



# A·P·O *news*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

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## Development of e-specialists

Information technology (IT) has emerged as a powerful tool for productivity improvement. This fact has been well documented. However, IT remains a complex tool with a wide range of products and a variety of possible applications. The situation is made more complicated by relatively short product life cycles. The pursuit of higher productivity using advanced IT capabilities in a country requires a pool of competent IT or electronic specialists (e-specialists) who can promote the use of IT, diagnose IT-related problems, and implement various applications for enhancing productivity and expanding business opportunities.



(L-R) Mr. Lovneesh Chanana, Head (IT), NPC, Mr. R.C. Monga, Deputy Director-General, NPC, Dr. S.K. Pachauri, Mr. M.D. Bhattarai, Senior IT Program Officer, APO, Mr. S. Bhargavan, Deputy Director-General, NPC, at the opening session

In response to the urgent need to develop IT capabilities in its member countries, the APO organized a training course on the “Development of e-Specialists” in New Delhi, India, 23–27 February 2004. Nineteen productivity specialists from 11 member countries attended the program, which was implemented by the National Productivity Council (NPC) of India. Dr. S.K. Pachauri, NPC Director-General, inaugurated the program. In his address to the participants, Dr. Pachauri expressed gratitude to the APO for promoting IT as a productivity tool. India, he said, has made significant progress in adopting IT at all levels of the economy. According to the Global Information Technology Report, it ranks second worldwide in the increase rate of IT and communications technology diffusion. India is also a favorite venue for business process outsourcing. Dr. Pachauri suggested that any IT intervention would require: 1) IT infrastructure planning, establishment, and management; 2) reengineering of work practices; 3) human resources development; and 4) change management. In this context, NPOs must act as change agents.

(Continued on page 5)

**“Unless it produces action, information is overhead.”**

**Thomas Petzinger Jr.**

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## Customer service in the public sector (part 2)

The workforce in the service of the public can often find itself in a situation we describe in Australia as being “between a rock and a hard place” or in a “no-win” situation. This can occur because the definition of “the customer” becomes confused. It happens when the political bosses make demands on the workforce concerning public policy matters on one hand, and on the other the general public has growing expectations of improved customer service levels from all organizations. The question is: whom do I serve?

To clarify this dilemma for the whole organization, it is important to define who the customer is. In an Australian Public Service training manual the customer is defined as “any individual or organization that wants or needs a product or service from an agency. Services can be those which ensure that legislation is met, and customers can include those with voluntary and obligatory relationships with the agency. Some terms that are used for such customers in the public sector may include: client, beneficiary, taxpayer, patient, superannuant, pensioner, prisoner, veteran and members of the public.”

This model used by the Australian Public Service shows a suggested framework to keep in mind when applying the principles of customer focus to a public-sector agency (see figure). While the principles of customer focus differ little between the public and private sectors, the environments in which they are applied vary.

Tackling customer service improvement raises some very important questions, such as:

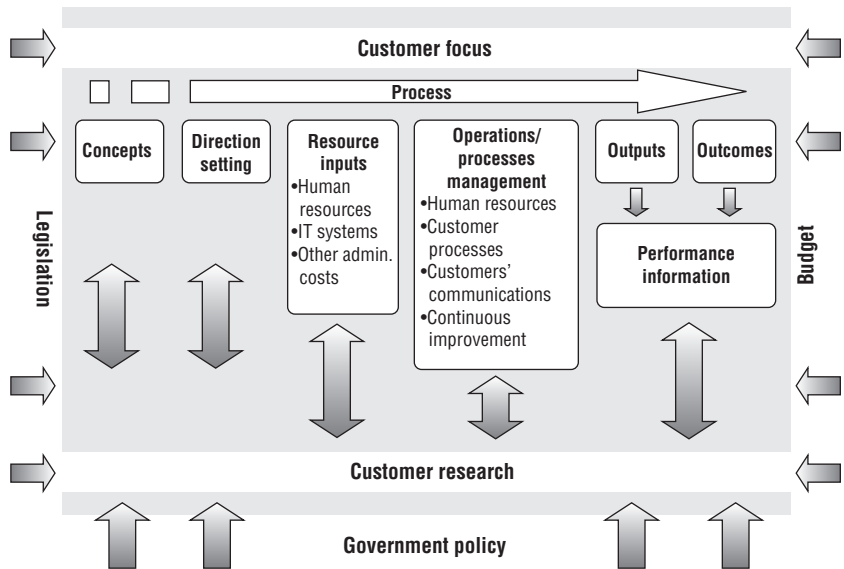
- Why do I want to do this?
- Where do I start?
- Who should be involved?
- What do I have to find out?
- How do I commence the improvement process?

