

Eye-opening eco-design

Environmental issues, including climate change, have become one of the biggest international challenges of the 21st century. Various initiatives have been attempted, but a focus on eco-design appears to be a rational method to minimize the impacts of many human activities on the environment. Eco-design is a fundamental component of eco-practices which enables enterprises of all types to develop products demanded by customers while becoming and remaining more competitive in the market. Driven by changes in consumer demand, companies are now paying greater attention to eco-products as markets become more intensely competitive and sensitive to eco-friendly features.

As part of efforts to increase broad-based awareness of the need for eco-design, the APO, Industrial Development Bureau of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, China Productivity Center, and Taiwan Environmental Management Association jointly organized a workshop on Eco-design, 1–5 November 2010, in Taipei, Republic of China. It was intended to illustrate ways to branch out from conventional product designs and materials that may negatively affect the environment at different stages in the product life cycle. The workshop brought together 21 participants from 10 member countries, along with three international and seven local speakers who shared ideas on and discussed a myriad of issues relating to eco-design, while also focusing on the extensive business opportunities that eco-products and eco-businesses represent. The topics ranged from eco-design, remanufacturing, and the 3Rs (i.e., reduce, reuse, recycle) to international regulations, carbon footprinting, and actual examples of eco-designed products taking world markets by storm. Participants also made presentations on the status of eco-design in their countries.

On day 3 of the workshop, two companies hosted site visits that provided insight into the possibilities for eco-design. Cheng Loong Corporation was originally a corrugated paper box plant but after more than 50 years of hard work has developed into an international paper manufacturing and services conglomerate. All Cheng Loong mills



Ricoh Company, Ltd. General Manager of Corporate Environment Division Takao Sato lecturing on international regulations for eco-design. Photo courtesy of CPC

have ISO9001, ISO14001, and OHSAS certification and emphasize clean production. The company received environmental awards annually for seven years starting in 1998 and in 2004 was awarded the first National Sustainable Development Award.

PEGA Design & Engineering was established in 2008 and grew out of a smaller design team into an independent consultancy emphasizing R&D during each stage of the home and office product development cycle. In addition to numerous other awards, PEGA received the 2010 iF Communication Design Award for its creative Dao Cha, a unique paper structure combining teapot, teabag, and teacup for ultimate portability and safety. Both companies were acknowledged eye-openers for participants. 