

APO Best Practice Network: focus on the Philippines

The APO established its Best Practice Network (BPN) after a study meeting on the topic in Singapore in April 2001. Since then, six workshops on the APO BPN have been held in member countries. As decided at the second workshop, three demonstration projects were initiated in the areas of the balanced scorecard, front-line customer service, and people performance management systems in Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines, respectively. At the fourth workshop meeting, selected participating organizations presented their best practices on the three topics.

The sixth workshop was held in Thailand, 2–5 August, to address the major challenges organizations face when they undertake a benchmarking exercise: making contact with other organizations, developing benchmarking partnerships, sharing information, and absorbing lessons from other countries. Twenty-four participants from 14 APO member countries attended. The group deliberations encouraged a more focused approach to problem solving related specifically to organizational excellence in SMEs, developing an innovation culture, and promoting local benchmarking. Participants proposed solutions relevant to their industrial environment and suggested future areas of intervention to promote best practices, including virtual networking. The culmination of the workshop was two site visits to MBP Leather, a recipient of the National SME award, and Yokogawa Thailand, a hub for creating a culture of innovation in industry. These site visits enabled the participants to assess how process improvement systems can be put in place in SMEs and the key strengths necessary for the implementation of best practices. It was pointed out that key success factors are top management support, staff involvement, external support from consultants, and organizational focus on the key performance indicators identified.

The new topics of the APO BPN are the “development of performance indicators for SMEs” led by Malaysia; “measuring the impact of business excellence” led by Singapore; and “public-sector excellence” led by Iran and the Philippines. The NPC, Malaysia, has made its e-Benchmark portal available to all BPN members to initiate the sharing of best practices among APO member countries, and a similar facility was offered by the ROC.

The Philippines has set up a local benchmarking network called the Best Practice Exchange (BPEX) Network. It started with 41 organizations, mostly from the private sector, led by recipients of the Philippine Quality Award (PQA), other large manufacturing companies, and service and government organizations. An Executive Committee steers the BPEX Network under the leadership of the managing director of the DAP Center for Knowledge Management.

Initially, the network’s activities centered on the sharing of best practices on any topic chosen by the sharing organization/s. However, with that approach, attendance and participation dwindled because not all the best practices shared were of interest to the entire network. Thus, in 2004 the Executive Committee organized four sectoral benchmarking groups for healthcare, in-house call centers, semiconductor manufacturers, and government to make the BPEX more responsive to the needs of participating enterprises. In addition, an SME sectoral group was formed in response to the APO BPN 2004 benchmarking topic on “organizational excellence in SMEs.” Four new sectoral benchmarking groups were set up in 2005 to address the new APO BPN benchmarking topics of public-sector excellence, measuring the impact of implementing business excellence, and key excellence indicators in SMEs. A fifth, food safety, was added to address an urgent need in the Philippines. To sustain the network, the sectoral benchmarking groups are linked to apex bodies or industry associations/organizations, including: the Philippine Society for Quality in Health Care; Philippine Society for Quality; Semiconductor and Electronic Industry in the Philippines, Inc.; Makati city government; ASEAN TQM Foundation; and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines.



Finishing department of MBP Leather

The DAP BPEX Network presented plaques of appreciation to six healthcare and five in-house call center members of its BPEX Network sectoral benchmarking groups during the Philippine Society for Quality’s 17th Annual National Quality Forum held on 12 October. 🏆