



Asian Productivity Organization “The APO in the News”

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Awards Recognising Excellence in the Public Sector

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A recent workshop, 27-30 October 2014, organized by the Asian Productivity Organisation investigated the importance of awards for recognizing and sharing best practices. The purpose of the workshop was to assist National Productivity Organisations in designing relevant and effective awards that supported public sector organisations on the journey to business excellence in their respective countries. Representatives from 11 countries attended. The chief experts leading the workshop were Dr. Robin Mann, Director, Centre for Organizational Excellence Research, Massey University, New Zealand, www.coer.org.nz, and Dr. Stefania Senese, Officer, Governance and Public Administration, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA.



APO COE WORKSHOP ON QUALITY AWARDS
FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR
27 - 30 October 2014
Singapore

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Singapore
Leading Excellence

Many awards were studied from APO member countries and internationally (see the [spreadsheet for examples](#)). These included awards for all aspects of business excellence including awards recognizing excellent performance in Leadership, Strategy, Human Resources, Processes, Customer Focus, Information Analysis, Innovation, Service Excellence, E-technology, and Partnerships and/or awards for specific sectors such as the health or education sector.

Some of the issues investigated were:

- What are the similarities and differences between the various awards for the public sector?
- Which awards have been the most successful?
- Why are some awards successful – what are the key ingredients for success?
- Why are some awards not successful – what are the barriers or challenges that may hinder the impact of an award?

Some of the benefits of awards were identified as:

- Awards raise awareness of the importance of a subject
- The award criteria can help to guide users on what is good practice
- The award criteria can be used by organisations for self-assessment purposes
- Awards motivate organisations to implement improvement initiatives
- Winners of awards become role models
- Award winner best practices can be shared
- Communities of practice of award winners can be created

Some of the concerns of awards were identified as:

- Awards may become the destination and once achieved the organisation may revert back to their previous state
- Organisations may focus too much attention on the award rather than on their business.
- Awards can be expensive to administer
- Awards if not administered effectively with an independent and fair judging process run the risk of losing their credibility.
- Are awards the best approach to encourage organisational improvement or are there better approaches?

The workshop enabled member countries to have a better understanding of the role of awards and how they can provide an integrated approach to assisting organisations on the journey to business excellence. For example, awards for each category of business excellence, as indicated in the Figure below, can provide the building blocks and support for an overall national award for business excellence.



For more information on business excellence and awards, contact Dr Robin Mann, r.s.mann@massey.ac.nz or view over 500 award types and over 15,000 award winners and learn from their best practices by [joining bpir.com](http://joiningbpir.com).