Vietnam

Financing of Cleaner Production

The project “Strategies and mechanisms for promoting cleaner production investments in developing countries,” was launched in Hanoi on 6 September 2000, with stakeholders such as other relevant ministries and governmental agencies, representatives of the financial and business community and selected international development partners. The UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, in cooperation with the Department of Science, Education and Environment of the Ministry of Planning and Investment of Vietnam, will carry out the project.

The project, with a duration of three years, includes awareness and capacity-building activities for policy makers, financial institutions and the business community. It will increase the demand for creditworthy cleaner production investments. It will also lead to a situation where preventative strategies become an operational procedure and approach; not only in industry and government, but also in the financial sector, in full recognition of the considerable economic advantages that this approach brings to enterprises and the national economy.

Despite the recognised benefits of the cleaner production strategy, securing investment funds is seen as a major constraint in making it a wide practice. Environmental risks are often undervalued in a project assessment process and many environmental management costs are hidden in a company’s overhead account.

Vietnam subscribes to protecting the global environment, including the adoption of sustainable production and consumption practices. During the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) forum on the environment in 1999, the Minister of Science, Technology and Environment, on behalf of the government of Vietnam, signed the International Declaration on Cleaner Production.

The Vietnam National Cleaner Production Centre was established in 1998 to promote the adoption of a cleaner production strategy by industrial enterprises. The new project will add financial strength to these activities. (MJ)

India

Ban on Old Transport Vehicles

The government of New Delhi’s decision in September not to allow commercial transport vehicles over 12 years old on the road from 1 January 2001 will affect 125,000 vehicles in the Indian capital. The ban also includes private-use two-wheelers (motorcycles, mopeds and scooters) that are 15 years or older.

A spokesman for the Government said that the ban had to be imposed to contain growing air pollution, described by him as “grim”. New Delhi has an estimated three million vehicles – more than the combined number for India’s three other metropolitan areas of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Of the 1.6 million two-wheelers in the city, over 100,000 are more than 15 years old. In addition, more than 25,000 light and heavy commercial vehicles older than 12 years will also be banned. The government spokesman announced that the government plans to ask the Supreme Court to impose a ban on the registration of similarly old vehicles in the districts around the Indian capital. It has also imposed a ban on the replacement of gas engines with diesel ones in older vehicles.

The Cabinet also decided that the Transport Department will now register only those vehicles, both gas and diesel, that comply with Euro-II norms or emission standards at the time of registration. Euro-II norms, which came into effect in the European Union in 1996, call for carbon monoxide emission limits of 2.2 grams per kilometre (g/km), hydrocarbons + nitrogen oxide limits of 0.5 g/km, and particulate matter, zero. Diesel levels are 1 g/km for CO, 0.7 g/km for HC+NOx and 0.1 g/km for particulate matter.

The aim is to set a life span for vehicles and to encourage manufacturers to adopt new and updated technology. The life of a bus has been fixed at eight years, and after 1 January 2001, only buses running on compressed natural gas will be registered. (MJ)