

**SWEEPING POLICY REFORM TOWARDS  
A “SOUND MATERIAL-CYCLE SOCIETY”  
STARTING FROM JAPAN AND  
SPREADING OVER THE ENTIRE GLOBE**

*—THE “3R” LOOP CONNECTING JAPAN WITH OTHER COUNTRIES*

**Executive Summary**

Focusing on the promotion of the “3Rs”—reduce, reuse, and recycle—this brochure summarizes the experience that Japan has accumulated in waste management and recycling policy over the years. In order to realize a Sound Material-Cycle Society (SMS) both domestically and internationally, it also presents the state of efforts now gaining ground overseas, building on the momentum of the “3R Initiative” that was agreed on at the G8 Summit of 2004.

First, this brochure examines the period from the end of World War II until the time of the “bubble economy”, providing an overview of waste-related measures implemented during this period as well as the background behind the enactment of the Waste Management Law. It also discusses the occurrence of illegal dumping and other forms of improper waste disposal and explains how waste management became a social problem.

Second, the brochure explains the process through which major policy reforms of waste management and recycling measures have been implemented over the past dozen years or so. This explanation focuses on three policy measures: 1) industrial waste<sup>1</sup>, management based on the responsibility of the waste generator, 2) recycling measures grounded in extended producer responsibility and 3) municipal waste management promoted collaboratively and cooperatively by the central and local governments. Additionally, this section provides an overview of the status of policies.

Finally, this brochure discusses the basic concept leading to the formation of an international SMS and Japan’s role in achieving this. It further provides an overview of developments on the international stage, including the Ministerial Conference on the 3R Initiative in 2005 and the Senior Officials Meeting on the 3R Initiative in 2006, which were hosted by Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> In this brochure, unless indicated otherwise, “waste” means valueless things and can be classified into “municipal waste” and “industrial waste,” in keeping with Japanese regulations. Industrial waste contains twenty types of waste from business activities, provided for exclusively under the Waste Management Law, such as combustion residue, sludge, waste oil and imported waste. Municipal waste is other waste to be treated by municipalities and is classified into “general waste,” such as garbage from households, and “human excrement”.