

People behind the scenes: Hiroshi Shirane

My name is Hiroshi Shirane and I am a senior at Keio University in Tokyo, majoring in economic measurement and modeling. I am a student of Professor Koji Nomura, who is the manager of the APO Productivity Database project (PDB). His research team meticulously examines the data collected from APO member countries and constructs the long-term harmonized productivity database that is comparable among countries. Since I am very interested in the field, I applied for a part-time job to assist in data examination. My main role is helping Professor Nomura to collect and examine the data for one element of the APO Productivity Database project, the Asian Quarterly Growth Map, which can be accessed on the APO website.

Following Professor Nomura's instructions, I collect quarterly GDP growth data from the official government statistical office websites of APO member countries and others in the rest of the world. Not many know that definitions of quarterly GDP can be different among countries. If we try to compare quarterly economic growth among different countries based on different definitions, the results will be misleading. In the APO's Asian Quarterly Growth Map, however, the data have been reconciled so

that they can be compared among countries. I believe that the world map of quarterly GDP growth is valuable for those working in various fields who wish to understand the short-term trends in economic growth in a single country or multiple countries. Visualizing other types of economic and productivity indicators with a similar user-friendly design and functions would be a good idea for the future.

In this project, I work with other tenured researchers and the APO officer, while receiving helpful advice from Professor Nomura. It is tough to do both the APO work and my course work at the same time. But this is a valuable experience for me, and I am inspired by working with professionals and being given challenging tasks. I wish that I had been involved in the APO Productivity Database project much earlier. After gaining this type of experience while working on the Asian Quarterly Growth Map, I hope to contribute to society by working productively in the field of economic measurement when I leave university. 

