

Evolution in public-sector management

The public sector in APO member countries faces growing pressure to evolve. That pressure, whether generated internally or externally, translates into demand for public management to become more productive and transparent. Common barriers to changes in public management include subjective result measures, the lack of a holistic planning approach, and fragmented work structures. The APO therefore organized a training course on Performance Management Systems for the Public Sector with the collaboration of the National Iranian Productivity Center in Tehran, IR Iran, 14–17 February 2009.

The course was the second in a series of public-sector projects started in 2008 to create a pool of public-sector productivity catalysts in member countries. The first was held in the Republic of Korea on Sustainable Management Strategies for the Public Sector in November 2008. The follow-up course in IR Iran was particularly welcomed by the host country, since the current national agenda is reexamining the performance of the public sector. Thirteen international and 10 local participants representing mid- to senior-level management from various governmental organizations involved in national budget planning, implementation, and evaluation attended.

One of the principal challenges in the public sector is creating an integrated performance appraisal system that results in transparency and accountability. The five-day course focused on practical application of performance-based budgeting (PBB). Chief expert Dr. Arunaselam Rassapan, senior advisor to the Center for Development and Research in Evaluation and technical policy adviser to many governments on public-sector management, addressed the need for a holistic approach to planning and development within the government framework. In addition, various principles and methodologies were discussed, including the



Group exercise on budget design

horizontal/vertical principle and program activity structure in PBB, development of performance frameworks, result-based management systems, design of performance appraisal frameworks (output planning, impact assessment, and contingency planning), and national report cards for the public sector.

Participants gained a realization that the lack of an integrated approach to address public-sector performance undermines the overall quality of the national management system. They also suggested that additional projects specifically addressing the public sector be held to ensure that member countries are sufficiently prepared for the new challenges in productivity. The APO plans more efforts in this area in 2009 and thereafter to meet strategic development needs in its membership. 