

Taiwan and US EPAs Cooperate on Regional Inspection Training

Starting on 12 March 2013, the Taiwan and US EPAs jointly held the four-day Regional National Environmental Law Enforcement Personnel and Seed Instructor Training Program. Environmental personnel from Southeast Asian nations such as Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Singapore came to Taiwan to receive training. Inspectors from the Taiwan EPA also attended the program, engaging in fruitful exchanges of experience and knowledge concerning environmental law enforcement with their Southeast Asian counterparts, and building a good foundation for future cooperative relationships.

The training program was one of the items agreed to as part of an existing bilateral environmental protection agreement. Under the framework of this agreement, Taiwan and the US have worked together very closely on numerous environmental protection policies and technological advancements over the last 20 years.

The Taiwan EPA has been rolling out a number of new environmental administrative strategies over the last few years. One of these is the in-depth audit method of inspecting and auditing for polluting activities: Inspectors have been carefully examining and auditing the “three flows” of the everyday operations of suspected enterprises in order to stamp out illegal activities, and now have considerable experience doing this. The “three flows” refer to the flow of information, the flow of materials, and the flow of capital. Fines for violations are now calculated according to the following parameters, as set out in administrative law: “degree of responsibility,” “degree of environmental impact” and “gains obtained from violating administrative law.” The financial resources of the offending enterprise are also taken into account when levying the fine. The EPA is resolute in its intention to use hefty fines that exceed any illegal gains in order to dissuade other potential violators from breaking the law. This approach has so far proven effective, and the EPA was happy to share its experience with the SE Asian trainees who attended the four-day program. The EPA is confident that the knowledge the trainees took home with them will enhance the administration of environmental protection in those nations.

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