

The Newsletter of the 20% Club for Sustainable Cities



Vol. 5
December 1999

Local Governments in Individual Measures

At present, many local governments in Japan are involved with global warming prevention and global environmental conservation measures using unique methods. Given the trend of decentralization of power, environmental measures in the 21st century are expected to be in touch with regional status and to enhance regional characteristics.

An example of unique measures reflecting regional characteristics is the bicycle-oriented town development undertaken by Akita Prefecture's Futatsui Town, a non-20% Club member with a population of 13,000. Futatsui Town's town development project is a lively global warming prevention measure, full of dreams.

This project is a model project for the Environment Agency's regional promotion of global warming measures. The basic plan, developed through public participation involves clearing snow for bicycle use in winter, the diffusion of three-wheelers that can be used by the elderly population and of electric bicycles, the introduction of public bus services and shopping buses, the promotion of recycling used bicycles and other detailed programs.

Bicycle stations have been set up throughout the town for citizens to use freely and to leave at bicycles stations near their destinations.

Mayor Kazunao Maruoka estimates that 12.9 percent in commuting, 3.6 percent from the park and bicycle-ride program and 2.2 percent from recalling shoppers, thus totaling in reduction by 18.7 percent of CO₂ emission, can result from the success of the project. At the same time, there is discussion on health matters, in the context that bicycle cannot be ridden unless one is in healthy condition.

ISO 14001 Accreditation in Local Governments

The trend of acquiring ISO14001 accreditation is expanding among local governments in Japan. The concept of environmental management systems of ISO 14001; which involves achieving policy goals through a process of translating them in numbers, checking accomplishment status regularly, and reviewing; has much in common to the concept of the 20% Club. The acquisition of ISO14001 accreditation only means that the local government has finally incorporated a system for policy implementation, thus bringing itself to the starting line; it is the details of the policy to be implemented in the following stage that is essential.

Therefore, this issue will be a special edition of ISO14001 accreditation in local governments in Japan. (Secretaria)



The Development of Unique Environmental Policies The Rise of ISO14001 Accreditation in Local Governments in Japan

There is an expanding movement for ISO14001 accreditation among local governments in Japan for the establishment of an environmental management system. Although it is indeed an international environmental management standard, it is a method advanced by ISO (International Organization for Standardization), a private organization; why are so many local governments showing high interest in this method?

The ISO standard is an international standard demanded for industrial products. Some widely known examples are the standardization of screws and film. Today, about 200,000 companies throughout the world have acquired accreditation

for ISO9000, a quality management standard. Japanese companies, confident of topping all in quality management, were said to be indifferent to ISO9000 accreditation, but this attitude eventually put them in a very disadvantageous position in the global market. Now, in the face of a new era where environmental concern must be top priority in corporate activities, an international standard not for product “quality,” but for the “system” for goods and service delivery, ISO14001 has been acquired by over 2500 Japanese companies – a number highly exceeding that of other countries – as of October 1999. This trend may be a result of bitter experiences.

Acquisition Aims for Local Governments

The reasons for local governments to follow private enterprises in ISO14001 incorporation in its management.

- 1) Environmental management such as energy and resource conservation can result in an improvement in economic efficiency.
- 2) With the local government taking the initiative, not only are municipal employees expected to enhance their environmental awareness, citizens

and businesses are expected to be influenced to follow the municipality's example.

- 3) The established of an environmental management system can result in the efficiency of the entire municipal administration, and furthermore, in the promotion of administration reform.
- 4) The system can be utilized as a method for environmental disclosure and provide support for regional environmental improvement.

What is an Environmental Management System?

Here is a brief introduction of ISO14001.

ISO is a private organization established in 1947. The BCSD, established at the Earth Summit

(United Nation Conference on Environment and Development: UNCED) held in 1992, campaigned for businesses to actively deal with environmental issues and the ISO Board decided on the



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establishment of a specialized committee for environmental management in 1993.

The specialized committee consists of six working groups where the development of international standards including an environmental management system, environmental auditing, eco-labeling is being considered. In September 1996, standards for the environment management system was issued (note: the word “issue” is applied as it is

a voluntary standard) and it came into effect in Japan as JIS (Japanese Industrial Standard) in October the same year.

The essence of an environmental management system adopted by ISO is said to be the development of the policy contents by continuous improvement through the utilization of the PDCA cycle which involves Plan (P), Do (D), Cycle (C) and Action (A).

The Components of an Environmental Management System of ISO 14001

<Environmental Principles>

Environmental Principles correspond to an organization's environmental constitution and are defined to be the indication of the intentions of top management. It is required for Principles to include organizational activities, characteristics of products and services, environmental impact, pollution prevention goals, a framework for revision and to be documented and kept under custody. The Environmental Principles must be disclosed upon request by stakeholders.

<Plan>

The system calls for the development of an action plan that aims to reduce environmental load and to promote environmentally beneficial matters by setting goals and numerical indicators. Furthermore, in order to secure the implementation of the plan, schedules and documented procedures clearly indicating responsible departments and individuals appointed to the project are also prerequisite to the system. With aims to assure the implementation of a project, the plan serves as a core essence of an environmental management system.

