

## Case 4: Minamata City

### Environmental Model City, Minamata - Waste reduction, recycle, eco tourism, and ISO performance

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#### 1. Separate collection of 23 types of waste

Minamata City introduced the separate collection of waste in 1993, before any other city in Japan. Currently, waste is divided into 23 types and collected by the station method. The collection of CFC gas has also been started. Many people responsible for administration, representatives from community creation groups visit the city every day to inspect the region so advanced in waste disposal. Recently, students from various parts of Japan also started visiting the city, during school trip as a part of their educational programs.

1. Returnable Bottles	9. Aluminum cans	17. Clothes
2. Bottles (transparent)	10. Pots & pans	18. Large waste
3. Bottles (brown)	11. PET bottles	19. Dry batteries, etc.
4. Bottles (light blue)	12. Waste plastic	20. Fluorescent lights, electric bulbs, etc.
5. Bottles (green)	13. Newspapers & leaflets	21. Landfill waste
6. Bottles (black)	14. Corrugated paper	22. Bottle caps, etc.
7. Flat glass	15. Magazines	23. Burnables
8. Steel cans	16. Other types of paper	

#### 2. Activities of Women's Liaison Meeting for Reducing Waste

Major activities of "Women's Liaison Meeting for Reducing Waste"

Concluded "Agreement on Abolition of Plastic Food Trays" with 4 large retailers in the city

Plastic food trays were prohibited in the sale of 65 items. (September 1998)  
Sales activities have been monitored on a regular basis since then.

Engaged in the distribution of free "shopping bags" to households to do away with plastic bags offered at cash registers (November to December 1998).

Supported the establishment of the Eco-Shop Certification System and engaged in examination (since April 1999).

Engaged in family ISO certification examination (since October 1999)

Prompted one of the large retailers to introduce a point-card system for

clients coming with their own shopping bags.

### 3. Operation of ISO Environmental Management System

The municipal office of Minamata City obtained ISO14001, international standard for environmental management, in February 1999. Under the system, the city intends to redouble efforts for the realization of "an environmental model city" making the most of the lessons from Minamata disease and fulfill the roles local governments should play in the preservation and revival of the global environment.

#### <Effects>

- ① A significant step for Minamata City to be recognized by everybody as an international environmental model city.
- ② Improvement of the regional image (may give favorable effects at the Local Government Environmental Council and Mansfield Environment International Conference in 2000, Mercury International Meeting in 2001, etc.)
- ③ Reduction of costs through energy and resource saving, including lower costs of electricity and paper used at the municipal office and related facilities.
- ④ Changes of ideas on environment and progress in activities of staff members.
- ⑤ Rationalization of administration and progress of reform as a result of the introduction of the system.
- ⑥ Improvement of ideas and influence on concrete activities of citizens as a result of the acquisition of environmental ISO by the municipal office.
- ⑦ Support of small enterprises in the city in the acquisition of environmental ISO.

#### <Purposes and Targets>

Reduction of waste, etc.	40	
Creation of an environmental model city		31
Promotion of energy saving	6	
Resource saving and recycling	3	

### 4. "Family ISO" (family version of ISO) – Creation of Environment-Friendly Living

<Scheme>

At home

① Declaration of activities

Choose some activities from the 35 items such as "turn off the light in an unused room" and declare them.

② Assignment works (who takes care of what) and activities

Example:

Mother - shopping-related matters

Children - management of energy and resource saving

Father - matters related to car usage

Grandmother - matters related to waste disposal

Grandfather - matters related to electricity, etc.

③ Recording of activities

Make a record to clearly show the results of the activities.

④ Reviews

Start new activities after checking the record.

Three months later:

Examination

Executed by the Women's Liaison Meeting for Reducing Waste, etc., under the leadership of the Minamata Junior Chamber.

Certification

The mayor will certify families passing the examination.

Other

The certification is valid for three years and during the three-year period, periodical examinations are held each year.

## 5. "School Version of Environmental ISO" - Creation of Environment-Friendly Schools

<Scheme>

At school

① Declaration of activities

Choose some items from 76 items including "turn off the light in the classroom whenever the light is unnecessary" and declare them.

