

Third-Party Observation

I would like to see AISIN expand its sphere of cooperation on the environment to its supply chain.

Although I also wrote the third-party assessment for AISIN REPORT 2007, this time I wanted to follow up on advances since then by visiting the following facilities.

My first stop was the Handa Plant's Ecotopia biotope and eco farm, which had developed into one of the only biotopes of its scale in Japan, created by the Environment Department and other employees by hand. This was my first visit in the two years since I was invited, in June 2007, to the biotope's commemorative firefly-themed opening ceremony of *Hotaru no Yube*.

I was reminded of several years ago when, under the Environment Department's guidance, I first saw the large 2,800m² field that would house the biotope. I recalled marveling at its size and puzzling at what kind of facility it would become. The biotope was not an artificial park created by a landscaper, but an ecological facility created with AISIN employees' own hands using copious amounts of recycled products made from the neighboring AISIN Eco Center.

There were countless killifish swimming in schools in a waterway made of completely purified wastewater from the plant. Unfortunately firefly breeding apparently had not gone as planned, but currently uncommon dragonflies were flying about, and I noticed pheasant eggs in a tuft of grass. I was astounded at the rich biota that had formed in such a short time period.

Seasonal vegetables were thriving visibly in a hand-made garden open to all the workplaces in the Company, and to neighboring NPOs and elementary schools. This is the eco farm, built by the AISIN Eco Center with nutrient-rich soil made from fully fermented compost created from leftover foods recovered from the cafeterias of each Group plant. The biotope is used by neighborhood elementary schools for environmental education, and for interactions with community citizens, symbolizing AISIN's advanced status as an environment-oriented corporation. Such social activities are an indispensable component to be with society as a corporate citizen, no matter the business conditions. The biotope is expected to be an official observation course in next year's biodiversity COP10 conference to be held in Nagoya, and here I would like to convey my respect for AISIN as an environmental frontrunner in Japan maintaining its environmental activities without pause, even in the recent harsh economic climate.

I also visited the Aisin com-center attached to the head office for the first time in a long while. The Future Zone where cutting-edge global technologies were on display was fascinating, but this time my eye was caught by the slightly unusual keyword *satisfaction* on a display panel in the Products Zone. Besides the pleasure a user experiences, for employees engaged in development, design and production, and for those at cooperating companies who receive the parts, the word *satisfaction* has a flavor that really conveys the joy of creating products and seeing them used. I felt that this word expressed the essence of AISIN's corporate philosophy.

The Environment Department's Environmental Analysis Laboratory had steadily advanced. The office coordinates with environmental analysis staff at each plant, and three specialists constantly monitor measurement data from eight plants in real time employing state-of-the-art equipment through a system called *E-cosmos*. I was struck by a system that automatically detects signs of environmental risks and handles them one by one in the spirited operating style of the office. Although the work of environmental analysis seldom emerges from behind the scenes unless there is a major problem worthy of newspaper coverage, the source of a corporation's trust from society is in these kinds of diligent and sustained environmental conservation activities.

This visit reaffirmed AISIN's broad range of efforts and steady advancement as an environmental leader representing Japan. I dare say that I think AISIN's next challenge as an environmental-promoting corporation is to expand its sphere of environmental cooperation not only to each Group company, but also to the companies upstream and downstream in its supply chain. I will be keeping an expectant eye on AISIN.



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