The “why” is often a result of the financial situation, change in policy direction, change in leadership or management reorganization, perception or knowledge of poor customer service, or a combination of these and other productivity issues. The “why” provides a reason to act.

“Where” we start is seeking data and information relating to customers and the broken processes that impact most on them. Having the curiosity of a child is very helpful. Asking “why” many times very quickly leads to the root cause. However, data collection and analysis are vital to verify opinions and perceptions and to seek customer complaints from all possible sources in the organization.

sector organizations throughout Australia at all three levels of government and in public utilities has meant that productivity gains have flattened or reduced the rate of increase in taxes and charges to taxpayers and the private sector. These productivity/cost savings in turn have made the private sector more competitive and helped keep the inflation rate low, thus enabling the economy to grow.

Figure. Public-sector environment.



“Who” participates? Customer service will quickly collapse without strong and enthusiastic leadership support. The customer complaints process needs to be managed through a system that ultimately reports to the top management team and reviewed as an integral part of the management’s measurement system. This level of management focus sends positive signals to the workforce that management is serious about improving customer service.

Past CEO of Motorola George Fisher stated: “Organizations are not built to serve customers; they are built to preserve internal order. To customers the internal structure may not only mean very little, it may serve as a barrier.” This is particularly true of most public-sector organizations. Very often they are caught up in policy paralysis and drained by total inertia. Breaking free from the clutter of bureaucracy is not easy. However, the paradigm change that has occurred over the past decade or so and is continuing in most public-


In my previous column (see December 2003 issue) I pointed out that Australia Post had maintained its postage at the same rate for 10 years by improving productivity and customer service. This meant that business postage costs were also contained over the same period. Another productivity example includes the electricity generation and distribution system, which has moved from full government ownership and inefficiency to largely privately owned or corporatized (managed and expected to perform like a private-sector enterprise including making a profit for the owners, i.e., the government) enterprises which are more efficient and productive. The power cost savings to the manufacturing sector has been significant over the past 10–12 years.

“What” we have found out is not simply about process assessment, analysis, and improvement, but demands a paradigm shift to a positive attitude and supportive management throughout the work-



force. For example, ensuring a complaints-handling and management system is in place to track and measure this process is vital for ongoing improvement. A culture of “welcoming complaints” needs to be encouraged by top management, and it should not be seen as a method or reason for criticizing individuals.

“How” do we start the improvement process? In my experience and that of other experts I have talked with, an awareness or sensitizing program throughout the organization is an important first step in improving customer service. This requires a well-structured strategic plan, with input from the workforce at all levels and functions. The establishment of an empowered executive-led task force representing a slice of the workplace will lead the change. Please refer to the Figure to study the process.

Although the various public-sector agencies differ, the customer service focus in the public and private sectors is very similar. In the end, everyone is dealing with the same customer base. Although outcomes and measurements may differ, the methodology for improvement is common to all. 

*Richard Barton is the Managing Director of Business Improvement Advisory Services. Previously he was the Business Process and Quality Management Executive for IBM in Australia & New Zealand. He was also General Manager with the Australian Quality Council. He has had a long and close association with the APO. Mr. Barton writes this column regularly for the APO News.*

## From the SECRETARY-GENERAL'S schedule

### March 2004

#### 1–2 March

APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima made an official trip to Malaysia to attend the International Forum on Green Productivity to Enhance Competitiveness and Sustainability held in Penang, 1–2 March (*see page 5 for full report*). During the visit, he also paid a courtesy call on Tan Sri Dato' Azman Hashim, APO Director for Malaysia and Chairman, National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur.

#### 8–9 March

Attended the APO Top Management Forum in Kyoto. This year's theme was “Corporate Strategic Alliances for Economic Development in Asia.”

#### 12 March

Received Dr. S.K. Pachauri, Director-General, National Productivity Council of India, who paid a courtesy visit to the Secretariat. Dr. Pachauri made a stopover in Tokyo after attending the APO Top Management Forum on Corporate Strategic Alliances for Economic Development in Asia. He was given briefings by the Secretariat departmental directors.