② Assignment of works (who takes care of what) and activities

Example:

Principal: general administrator of environmental management

Vice-principal: person in charge of environmental management

Chief teacher: head of executive committee

Class teacher: environmental promotion staff

President of the student council: environmental leader

Vice-president of the student council: environmental sub-leader

③ Recording of activities

Make a record to clearly show the results of activities.

④ Reviews

Start new activities after checking the record.

Three months later:

Examination

Executed by the School Education Section and Environment Section of Minamata City.

Certification

The mayor will certify schools passing the examination.

Other

The certification is valid for three years and during the three-year period, periodical examinations are held each year.

## 6. Environment Meister System

"Meister" means a "master craftsman" under a German system. Meisters certified by public organizations are given a certain status.

Minamata City established a system for certifying craftsmen who attach much importance to the environment in their production activities. This is called the Environment Meister System, and commenced in fiscal 1998, before any other city in Japan. This is to improve the status and consciousness of craftsman and promote the creation of safe and sound commodities in consideration of environment and health, reflecting their experience with Minamata disease. In the first year, fiscal 1998, nine craftsmen engaged in the activities of papermaking, and the production of tea leaves, bread, tangerine oranges, vegetables, rice or eggs were certified. In fiscal 1999, five craftsmen including a tatami-maker were additionally certified, making the current total of certified environmental meisters fourteen. All of them produce products with

confidence and pay careful attention to the environment in every part of their processes, including materials selection, production, processing, selling, and disposal of waste.

"Products produced by environmental meisters" mean safe and sound products certified by the municipal office. For some time in the past, Minamata-made products were not favorably accepted on the market due to the bad image of the city. Nonetheless, people in Minamata have learned through experience the dreadfulness of environmental pollution and because of this, they can now produce truly safe and harmless products. Before the establishment of the meister system, Minamata products were simply products produced with confidence by people who were particularly concerned about the environment. In future, however, they will be traded as brand products produced by the renowned environmental meisters of Minamata City.

#### <Qualification Criteria>

- ① Have been engaged in production in consideration of environment and health for 5 years or longer.
- ② Have experience in production in consideration of environment and health, including the use of natural materials and elimination of chemicals
- ③ Have detailed knowledge, experience, technology, etc. in relation to production in consideration of environment and health.
- ④ Engaged in activities in relation to the preservation of the local environment.
- ⑤ Have detailed knowledge about environmental problems and preservation.
- ⑥ Have detailed knowledge upon pollution, including the Minamata disease.

#### 7. Promotion of Green Tourism

Minamata City is promoting green tourism, regarding the whole region as a field.

We believe that the creation of an environment rich in nature will lead to green tourism, resulting in the activation of the local economy. According to this belief, a "Minamata Green Tourism Study Meeting" was organized in April 1999, which comprised nine members, including people engaged in agriculture or forestry, and the headmen of administrative wards. These meetings

are promoting efforts for information gathering and exchange and the establishment of know-how for commercialization, in order to establish Minamata City's green tourism based upon its natural features and life style unique to Minamata.

#### Major Activities

Eco Minamata Field Tour: October 2 to 4, 1998

Held three courses to the village, mountains, and sea for 20 people from the mass media concerned with green tourism and sought their opinion and impressions.

1<sup>st</sup> Monitor Tour: May 29 to 30, 1998

Nineteen people living in urban areas participated. Three menus - "Living in the Mountain" (Kugino area), "Living by the Sea" (Fukuro area) and "Spa" (Yude area) - were offered. Evaluation criteria were clarified, including the scale, travel means, etc.

2<sup>nd</sup> Monitor Tour: September 22 to 24, 1998

Under the title of "Enjoy the Autumn Taste in Minamata", three courses - "Natural Features and Living Created by Water" (Ishitobi area), "Living in the Mountain" (Kugino area), and "Discovery of New Spas" (Yude area) - were conducted with the participation of 17 people from the mass media as monitors. A report was prepared after the courses were completed.

Prepared pamphlets and a report on Minamata's own style of green tourism.