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APO manuals add value to the productivity clearinghouse

One of the key roles of the APO is to serve as a clearinghouse for information on productivity. A vital part of its information program is publications that propagate and disseminate knowledge and information on the productivity concept, its socioeconomic significance, and the tools and techniques for its enhancement.

Most APO publications are report format titles. Projects on current issues relevant to member countries are selected, and the proceedings and resource and country papers are published. Special publications cater to specific needs to assist member countries in their productivity endeavors. They include the proceedings of special events and the annual *APO Productivity Databook* and *Eco-products Directory* series. In 2008, the APO started the publication of manuals to provide practical guidance and hands-on advice on specific topics based on major project findings and expert discussions.



“Six manuals have been published since July 2008. Five are on Green Productivity (GP)-related topics, including two on energy, and the other is on food safety management. Currently three manuals are in production,” said Secretariat Information Officer Sunju Lee, who is in charge of APO publications. “All of the published manuals are written in simple English to allow the contents to be absorbed with relative ease. Secretariat officers in charge of the projects are involved in preparation and finalization of the contents.”

Most GP manuals detail the outcome of Industry Department projects. Secretariat Industry Program Officer K.D. Bhardwaj explained that these manuals strengthen the APO’s information program since the contents are drawn from interactions among participants and resource speakers who practice the techniques. He also stressed the importance of these manuals as project follow-up. “These are very useful for face-to-face programs after an e-learning course or for individual-country programs following multicountry projects. Participants can study the major points, key findings, and discussion contents of the previous project before attending. Therefore the follow-up can focus on more advanced topics.”

The *Working Manual on Energy Auditing in Industries* and *Biomass as Fuel in Small Boilers* have proved useful references for participants in follow-up projects. The energy auditing manual was based on the workshop on Energy Efficiency and GP, organized by the APO and National Productivity Council, India, and a subsequent Web-based project on Energy Management in 2007. The author, Arvind Kumar Asthana, a resource speaker in both projects, included step-by-step methodology for energy audits and instructions for detailed energy audits in industries. The manual has been used as reference for all participants in energy-related APO projects, including the recent e-learning course on Energy Auditing completed in early July.

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The biomass manual resulted from the regional workshop on Biomass Utilization for Industrial Boilers held in Pakistan in August 2008. Early in 2009, national dissemination seminars to follow up the regional workshop were organized in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. The manual was disseminated at those seminars and were appreciated by the participants.

The three GP-related manuals are the *Green Productivity and Green Supply Chain Manual*, *RoHS Manual for SMEs*, and *Green Tourism Certification Manual*, which were published in August 2008, November 2008, and June 2009, respectively. While the latter two are the direct results of APO projects, the GP and green supply chain (GSC) manual is a compilation of preexisting information. “The purpose of this manual is to develop a user-friendly, hands-on, practice-oriented, comprehensive manual for integrating the GP concept and GSC best practices,” stated Dr. Kun-Mo Lee, the volume editor.

The first Agriculture Department publication in the series is the *Food Safety Management Manual*, based on numerous APO projects dealing with the issue. The author, Yong Kok Seng, is a long-serving APO resource speaker on food safety. The manual also includes tips on how to make the most of the text, how to read each chapter, and a reading strategy. “The manual is so simple and easy that anyone can use it without additional guidance,” commented Secretariat Program Officer Dr. Muhammad Saeed, who has conducted food safety projects in collaboration with Yong.

“We are sure that our publications, including the new manuals, can give those who are interested or involved in specific fields new insights and perspectives. Given this, we are looking into how to disseminate this resourceful information to the widest audience,” said Lee. APO publications are distributed to NPOs, university libraries, research institutes, government agencies, private-sector corporations, university faculty members, researchers, APO resource persons, and senior corporate executives. To reach out to a wider audience and make distribution of these valuable productivity resources easier, the APO has made them available in both print and e-book formats since 2003. The PDF format of these publications is available free of charge on the APO Web site (www.apo-tokyo.org). The APO hopes that its information program will assist all productivity practitioners worldwide in their endeavors. 



Participants at the Nepal dissemination seminar