#### 22 March

Received Dr. Shoaib Ahmed, current APO Chairman and APO Director for Bangladesh and Secretary, Ministry of Industries, who paid a courtesy visit to the Secretariat. Dr. Ahmed was accompanied by APO Liaison Officer for Bangladesh Abdul Baqui Chowdhury and National Productivity Organisation Senior Research Officer Md. Belayet Hussain Choudhry. The Bangladeshi delegation was visiting the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (Tokyo) and Thailand Productivity Institute (Bangkok) under the APO Bilateral Cooperation Between NPOs Program.



(L-R) Mr. Tajima, Dr. Ahmed, and Mr. Chowdhury

#### 29 March

Received Colombo Plan Secretary-General Kittipan Kanjanapitakul, who paid a courtesy visit to the Secretariat.





## New APO publications



### GREEN PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

APO 407 pp. April 2004 ISBN 92-833-2347-5

The APO launched the Green Productivity (GP) Program in 1994 as a strategy to integrate productivity improvement with environmental protection in the industry, service, and agriculture sectors. It hosted the first World Conference on GP in the Philippines in 1996 to give further impetus to propagating the concept. Since then the GP concept has been adopted and implemented in almost all its member countries, yielding very positive results.

As a follow-up to the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, the APO 2nd World Conference on Green Productivity was held in December 2002, with the Philippines as host country for the second time (see APO News January and February 2003 issues for full report). The objective was to review past GP endeavors and achievements; seek new challenges, opportunities, and modalities for future GP activities; and identify ways to enhance the GP capabilities of the national productivity organizations. This publication, the official report of the conference, provides a summary of the conference proceedings and findings as well as the text of the inaugural address by Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the Statement on GP 2002, and the 39 resource papers presented at the three-day meeting.



### TOTAL FACTOR PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH

APO 355 pp. January 2004 ISBN 92-833-2353-X

Measurement of productivity is an important and necessary step in understanding the concept. Among the methods used for this purpose, like labor productivity and capital productivity, total factor productivity (TFP) has been most widely accepted by governments, policymakers, economists, and productivity specialists. In light of this, the APO conducted a survey study on measuring TFP among 10 of its member countries in 1998. That survey reviewed and established the reliability of standard estimation methods of TFP growth for national economies. The findings of the survey were published by the APO under the title *Measuring Total Factor Productivity* (2001).

In 2001, the APO undertook a second survey study to improve TFP estimation and to investigate the factors that determine TFP growth. The latter is especially important for both practical and policy purposes. Twelve member countries took part. This publication comprises an integrated report of the survey study and the national reports and findings prepared by experts of the participating countries. It is useful to those who are interested in the process of TFP growth and/or responsible for formulating policies for TFP growth to achieve higher economic development.

For order and inquiry on APO publications and videos, please contact the Information and Public Relations Department, Asian Productivity Organization, Hirakawa-cho Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 2F, 1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093, Japan. Phone number: (81-3) 5226-3927, Fax: (81-3) 5226-3957, e-Mail: [ipr@apo-tokyo.org](mailto:ipr@apo-tokyo.org)

## COMMON SENSE TALK



“Heroes and Lone Rangers are dead ducks. The real power is in capturing and utilizing the talent of diverse players to meet the organization’s fundamental goals.”

*Peter DiGiammarino*

“How can one individual solve the problems of the world? Problems can only be solved if one is part of a team.”

*Nelson Mandela*

“The battle for sustainable development will be won only if industry is in the front lines. Only private companies have the capacity to bring environmentally sound products to market, cleaner newer fuels and processes, and the next generation of engines.”

*Brian Mulrone*

“One of the hardest tasks of leadership is understanding that you are not what you are, but what you’re perceived to be by others.”

*Edward L. Flom*

“I bring my board my toughest problems, not my easiest. I don’t want a paperwork board, but one that thinks like owners.”

*Paul O’Neill*

“The great accomplishments of man have resulted from the transmission of ideas and enthusiasm.”

*Thomas J. Watson*

“Unless it produces action, information is overhead.”

