

A leadership platform for business excellence in Thailand

"A quality award program is an important driver or catalyst that can enhance the competitiveness of our region as well as that of individual nations through the creation of quality enterprises," stated APO Director for Thailand Dr. Vitoon Simachokdee, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, at a public seminar on 18 December 2009 as part of the APO conference on Quality Award Systems held in Bangkok, 15–18 December. The seminar, with the theme Sustainable Competitiveness Using the Business Excellence Model: Leadership and Innovation, also marked the 15th anniversary of the Thailand Productivity Institute (FTPI), the national productivity organization of the country.



APO Director for Thailand Simachokdee delivering remarks

former Global Business Excellence Leader Hans Van Beek, Philips Consumer Lifestyle, the Netherlands; former CEO Dr. David Spong, Boeing, USA; and Executive Director Thomas E. Schamberger, Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, Inc., USA.

The FTPI plans to cover new areas of productivity to play an effective role in the Thai economy. Its roles include administering the country's only business excellence framework and associated Thailand Quality Award, considered one of the key award systems in the region. Five APO experts from the Asia-Pacific, USA, and Europe shared their business excellence experience on the topic of leadership and innovation with over 200 seminar attendees including 23 APO participants. The key speakers included: CEO C.V. Jagadish, Systems on Silicon Manufacturing Co., Pte. Ltd. (a Singapore Quality Award winner), Singapore;

framework is viewed positively and directly contributes to the improvement of business results. Major findings of the survey were: 1) the benefits of adopting a business excellence framework are generally seen after five years; 2) leadership and culture are key challenges for most adopters; 3) innovation is a differentiator for future success for more advanced enterprises as well as new adopters; and 4) information sharing in the region on business excellence remains limited and should be developed to accelerate learning and raise the bar for business performance. Dr. Mann explained that the key findings of the report would be used as the basis for the 2010 and 2011 regional agenda.



Chief Expert Dr. Mann (standing) conducting the 2009 regional survey in Japan

The conference was also the venue for a series of workshops, special forums, and roundtable discussions where different stakeholders were able to describe their own agendas and exchange views on award programs. Participants also discussed how to address three main challenges and concerns of administrators, which were related to maintaining relevance, quality assurance, and funding support. The discussion was facilitated by Dr. Mann and cofacilitated by APO experts Hans Van Beek, Dr. David Spong, David E. Schamberger, and Surender Kakkar from India who provided professional inputs and guidance for participants.

Prior to the commemorative conference, the three-day second Quality Award Administrators' Meeting was held as part of the regional two-year (2010–2011) APO planning cycle focused on the development agenda for quality award programs in member countries. This was a follow-up to the first meeting in Mongolia in 2007 which developed the current platform for the advancement of award systems in APO member countries. The 2009 meeting was able to determine a common pathway and set goals for future quality awards.

The first day of the main conference included a session introducing APO activities related to quality award programs. Details of four major programs were reported including the 2007 Mongolian meeting, 2008 Tokyo expert meeting, center of excellence in business excellence initiative, and 2009 regional survey on the Impact of Business Excellence/Quality Awards on Enterprises. A highlight was the presentation of the preliminary results of the survey by Chief Expert Dr. Robin Mann, Director of the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research, New Zealand. The survey studied the performance implications of award systems in the Republic of China, India, Japan, Singapore, and Thailand from the perspectives of the senior management team and CEOs. The results confirmed that the business excellence



Discussing how to improve award programs

By the end of the meeting, the group of administrators realized that, as they continued to operate their award programs, their unique experiences during the journey toward business excellence were also important for the region. Therefore all members agreed to cooperate for continued progress. They also agreed with Dr. Spong's concluding remarks that, "The secret of success in business excellence is simply being consistent and persistent with passion." 