



Certificate-based e-course on the Occupational Health and Safety Management System: Enroll now

The APO first started exploring the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for productivity promotion in 2002 by organizing a seminar on Multimedia for Productivity Promotion and Enhancement with Special Focus on e-Learning in the Republic of China. After studying the efficacy of e-learning and the ability of member economies to access it, e-learning modes, including web-based live sessions, videoconferencing, and self-learning, have been utilized more widely. Beginning in 2006, and in line with calls by member economies to use IT for increased cost-effectiveness, wider outreach, and greater APO visibility, the APO embarked on a full-fledged integration of e-learning courses with face-to-face projects.



On the self-learning front, nine e-courses on various subjects like total quality management, integrated management systems, Green Productivity, biomass energy, environmental management systems, and medical waste management have been made available on the APO's website since 2006. Although hundreds of individuals took these courses, certificates were not issued as these courses were simply designed for educational and awareness purposes.

However, there is increasing interest in e-learning courses offered by the APO through videoconferencing and the web. More than 5,000 participants have taken courses and received certificates since 2006. The APO therefore decided the time was right to offer certificate-based self-learning e-courses. A Secretariat team assigned by the Secretary-General to develop a structured, certificate-based self-learning e-course led to the introduction of the pilot certificate-based self-learning e-course on the occupational health and management system (OHSAS 18001:2007), which opened for enrollment on 1 July 2011.

This course is open to all who register, free of charge, at <http://www.apo-elearning.org/> until October 2011. Participants follow a simple process of self-registration and then study nine modules covering the purpose and structure of OHSAS 18001; understanding implementation, operation, checking, and management of the system; and planning, conducting, and reporting audits and follow-up actions. The course also provides additional reading materials for comprehensive understanding. Four self-assessment quizzes and the final examination are taken. Most participants can easily complete the course in two to three weeks. Certificates are awarded to participants who receive 70% or higher on the final exam.

Encouraging results and feedback have so far been seen in the one and one-half months since its launch. More than 1,425 have registered for this course, with the list of participants still growing. While 95% of the participants come from APO members, the rest are from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and North America. They come from industry, academia, NGOs, consultants, government organizations, industrial associations, NPOs, audit firms, the health-care sector, and science and engineering research institutions. The promotion of this course by the NPOs and APO Secretariat staff is a significant factor in the initial success, which has provided the APO the widest outreach ever for a single project.

The advantages for participants are clear: they need not apply for leaves of absence or travel and can comfortably take the course at their own pace and in their own space; and 99% agreed that the course content was engaging and they would be able to apply the lessons at work. The positive feedback received from participants (see box) who successfully completed the course has encouraged the APO to develop more such courses and consider participant suggestions to make the courses interactive. *Contributed by K.D. Bhardwaj/APO Industry Department.*

Participants' comments:

"Overall, the APO e-learning system is excellent as it provides cost-effective learning methodology and technology. I am looking forward to more e-learning modules from the APO." *Zauyah Tarmizzi, Malaysia*

"It was an absolutely fantastic experience. The learning was very inclusive and relevant to my area of work. It has certainly helped me to understand the intent of the series. With the organization that I work for currently nearing completion of an integrated aviation management system, and OHSAS being one of the guidelines that we have integrated, this learning experience has certainly helped me and my colleagues. Thank you sincerely for offering me this opportunity." *Owen Handyside, Fiji*

"Very impressive. I have learned a lot and notice the similarities to quality management systems in the audit process." *Poloko Thobega, Botswana*

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CONTENTS

- 2... p-Leader—Mongolia
- 3... e-Learning course on integrated management systems
- 4... p-Watch
- 5... Horticultural supply chain management
- 5... Growth thought leadership: Global connection for going green and innovation
- 6... Risk assessment for food and agricultural products
- 6... Balanced scorecard for improved company performance
- 7... Register for the APO *Eco-products Directory 2012* and Database
- 7... APO/NPO update
- 7... Photo news
- 8... KPC signs multilateral MOU
- 8... CPC seminar on ISO 26000
- 8... 52nd WSM to convene in Lao PDR