*Thomas Petzinger Jr.*

# GP, competitiveness, and sustainable development

The APO, in a consortium comprising the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM), National Productivity Corporation (NPC) of Malaysia, Socio-Economic and Environmental Research Institute, and University Science of Malaysia, organized in Penang, Malaysia, the International Forum on Green Productivity (GP) to Enhance Competitiveness and Sustainability, 1–2 March 2004. The objective was to provide a forum for exchanging information on GP approaches and techniques; gaining commitment to balanced and sustainable productivity and environmental practices; and identifying new areas for GP expansion. The meeting was also supported by the National Institute of Public Administration of Malaysia and the Green Productivity Association of Malaysia. Among the attendees of the forum were 27 participants from 16 APO member countries who were in Penang at the same time to attend the APO 4th Practicum Workshop on GP, 1–26 March. The forum was officially inaugurated by FMM President Dato' Mustafa Mansur. Other speakers at the opening session were APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima and NPC Director-General Mah Lok Abdullah.

APO Secretary-General Tajima, in his speech to the forum, said that productivity improvement must not be confined to the economic sphere alone but should also embrace environmental concerns. Such integration will enable productivity to contribute to competitiveness. "This is reflected in the fact that both ISO 9000 and 14000 certifications have become important corporate goals." On the APO GP Program, he said that it has shown substantial tangible results in less than a decade. The next phase of the program is to promote private-sector participation in its activities. Toward this


end, the APO has established a high-level GP Advisory Committee (GPAC) that comprises representatives from leading Japanese corporations. The Secretary-General added that the GPAC will be helping the APO to achieve its goal of greening supply chains in the region. He called for the formation of similar GPACs in other countries.



Dato' Mustafa Mansur

Dato' Mustafa Mansur highlighted the difficulties faced by small and medium industries (SMIs) in endeavoring to be environmentally active in their operations. He said that the contributions of SMIs to the economy and employment of a country could not be ignored. In Malaysia, SMIs comprise 92% of total establishments in the manufacturing sector, employ 33.3% of the workforce in the sector, and contribute 6% of GDP. "Clearly the production activities of such a large industry population would have a significant impact on the environment." Dato' Mustafa pointed out that


efforts to improve the SMIs' environmental performance encounter many barriers, including limited financial resources, lack of technological capacity and technical skills, little or no awareness of environmental protection issues, and poor understanding of environmental regulations. Despite these barriers, he added that "research has consistently shown that implementing certain basic environmental practices could bring about significant cost savings and less pollution." He expressed the hope that the SMIs would consider adopting the GP approach to achieve higher productivity and greater environmental protection.

The forum featured two keynote addresses by the two top leaders of the Future 500: Chairman Tachi Kiuchi who spoke on "Corporate Sustainability Challenges and Innovative Response" and President and CEO Dr. William Shireman who expounded on "Leading International Standards and Metrics: Their Impact on Global Competitiveness." Other presentations on the five themes of Global Challenges, Global Trends, Responses of Governments and Businesses to Global Challenges, Green Productivity in Practice, and Business Case for Sustainability dealt with the following: Trends relating to European environmental requirements for businesses; Global trends in green supply chains and green procurement and their impact on corporations; Green procurement in Malaysia: case of Konica Minolta Precision Engineering; Promoting GP activities in Malaysia; GP activities in the Asia-Pacific region; GP demonstration projects in Spindex Industries Singapore (precision tools) and Jona's International Philippines (food processing); and Malaysian case study: Master Pack Sdn. Bhd. 

## Development of e-specialists ..... Continued from page 1

The program comprised 12 expert presentations and two observational field visits. The presentations covered a diversity of topics, including: Concept of information systems; IT tools for information processing; Linking IT to productivity; The Internet and intranets; IT in manufacturing; IT applications in SMEs; APO and e-services; IT-enabled business process engineering; Business process outsourcing; e-Governance: The Indian experience; Organizational management and the role of IT; and Security in IT applications. For field studies, participants visited a call center of Hero Limited which was outsourced by an American company to communicate

with its customers in the USA and a company that produces software applications for a wide range of productivity tools.

Participants evaluated the program as highly useful, comprehensive, and content rich. Devendra Pradhan, a participant from Nepal, described it as a "must course for productivity specialists." Maria Lourdes Pacis Aquilizan of the Philippines congratulated the APO and NPC India for a most timely course. She suggested that future similar courses should cover both success stories and unsuccessful ones as e-specialists must also know how to avoid failure. 