<Implementation>

This part of the system deals with the implementation of a project.

It is compulsory that the roles and powers of top management are clarified and that an environmental manager be appointed. Top management assumes responsibility for all elements of the system, including the budget and human resources and the manager is responsible for the actual operation of the system and must report outcomes to top management.

<Checking>

In order to ascertain whether the plan is progressing towards its goal according to schedule, the monitoring and measurement of environmental aspects, a regular assessment of the status of the observance of related laws and an audit of the environmental management system are mandatory.

<Top Management Review>

ISO14001 requires a regular review of an environmental management system to be conducted by top management. This review, carried out for the continued improvement of an environmental management system and the



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maintenance of its effectiveness, involves examining issues with reference to audit results and the level of achievement of goals, thus

bettering the system. Complaints from residents must also be taken into consideration upon improvement.

Cases of ISO14001 Accreditation Acquisition by Local Governments in Japan

The above was a brief summary of ISO14001, now followed by examples of local governments that have begun to actually take action. Shirai Town, Chiba Prefecture and Joetsu City, Niigata Prefecture were among the first to acquire ISO14001 accreditation. Recently, Gifu Prefecture and Sendai City, a 20% Club member have also succeeded in acquisition.

The first Japanese local government to acquire ISO14001 accreditation was Shirai Town (January 1998), a town populating just 50,000 people and famous for its abundance in nature and for the production of pears. We interviewed Mayor Noriaki Nakamura about his reasons for challenging to adopt an environmental management system right after the acquisition.

With the launching of the Third Comprehensive Plan in 1996, Mayor Nakamura who is addressing the town administration with the principle of making a “town that reflects the natural environment on town life,” chose ISO14001 as a tool to appeal to citizens the town’s stance towards the environment, including his view of a town as one large enterprise, and to implement its measures.

It was impressive that, as a leader in administration, he emphasized that it was a measure that would create “the most effect with the least cost.” He personally developed and documented the Environmental Principle and established the system with a budget of 2,000,000 Japanese Yen and four municipal employees. In one year, he has succeeded in reducing electricity use by 2.2 percent and office paper use by 19

percent. Now that the town has passed the external audit after a year since implementation, it is endeavoring towards its next goal.

A remarkable aspect of Shirai Town’s case is that despite its saving about 1,100,000 Japanese Yen due to energy and resource conservation, it has spent about 7,000,000 Japanese Yen for the introduction of the tree management in parks and raw waste management facilities, thus leaving it with a shortfall of about 6,000,000 Japanese Yen for the implementation of an environmental management system as provided for in ISO14001. Park management involved the discontinuation of herbicided and conversion to manual handling, thus resulting in a large outlay.

Mayor Nakamura has stated, “It is important for environmental measures to be taken with a view of the long-term and implemented with a plan. In order to prevent pollution in rivers and lakes, a long-term approach should be by far less expensive and has emphasized the necessity if not only a short-term cut on expenditures but also long-term investments.

Joetsu City, Niigata Prefecture, with a population of 134,000, followed Shirai Town in the acquisition of ISO14001 accreditation (March 1998). Famous for unique administrative operations such as publicly advertising for a deputy mayor for environment and culture, the city is also in the spotlight for its construction of an environmental management system.

The city established a “Citizen Observer



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Commission,” composed of five members representing citizens, businesses and NGO’s and incorporated the opinions of stakeholders upon developing the system. ISO14001 requires the disclosure of the Environmental Principles but does not necessarily call for public participation or the

disclosure of goals. In light of the fact that the city reveals its environmental program to the public and that its success is determined by how many citizens they can motivate to participate, the city’s undertakings can be referred to as an extremely advanced case.

Expansion to Prefectures and Major Cities

The accomplishments of Shirai Town and Joetsu City can be said to have ignited the enthusiasm towards ISO14001 accreditation acquisition in many local governments in Japan. The municipalities were followed by Oita (January 1999), Saitama (February 1999), Osaka (February 1999) Prefectures, and recently, by Gifu Prefecture (July, 1999), which has introduced the details on its website (<http://www.pref.gifu.jp>). Sendai City, a 20% Club member, in September 1999, was the first city designated by ordinance to acquire ISO14001 accreditation.

In 1990, Gifu Prefecture launched “Love Earth Gifu Campaign” in which it seeks to reduce energy and paper use within the prefectural government and acquired ISO14001 accreditation to further public participation in environmental issues.

25 items in ten areas have been set as issues to be addressed by the year 2012 (base year: 1997).

- level of electricity use: stationary
- level of water use: reduction by over 10%
- level of paper use: reduction by over 10%
- amount of waste managed: reduction by over 20%
- procurement of environmental friendly products: more than 70%
- reuse of concrete 100%
- promotion of tree planting: more than 10,000 newly planted trees on prefectural roads

In addition, the prefectural government has adopted other measures such as the promotion of the use of low-emission vehicles, utilization of natural energy, which have also been introduced to the public accompanied by numerical indicators. The prefecture, furthermore, supports other prefectural organizations and small and medium sized businesses in the prefecture in acquiring ISO14001 accreditation and requires schools and police status to operate by ISO14001 standards.

