

National experts meet for the APO Productivity Databook 2009

The APO Productivity Databook project started last year in line with the organization's aspiration to serve as a regional adviser and think tank for productivity. The project was also initiated due to the increasing recognition of the importance of internationally harmonized productivity data as a basis for need- and evidenced-based policymaking for economic development.

One tangible result of that effort is the 2008 *APO Productivity Databook*, published in March this year. The latest edition contains data on comparative labor productivity and economic growth analysis. This databook allows NPOs and policymakers to refine development prioritization, while helping the APO Secretariat to conduct appropriate project planning. The databook has attracted interest and support from numerous governments, institutions, and organizations, both within the APO membership and beyond. To accommodate requests, work to produce the 2009 edition is underway, with improved data quality envisaged.

Work on the 2009 databook officially began at the coordination meeting of 15 national experts and Chief Expert Prof. Koji Nomura of the Keio Economic Observatory, Keio University, Japan, in Bangladesh, 21–23 May. They discussed various productivity measurement issues and data collection methodology to ensure high-quality cross-country data for regional and international comparative analyses. APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka attended the opening ceremony to deliver an address, encourage the national experts, and seek their continuous support and cooperation for the production of the 2009 edition of the *APO Productivity Databook*. Secretary-General Takenaka expressed high hopes for the 2009 edition, saying, “While appreciating the achievements of last year, the APO is eager to improve the next edition. That will be done by all of you, under the leadership of the chief expert, Professor Nomura.”



Secretary-General Takenaka (R) requesting experts' support

During the coordination meeting, Prof. Nomura presented the project frameworks of the *APO Productivity Databook* and the closely related APO Productivity Database. He also highlighted the important tasks of the national experts in tackling the challenges of ensuring cross-country data comparability and rigorous economic analyses under a harmonized APO productivity measurement methodology. The national expert presentations reported on the results using the revised APO data questionnaire for collecting meta-data and shared particular difficulties encountered in completing the questionnaire so that solutions could be devised to compensate for the innate problem of unavailable data.

The meeting concluded that a harmonized productivity measurement methodology would be feasible, and therefore the experts will attempt to make more accurate comparative analyses of productivity performance levels among APO member countries for the 2009 edition. Publication is anticipated for March 2009. 