## Introducing the APO Secretariat (VI)

Starting with the June 2003 issue, on a bimonthly basis the *APO News* has been featuring brief takes on the APO Secretariat by introducing the work of its departments. Five have been presented: Administration and Finance, Research and Planning, Industry, Agriculture, and Environment. The last in this series is the Information and Public Relations (IPR) Department.

### *Information and Public Relations Department*

The work of this department is anchored on three broad pillars: 1) promoting the mission of the APO to intensify and broaden the scope of its cooperation with organizations both within and outside the APO membership and to increase its network of collaboration; 2) disseminating information helpful to productivity promotion and improvement through the print media and Internet; and 3) managing and intensifying the application of IT within the Secretariat, in course administration, and in training delivery systems.



(L-R) seated: Fujimoto, Kurayoshi; standing: Okada, Mok, Bhattarai; inset: Ono.

A major task of the IPR Department is the annual publication of the *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis*. Launched in 2001, its purpose is to meet a long-felt need in member countries for a set of vital, fundamental, and authoritative economic and productivity data and their analysis to assist policymakers and business leaders in their strategic thinking, policy formulation, and socio-economic planning. The department is endeavoring to build this core competency of the APO into one that is highly valuable. The next challenge of the department is to explore new applications of IT in the Secretariat and in the activities of the APO. Of particular interest is the greater use of e-learning systems in APO training programs.

The Director of the IPR Department is Kenneth Mok. He is assisted by Senior IT Program Officer Mukesh Bhattarai, Program Officer Satoshi Okada, and three general support staff: Tomoko Ono, Yoko Fujimoto, and Emiko Kurayoshi. ☺

## RECRUITMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

### Agriculture Program Officer

The Asian Productivity Organization (APO), an intergovernmental organization with the Secretariat located in Tokyo, is seeking a dynamic, competent, and experienced Program Officer for its Agriculture Department.

The functions of this position include the formulation, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of programs and projects in human resources development (HRD)—seminars, symposia, study meetings, training courses, and surveys—in the food and agriculture field, including forestry and fishery. The main responsibilities include planning, facilitating, and implementing projects; preparing and editing project documents; identifying and coordinating with resource persons; and conducting follow-up activities on projects implemented.

Applicants should possess a good knowledge of the productivity enhancement activities and socio-economic development needs of the Asia-Pacific region, a high degree of resourcefulness and creativity, and analytical capability. They must hold at least a bachelor's degree, preferably with a Master's or Doctoral degree, from reputable colleges or universities in agricultural economics, development economics, or HRD, with: 1) sufficient experience in project planning and implementation, economic analysis, research, project management, and report preparation; 2) at least 10 years of professional experience in international organizations, government service, public corporations, research institutions in the areas of food and agriculture, or productivity movement; 3) good exposure to international and/or regional conferences/meetings and good knowledge of food and agriculture in Asia and the Pacific; 4) good interpersonal and public relations skills; and 5) proficiency in both written and spoken English. Applicants should be from APO member countries, in excellent health, and preferably between 35 and 48 years old.

Salary will be commensurate with qualifications and experience, comparable with similar positions in other international organizations, and tax exempt in Japan for international recruits, plus other benefits. Appointment will be on fixed-term basis for two years and renewable thereafter upon mutual consent.

Interested candidates should send a resume with photograph by 15 May 2004 to:

*The Secretary-General  
Asian Productivity Organization  
2F Hirakawacho Daiichi Seimei Building  
1-2-10 Hirakawacho, Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 102-0093, Japan  
(e-Mail: apo@apo-tokyo.org)*

*Please refer to the APO Web site at [www.apo-tokyo.org](http://www.apo-tokyo.org)  
for further details.*





## FIJI

**Dr. James Chen**, Associate Professor, Department of Industrial Engineering, Chung Yuan University, Republic of China, was deputed to design and conduct Industrial Engineer Training, 5–8 April 2004.

**Mr. R.C. Monga**, Deputy Director-General, National Productivity Council, India, was deputed to provide technical expert services on Linking Wages with Productivity, 15–19 March 2004.

## ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

The following were deputed to serve as resource persons in the working party meeting on Application of Action Research for Integrated Community Development, 5–8 April 2004: **Dr. Robert J. Fisher**, Consultant, Australia; **Ms. Saipora K. Matai**, Chief Economic Planning Officer, Ministry of Regional Development, Fiji; **Mr. Seyed Babak Moosavi**, Faculty Member, Rural Research Centre, Islamic Republic of Iran; **Dr. Chang Soo Choe**, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, Korea University, Republic of Korea; **Mr. Bisan Singh Al Ram Singh**, Executive Director, Management Institute for Social Change, Malaysia; **Dr. Leong Yueh Kwong**, Director, Socio-Economic and Environmental Research Institute, Philippines; **Dr. Waharaka Gamage Jayasena**, Deputy Director, Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute, Sri Lanka; **Ms. Kim Thi Thuy Ngoc**, Project Planning Manager, Office for Environment and Community

## APO/NPO update

### New APO Alternate Director for Republic of Korea

**Mr. Young-Hwan Yoo**, Director-General, Industrial Policy Bureau, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy, was appointed as the APO Alternate Director for the Republic of Korea w.e.f. 26 January 2004, in place of Mr. Jun Yeong Choi.

### New APO Liaison Officer for Japan

**Mr. Yoji Osaki**, Director, International Department, Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Department, was appointed as the APO Liaison Officer for Japan w.e.f. 1 April 2004, in place of Mr. Kyoji Kimura.

### NPS Sri Lanka has new fax number

The fax number of the National Productivity Secretariat of Sri Lanka has been changed to: 94-11-2513296.

The phone number remains unchanged: 94-11-2513156.

Development, Vietnam Productivity Centre, Vietnam; and **Mr. Raul J. Lara**, Supervising Science Research Specialist, Philippine Rice Research Institute, Philippines.

## MALAYSIA

**Mr. Lee Kiyau Loo**, Secretary-General, Green Productivity Association Malaysia, Malaysia, was deputed to serve as a resource person in the 4th Practicum Workshop on Green Productivity, 1–9 March and 17–26 March 2004.

**Prof. Tay Joo Hwa**, Head, Division of Environmental and Water Resources Engineering, School of Civil and Structural Engineering, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, was deputed to serve as a resource person in the 5th Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Cleaner Production Regional Conference, 15 March 2004, and 4th Practicum Workshop on Green Productivity, 16–20 March 2004.

**Prof. Takeo Yoshikawa**, Dean and Professor of Management Accounting, Graduate School of Business Administration, Yokohama National University, Japan, was deputed to provide technical expert services on Development of the Balanced Scorecard Guide Book, 29 March–2 April 2004.

The following were deputed to provide technical assessment of the Eco-Products International Fair 2004, 7–8 April 2003: **Mr. Masatoshi Yoda**, President, Ebara Corporation, Japan; **Dr. Takaharu Gamo**, General Manager, Corporate Environmental Affairs Division, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., Japan; and **Mr. Kenji Hasegawa**, General Project Department, Cultural and Business Projects Bureau, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc., Japan.

## PHILIPPINES

**Mr. Heinz Werner Engel**, Senior Environmental Counselor, International Network for Environmental Management, Belgium, was deputed to serve as a resource person in the Green Productivity-Integrated Community Development Demonstration Project in a Fishing Community, 29 March–7 April 2004.

## SINGAPORE

**Dr. David Smith**, Executive Member, Business Continuity Institute Board, and Managing Consultant, March UK Limited, UK, was deputed to provide technical expert services on Business Continuity Management, 27–31 March 2004.

## VIETNAM

**Dr. Melkote Ramdas Ramsay**, President, Ramsay International Productivity Education & Research Foundation, Australia, was deputed to provide technical expert services on Productivity Assessment at Company Level, 15–19 March 2004.

## Program calendar

### India

Seminar on the Industrial Use of Biotechnology, 17–20 August 2004.

### Japan

Multi-country Study Mission on Venture Business Development, 5–9 July 2004.

Training Course on Practical Corporate Management & Problem-solving Techniques for Production Managers of SMEs, 12–16 July 2004.

### Malaysia

Training Course on Development of Income-generating Business Activities for Women, 6–16 July 2004, Philippines (6–10 July) & Malaysia (12–16 July).

### Mongolia

Seminar on Knowledge Management for the Service Industry, 2–6 August 2004.

Workshop on Enhancing NPOs' Core Competence: Productivity Education & Certification, 23–27 August 2004.