Mr. Yukitaka Arikawa of the Environmental Policy Section, Health Welfare Environment Department, Gifu Prefecture comments that it was possible for Gifu Prefecture to acquire ISO14001 accreditation in the short period of nine months after the governor’s declaration to launch the campaign because the prefecture had already introduced the PDCA cycle, which constitutes the main factor of ISO14001 through the New Love Earth Gifu Campaign, which had been begun in 1998 and knew what exactly it had to do.

The prefecture did not rely on outside consultants but succeeded in acquisition by just the hands of municipal employees; hence, a budget of 4,000,000 Japanese Yen was all that was appropriated for the cause. The presence of activities already undertaken and well-trained employees and a high level of awareness throughout the administration can be referred to as a requirement for acquisition.



Wider Application

The undermentioned is a 20% Club member, Sendai City's case, which was the first example of acquisition by a city designated by ordinance.

Sendai's acquisition of ISO14001 accreditation is unique in that it was applied not only to the main government building but also to nine other sites, thus involving almost all bureaus and all wards and that it seeks not only to reduce environmental impact in office operations but also in public undertakings and authorization and licensing matters.

It is important to promote environmental consideration in city hall and other municipal organs but to extend application to public undertakings and paperwork and projects conducted under municipal authorization or license can be noted as epoch-making. Sendai City presents its Environmental Principles upon invitation and acceptance of tenders for public undertakings and asks businesses to submit a document that promises cooperation.

According to Yoichi Kobayashi, subsection chief, Environmental Planning Section, Environment Department, Environment Bureau, Sendai City, there was opposition within the municipal government regarding the extension of application to public undertakings and authorization and licensing, as these operations are originally conducted according to law. There was much anxiety as well. However, the municipality proceeded with its plan, thus changing the level of awareness among employees and deepening

understanding on the part of businesses.

Public undertakings that must abide by ISO14001 standards include road construction projects and sewerage construction and 94 other projects that impose a large impact on the environment and the ten areas of authorization and licensing are preliminary consultations and authorization concerning industrial waste management facilities, authorization of the development of over 1ha of land and the inspection following the completion of a construction project.

Although it took Sendai City two years after its mayor announced his campaign to obtain ISO14001 accreditation in September 1997 (cf. Sendai City's Acquisition Process Chart), allowing for a comparatively long preparation phase in which it developed Sendai City Environmental Quick Action Plan and sought consensus among municipal organs and businesses, but this period was an important in expanding the area of application.

Sendai City spent 19,910,000 Japanese Yen on the accreditation acquisition process (judging and registration fee: 5,000,000 Japanese Yen, internal environmental auditor training fee: 3,050,000 Japanese Yen, external consultant fee: 10,500,000 Japanese Yen, other: 1,360,000 Japanese Yen) but it also expects to save about 100,000,000 Japanese Yen. It is looking into the incorporation of an environmental budgetting for the future.



Senday City's Acquisition Process Chart



More Sites Acquire Accreditation

Each unit that implements an environmental management system is referred to as a “site.” A site can be a main office building as in Shirai Town’s case or even a waste management facility as in a recent case in Tokyo. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government is the first to have a waste management facility acquire accreditation and has set an example of how organizational units in close contact with environmental impact can acquire accreditation.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government’s Waste Management Bureau promoted the separate acquisition of ISO14001 accreditation in each waste management unit with aims to 1) continuously reduce environmental impact originating in waste management, 2) to obtain further public confidence in the waste management system, 3) to indicate the Waste Management Bureau’s attitude towards building a circular society. The Metropolitan Government plans to transfer the waste management authority from the

Metropolitan Government to the 23 wards. This constitutes a large administrative reform, for which the city has established an ISO liaison conference, has conducted training programs for all its employees, published a newsletter called Waste Management Bureau ISO Newsletter twice a month, promotes public relations towards residents living near management facilities.

The Metropolitan Government declared the introduction of an environmental management system in its waste management administration in its Tokyo Slim Plan in December 1997, but reduction of waste cannot be accomplished without the cooperation of businesses and citizens who dispose of the waste, and thus, waste management facilities altered their attitudes towards waste management in order to inspire other actors. In a large organization, much time and an enhancement of employees’ awareness is required for accreditation acquisition not to become a pie in the sky.

The Status of Acquisition

Besides the local governments introduced here, many others are addressing the issue and this trend is expected to further expand.

As formerly mentioned, the endeavors to acquire ISO14001 accreditation will hopefully not

only result in a successful construction of an effective administration system but invite an accumulation of meaningful ideas and experiences for the government during the preparation process.

20% Club for Sustainable Cities
c/o Global Environmental Forum
1-9-7 Azabudai, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0041
Japan
TEL: +813-5561-9735 FAX: +81-3-5561-9737
E-mail: gef20@shonan.ne.jp
<http://www.shonan.ne.jp/~gef20/>