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# NEW S L E T T E R

## NATIONAL QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY NETWORK (NQPN)



### Nationwide Dissemination of QPI (Kaizen) knowledge and techniques

In March 2022, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the **dtic**) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) entered into an Agreement for the implementation of the Quality and Productivity Improvement also known as Kaizen Project in the Republic of South Africa. The purpose of the Project is to strengthen the capacity of the **dtic** and its partner organisations that promote Quality and Productivity Improvement (QPI) activities nationwide.

### ● What is NQPN?

NQPN (National Quality and Productivity Network) is a network for maximising the impact of Kaizen training delivery.

Founding members :

- The Automotive Industry Development Centre Eastern Cape (AIDC-EC)
- The Automotive Industry Development Centre Gauteng (AIDC-GP)
- Automotive Industry Transformation Fund (AITF)
- Automotive Supply Chain Competitiveness Initiative (ASCCI)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Plastics SA
- Productivity SA
- Production Technologies Association of South Africa (PtSA)
- The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the **dtic**)

### ● MT & JCC

NQPN is managed by the Management Team (MT), which is made up of representatives from NQPN organizations. In addition, from 2025 onwards, a Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) will be held once a year, where CEOs and management of NQPN organizations including the **dtic** and JICA will gather to mainly review the past year's activities and discuss the next year's activity policy and strategy.

## ● What is Kaizen ?

Kaizen is a Japanese term that means "change for the better" or "continuous improvement". In corporate activities, Kaizen refers to identifying waste and bottlenecks in the production process, seeking solutions with the participation of everyone from management to production workers, pooling their wisdom, and continually improving the quality and productivity of a company's products and services with small investments.

## ● Creating a mechanism for the sustainable dissemination of Kaizen in South Africa

In the project launched by JICA and the **dtic**, firstly, Japanese experts will train South African Kaizen Trainers through classroom training and in-company training, and then these Kaizen Trainers will provide similar classroom training and in-company training to Kaizen Consultants, thereby increasing the number of Kaizen Trainers and Kaizen Consultants by South Africans themselves, and building a system for continuous human resource development. In the first Basic Kaizen training organized from July to November in 2023, the benefited 20 companies saw average of 62% productivity improvement, whereas that of the Training of Trainers (TOT) for Basic Kaizen organized from March to May in 2024, was 39.3% for 11 beneficiary companies. The top 10 Basic Kaizen Trainers were selected to attend the JICA study tour on capacity enhancement program in Japan from 15 to 30 June 2024. The overall goal was to deepen the understanding of quality management and productivity improvement through the Japanese Experience



### Digital Kaizen Training

The QPI Project is conducting Digital Kaizen training. This is not aimed at advanced full automation or IoT, but rather is a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) type training that uses inexpensive, familiar and easily available sensors to collect data on the production process in a paperless manner, and uses data analysis and visualization to discover waste and problems, leading to Kaizen. The first training session took place in July 2024, the second in November, and the third in March 2025.



### Basic Kaizen Training 2024

The Classroom Training (CRT) of the Basic Kaizen was conducted at the Indaba Hotel, Gauteng during 19-23 August 2024.

10 South African Kaizen trainers taught the course, and approximately 30 trainees from Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Gauteng, as well as from neighboring countries such as Lesotho and Zimbabwe, participated in the course. In this course, participants intensively learned theories and knowledge of quality and productivity improvement (Kaizen) in a five-day retreat format in preparation for in-company training to be conducted at factories. By December of the same year, those participants implemented Kaizen projects in their respective companies and 20 of them were certified.

## ● Study Tour in Indonesia and Thailand (November 2024)

In November 2024, the management of NQPN member organizations conducted a study tour to Indonesia and Thailand to learn about quality and productivity improvement activities and small and medium-sized enterprise support policies in Southeast Asian countries. During the tour, they visited the ministries of trade and industry of both countries, vocational and technical training schools, and factories of private companies that implement Kaizen. In general, they learned that in both countries, ministries and agencies investigate the skills required by private companies, public institutions provide the necessary technical training, match with private companies, and achieve high employment rates. They also learned that Kaizen has become a common activity not only for managers but all employees, and that companies in both countries have higher quality and productivity than South Africa in terms of both quality and quantity. Based on this visit, they obtained hints for further expanding and developing NQPN.



### Training of Trainers (TOT) for Basic Kaizen Case Study Book

This book showcases achievements of companies which implemented Kaizen.

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## ● Launching of the NQPN Promotion Working Group (25 October 2024)

The NQPN Promotion Working Group (PWG) was launched in October 2024 after the 2024 National Productivity Award ceremony. The members of this PWG are AIDC-GP, AIDC-EC, Productivity SA, ASCCI, Plastics SA, PtSA, etc., and the PWG will promote the activities of NQPN through various media such as newsletters, videos, and PR events. We welcome additional members to work with us.

## ● 2024 National Productivity Award

This Award ceremony became memorable one as the QPI (Kaizen) category was introduced to the National Productivity Awards during 2024 - CRH-Africa (EC) as gold winner, Pioneer Plastics (GP) as silver winner, and Apollo Diemakers (KZN) as bronze winner.

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**To be continued !**