Senior Officials Meeting on the 3R Initiative

Questionnaire on 3Rs' strategies and activities

As announced earlier, the Senior Officials Meeting on the 3R Initiative will be held from 6 March to 8 March 2006 in Tokyo, Japan. During the meeting, two working groups will be held in parallel in the afternoon of Day 1 (6 March) and Day 2 (7 March) to discuss the promotion of the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle).

The two working groups will respectively discuss: (1) promotion of the 3Rs at the *national level*, and (2) promotion of the 3Rs at the *international level* (e.g., international flow of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods). Both working groups will cover the following policy issues related to the promotion and implementation of the 3Rs: (a) cooperation between developed and developing countries, (b) cooperation among stakeholders, and (c) promotion of science and technology.

As stated in the letter from the Task Force for the 3R Initiative, we sent you this questionnaire to reflect your input on the issue paper for the meeting. Also, the result of the survey will be publicly reported later.

Please provide information relative to as many of the items as possible and send it prior to 23 January 2006 by e-mail to 3R@env.go.jp or by fax to +81-3-3593-8262.

1. 3Rs policy and strategy update

At the Ministerial Conference on the 3Rs in April 2005, participating countries reported their 3Rs policy and strategies in the form of the 3Rs portfolio. Please provide us with updated information on the major developments of national and international strategies, policies and activities on the 3Rs of your country since the Ministerial Conference on the 3Rs (April 2005).

a) As a major step forward to promote 3R in Germany landfilling of untreated waste is prohibited since 1st June 2005. Waste has to be treated by thermal or mechanical/biological processes to fulfill requirements that stop the landfilling of organic waste. This has two positive effects: 1. Biological reactions in landfills producing methane and leachates to soil or groundwater as well as polluted sites for the future are prevented. 2. Higher costs for the treatment of mixed wastes (up to 200 € / to) give strong economic incentives for waste prevention, segregation at source, separation, recycling and energy recovery.
b) Germany is very much supporting the OECD-work on material management of the Working Group on Waste Prevention and Recycling (WGWPR) with the goal of a comprehensive approach on circular economy. Germany has made recent studies on this issue and several experience to share with other states. The first meeting of the OECD on this issue took place in Korea in November 2005.

2. Domestic 3R activities

2.1 Good practices on 3Rs

We are going to develop a showcase of the successful activities on the 3Rs, including those of the national level, the municipality level, industry, and NGOs/NPOs. Please fill out the EXCEL sheet attached to this e-mail with your good practices on the 3Rs. (Note: If you have already provided us with substantial information on good practices on the 3Rs in the form of the 3Rs portfolio in the Ministerial Conference, please provide us more detailed information on a few of the most successful cases in your country.)

Examples:

a) Segregation at source: Private households separate packaging, paper, bio-wastes, glass, bulk waste, hazardous waste from mixed household waste.

b) Recovery quotas (app.):

Household waste:	60 %
C&D waste:	86 %
Waste glass:	88 %
Waste paper:	88 %
Total waste:	66 %

c) Decoupling of waste production and GDP:

Index for 1999 = 100; 2002: GDP = 104, waste production = 94

2.2 3Rs and governance

To promote the 3Rs, it is necessary to develop a governance system that responds to different situations and conditions of each country. Are there any specific issues relating to institutional arrangements for the implementation of the 3Rs and environmentally-sound management of waste? For example, please explain the different roles of stakeholders in the promotion of the 3Rs, such as how to position the informal sector that is engaged in recycling and recovering activities under the context of national 3Rs policies.

Germany is integrated into the legal system of the EU. Many requirements and standards are made on European level, but member states may have stronger requirements and standards to protect the environment. In many cases additional national legislation exists. In the legislative procedure stakeholders are consulted to integrate their experience and interests. Private enterprises, institutions (schools, universities etc.), municipalities, NGOs have a very strong role in the national 3R activities.

2.3 3Rs and environmentally-sound management of industrial waste

Since economic development tends to cause an increase in the amount of industrial waste generation, environmentally-sound management of industrial waste is essential to promote the 3Rs. To decouple economic development and industrial waste generation, what kind of role is expected for the industrial waste emitter, national and local governments, including municipalities? Also, please give us your views on how to share the responsibilities of construction and operation of landfill as final disposal sites among the stakeholders?

Most efforts to close cycles and to prevent waste generation are made on a local, regional or enterprise level. National legislation is mainly responsible to build a frame for all kind of activities to guarantee an environmentally sound waste recovery or disposal. Requiring and using high standards for waste related activities increases costs and prices for the waste generators. This incentive promotes waste prevention, segregation at source and recycling operations.

Final disposal sites are planned, built and operated mainly by municipalities or state owned companies. The waste producer has to pay a price equivalent to the costs for the disposal operation (pay as you throw). Just a small number of private enterprises operate landfills for special waste under the control of public authorities.

3. International 3R policy and strategy

At the Ministerial Conference on the 3R Initiative, it was observed that the international flow of (i) goods and materials for recycling and manufacturing, and (ii) recycled and remanufactured products (hereinafter “recyclable resources and remanufactured goods”) may contribute to the efficient use of resources and the prevention of environmental pollution if proper mechanisms are in place. It may promote sustainable consumption and production affecting not only the environment but also economic development and job creation. At the same time, it was noted

that for many countries the first priority should be placed on minimising the wastes within the country in which the wastes are generated. Participants at the Ministerial Conference expressed the view that transboundary movement of wastes should take place only when safe and appropriate use and environmentally-sound management are possible in the receiving country.

3.1 Situation of transboundary movement of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods

Regarding the transboundary movement of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods, what are the major recyclable resources observed in exports from and imports to your country? Are there any specific problems in relation to exports and imports of these recyclable resources and remanufactured goods? What are the major reasons for the problems?

Main secondary resources exported from Germany are: Metals (in all kinds of form – bulk, ashes, sludge, slag), plastics (esp. PET), waste paper, but also e.g. electronics and electrical equipment, used cars etc. A problem may raise when the distinction between (hazardous) waste and product is unclear while the export of these waste to several states is forbidden. A second problem is related to the low management standards in the receiving countries. Low costs in the receiving countries undermines the efforts in prevention and recovery by using high costs as an economic incentive.

3.2 Environmentally-sound management in transboundary movement of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods

To prevent environmental pollution caused by transboundary movement of recyclable resources, what kind of policies and measures (e.g., cooperation among national governments and other stakeholders) are expected? If your country has already launched such activities, please provide us with detailed information.

Very important is the transfer of environmentally sound management techniques to countries with low standards. This can be done by technical assistance and pilot projects, development of environmental consciousness and training of responsible actors. The exports to countries with too low standards should be restricted to promote higher standards and to protect the environment; the Basel Convention is an international tool to protect countries with low standards against hazardous wastes.

3.3 Harmonisation of economic and environmental benefits through the transboundary movements of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods

Please provide information on the positive and negative socio-economic impacts of the increase in import and export of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods in your country. What kinds of policies and measures have been implemented to support the positive effects and mitigate negative effects of trade of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods?

Such policy has to be elaborated on an European level.

4. Others

If there are any other issues related to promotion of the 3Rs which should be discussed in the Senior Officials Meeting, please provide us with your input below.

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