

Responding to Change in the Workplace:
Innovations in Labor-Management-
Government Cooperation



ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION

BEST PRACTICES TOOL KIT

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FOREWORD

When this project, "Responding to Change in the Workplace: Innovations in Labor-Management-Government Cooperation" was first proposed at the 22nd APEC Human Resources Development Working Group Meeting in Brunei Darussalam, its proponents' goal was to have it serve as an important "bridge" in a multi-year initiative within APEC to promote Labor-Management-Government (LMG) Cooperation. The bridge is to help APEC move from raising awareness of the value of LMG cooperation to a new "capacity building" phase. By capacity building, we meant not only showing economies what others were doing in this area, but also teaching concrete skills in resolving labor conflict and in establishing institutions to do so. The hope is that participants in this next phase will go back to their home economies armed with valuable knowledge and skills to disseminate.

The first project of the multi-year initiative, "Successful HRD Practices in the Workplace: Contributions from Labor-Management-Government," which took place in June 1999 in Victoria, Canada, focused on raising awareness of successful economy-wide LMG practices within the APEC region and the accompanying benefits of such cooperation. The current project, the second one in the series, is also aimed at awareness raising, but it has a greater emphasis on the workplace itself as opposed to the broader-based economy-wide initiatives that were the focus of most of the presentations in Victoria.

The current project can be described as a "bridge" because its sharp focus on what actually takes place in the workplace itself, as opposed to economy-wide initiatives to promote LMG cooperation, moves it away from solely awareness-raising and more in the direction of capacity building. This is especially true of the last Chapter of this Tool Kit, entitled "[How To Use This Tool Kit](#)," which provides step-by-step guidance in launching a LMG cooperative initiative.

The next project in the series, entitled *Training for the Prevention and Resolution of Labor and Employment Disputes* -- a one-week training that will take place in mid-2002 -- is squarely focused on capacity building for government labor-relations practitioners. The project proponents also envision a fourth component to the series in 2003, focused on training for *private* sector labor-relations advocates to enhance their ability to develop LMG initiatives for both labor peace and organizational productivity.

So it is from this practical perspective, focused on building the capacity of organizations throughout the APEC region to improve themselves through improved LMG cooperation, that the reader should address this Tool Kit. In this regard, the final Chapter marks the crossing of the bridge from awareness-raising to capacity building in the ongoing APEC LMG initiative. It is the project sponsor's hope that practitioners will use the Tool Kit to as guidance in establishing LMG initiatives in their own organizations in a manner that is appropriate for their context. To those visionary promoters of labor peace and organizational productivity, as you cross the bridge, we wish you all the best "on the other side."¹

David Thaler
Washington, DC
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* Please note: We will use "Labor-Management-Government" (LMG) and "Labor-Management" interchangeably throughout this Tool Kit. While sometimes there is governmental involvement in an initiative as a third party neutral, a funder, or occasionally in a more direct role in the employment relationship (e.g., if it owns the enterprise), in most cases in this Tool Kit we stress the cooperative efforts of labor and management only, since their interests can conflict with one another's in a way that they do not conflict with the government's interests. (Although, as we will see, labor and management have many common interests.) Therefore the most interesting and challenging initiatives are those that bring labor and management together, while the government usually has an overriding interest in bringing labor and management together.

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