### Nepal

Fifth Workshop on the APO Best Practice Network, 22–25 June 2004.

### Philippines

Training Course on Development of Income-generating Business Activities for Women, 6–16 July 2004, Philippines (6–10 July) & Malaysia (12–16 July).

Development of Productivity Specialists, 9–27 August 2004.

### Sri Lanka

Seminar on Promoting Capacity Building for Sustainable Agriculture, 21–26 June 2004.

### Thailand

Seminar on the "One Village, One Product" Movement for Community Development, 16–23 August 2004.

*Kindly contact your NPO for details of the above activities, including eligibility for participation. If you need the address of your NPO, it is available from the APO Web site at [www.apo-tokyo.org](http://www.apo-tokyo.org).*

# Thailand honors quality award winners

For the first time since its launch in 2002, the coveted Thailand Quality Award (TQA) was won by a local enterprise, Thai Paper Company Limited, the second recipient of this prestigious award. The award presentation was made at a grand ceremony held at the Royal Thai Navy Hall, 4 March 2004, and graced by Deputy Prime Minister Visanu Krea-Ngam. On this occasion, five other organizations received the lower-tier Thailand Quality Class (TQC): Thai Carbon Black, Siam Cement (Kaengkhoi), Chulalongkorn University Continuing Education Center, Thai Containers, and Siam Mitsui PTA Company. The first three, including Thai Paper, were TQC winners in 2003 (for details of the TQA, see APO News June 2003 issue).

**M**r. Paron Israsena Na Ayudhaya, TQA National Committee Chairman, said that the TQA recognizes world-class excellence in organizational performance. Thai Paper is entitled to use the esteemed TQA emblem to promote its businesses. "They will also contribute to increasing Thailand's competitiveness by serving as a model to encourage and inspire others."

Deputy Prime Minister Visanu, in his opening speech, said that Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was very pleased that a Thai company had won this year's TQA. He called on the TQC winners to make even greater efforts to increase productivity and to adopt knowledge management practices so that they too could win the TQA in the near future. The Deputy Prime Minister commented that the days of "economies of scale" have been replaced by "economies of speed." In this environment, for organizations to be competitive, they need to improve themselves in all areas and increase their capacity to reach new world standards.

Thai Paper Managing Director Chaovalit Ekabut said that his company was very proud to have received this prestigious award. "The TQA is excellent for optimizing organizational performance as it inspires employees to give their very best effort to achieve a challenging, practical, and rewarding goal." For organizations to survive and make progress in this era of the borderless business environment, they will need to improve themselves continuously, he added. "Organizations that implement the TQA framework will reap great benefits in a short period of time." Thai Paper shared the "secrets" of its success in winning the TQA at an all-day conference that the Thailand Productivity Institute hosted on 25 March 2004. The event attracted about 400 corporate executives.

In response to written queries from the *APO News*, Thai Paper Regional Sales Manager Puttaporn Saengratanadej reported that the company started its quality improvement program a long time ago when it implemented a companywide Total Quality Management Program in 1993. Everyone in the company was encouraged to participate and the program was launched with shopfloor activities like QC circles. "These activities played a major role in changing the work behavior of the employees, enabling them to be customer focused, fact based, and process oriented."

During the economic crisis of 1997, the company implemented a number of measures to monitor performance and to take timely remedial actions. Attempts were made to explain to employees the actions of the company and how they could help. It was during this time that the company sought and obtained ISO 9002, ISO 14001, and TIS 18001 certifications. The objective in doing this, as explained by Mr. Puttaporn, was to standardize processes and gain acceptance for their products in the world market. After the economic



Deputy Prime Minister Visanu (left) presenting award to Mr. Chaovalit

crisis had passed, the company set itself the challenge of qualifying for the prestigious Deming Application Prize, won in 2003, and the TQA.

On the company's future, Mr. Chaovalit said that Thai Paper plans to be one of the leading players in the industry in Asia by expanding its production capacity and improving further the quality of its products. 🌀

## Visit by Colombo Plan Secretary-General

Mr. Kittipan Kanjanapitkul, Secretary-General of the Colombo Plan, visited the APO Secretariat on 29 March 2004. He was met by APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima and Director for Administration and Finance N.G. Kularatne. Mr. Kittipan's visit was to explore possibilities for further collaboration between the two organizations.



Mr. Tajima (left) with Mr. Kittipan