director general of the National Productivity Council, India. It is clear that this gap leads to customer dissatisfaction. Best practices of service quality in Singapore were presented by Managing Director George Wong of Hoclink System and Services Pte. Ltd. A discussion was also conducted on promoting business excellence for SMEs in the service sector of Singapore.



*Pakistani participant presenting group work on the “service blueprint” for hotels analyzing problems and proposing improvements.*

A site visit to the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC), provided an opportunity to observe national training for public officers. The BPATC is implementing project called Improving Public Services through TQM. The training course concluded with participants presenting action plans for applying their own versions of service-sector TQM, on which they will submit individual progress reports after six months. 🌀