

# — Web-based e-learning program on — social accountability

**T**he APO has been trying to harness information and communications technologies (ICT) for developing human resources in member countries, and a number of ICT-based activities have been initiated. In 2004, the APO organized its first Web-based e-learning program on ISO9001:2000 QMS: A Paradigm Shift. The program was not only cost-effective but also highly evaluated by participants. Encouraged by the results of that endeavor, this year a number of e-learning projects are scheduled. The key advantage of e-learning is that it can be carried out by anyone, anywhere, at any time so long as the person has a computer with Internet access. The multiplier effect that this methodology generates is tremendous. It makes training more cost-effective and productive.

In April, the APO organized a Web-based e-learning training course on Social Accountability. The topic was selected because there is growing interest worldwide in the codes of conduct and social responsibilities of corporations. The course was designed to create awareness and understanding of the Social Accountability SA8000 system and standards and its importance in enhancing corporate social responsibility and productivity in member countries.

For this course, the APO utilized its three Internet-based platforms, the APOnet, APO e-Forum, and APO e-Learning Portal. Twenty participants from 10 coun-

tries enrolled in the course conducted by a resource person from Australia and moderated by the APO Secretariat from Tokyo. The resource person uploaded the first set of reading materials onto a dedicated site on the APOnet on the first day of the training course. Participants were issued identification numbers and passwords allowing them to enter the site and access the materials. They were given a few days to study the materials and to submit questions, comments, and suggestions on the APO e-Forum. At the end of the session, participants were asked to complete an assignment. This marked the end of the first module. This same pattern was repeated for the second to the fifth modules. During the course, three live sessions were conducted using the APO e-Learning Portal. The resource person made live presentations from Australia while participants monitored them from their home countries over the Internet. A few participants could not attend the live sessions for technical reasons such as lack of a computer with audio capability, inability to log onto the Internet for a long period, etc. On the final day of the course, a formal examination was conducted. The examination was sent to participants at an agreed time convenient to each and they were given a fixed time to complete it. They were then graded on the results. Another Web-based e-learning course is scheduled this year on Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems, 19 August–1 September. 