

## EMISSION REDUCTION INITIATIVES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN JAPAN

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**Abstract:** *The Law on Promoting Green Purchasing was enacted in May 2000 to promote green purchasing by the public sector in Japan. Under this law the central and local governments and other national entities, which have big purchasing power in the national economy, are expected to take the lead in purchasing environment-friendly goods and services, including energy-efficient products, and then to contribute to shift the whole demand of the country.*

*In order to foster concrete actions to address global warming by various stakeholders, Japan enacted a new law specifically dedicated to climate change, entitled the “Law for the promotion of measures to address global warming” (climate change law) in June 1998. This Law requires the central and local governments to prepare action plans to limit emission from their business activities.*

### 1. The Law on Promoting Green Purchasing

In May 2000 the new law was enacted to promote green purchasing by the public sector in Japan. Under this law the central and local governments and other national entities, which have big purchasing power in the national economy, are expected to take the lead in purchasing environment-friendly goods and services, including energy-efficient products, and then to contribute to shift the whole demand of the country.

The government of Japan had worked for the promotion of green purchasing based on its five-year action plan decided by the cabinet in 1995. However, the achievement was not satisfactory.

Based on this experience, the new law is applied not only to the ministries and agencies in the central government, but also to the diet, courts, and other various independent administrative entities. Whereas a numerical target was established for the entire government under the five-year action plan, the law requires each ministry, agency and other public entities to establish individually their own targets every fiscal year and to improve their performance gradually. The law fully entered into force on April 1 2001.

Under this law, the Cabinet shall decide the basic guideline on green procurement as a common policy for actions by each national entity. The guideline, adopted on February 2 2001, stipulates the following:

- 1) basic principle on promotion of green procurement
- 2) a list of environment-friendly goods and services to be procured, and criteria for selection

3) other matters, including provision of information to the public

Each of the ministries, agencies, the diet, courts and independent administrative entities shall develop every fiscal year, make public and implement its action plan of green procurement which includes quantified targets of procurement, based on the basic guideline.

After the end of every fiscal year each national entity shall report to the Environment Minister and make public the achievement.

Designated items

101 items have been designated as environment-friendly goods and services under the current basic guideline, which include:

- Paper, printed matters
- Stationary, office equipment
- Office automation apparatus, electric appliances, lighting, vehicles
- Energy-related facility
- Energy saving diagnosis
- ...

Numerical criteria for selection of products

Numerical criteria have been established for selecting products in the markets. Criteria in relation to energy efficiency are as follows:

- For air conditioners, TV sets, computers, copy machines, VTRs, refrigerators, fluorescent lighting bulbs, “Top-runner” standards under the 1998 amended energy conservation law\*,
- For other products which include printers, facsimiles, standards under the “Energy Star” program.

\* “Top-runner” standards are the energy efficiency standards which are established at levels which meet the highest efficiency achieved among products in the current markets. All manufacturers have obligations to supply products which meet these standards after a specified target year in the near future. The standards for the above-mentioned products are 14-83% improvement from the baseline (1997 average).

As for vehicles, CNG, hybrid, electric, and methanol vehicles, and ultra low emission, fuel-efficient (conventional) vehicles have been designated.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi announced in his first policy speech in the diet after he took the office (April 2001) that all vehicles for administrative use in all the ministries and agencies (c.a. 7000 vehicles) are to be replaced with low emission vehicles by the end of FY 2004. This initiative, called “Low Emission Vehicle Initiative” has been being implemented as an action based on the law on promoting green purchasing.

## **2. Climate Change Law**

In order to foster concrete actions to address global warming by various stakeholders, Japan enacted a new law specifically dedicated to climate change, entitled the “Law for the promotion of measures to address global warming” (climate change law) in June 1998. Under this law, which entered into force in April 1999, the government developed the “Basic national policy” to combat global warming. In addition, the law provides the

responsibilities of stakeholders (central and local governments, businesses, citizens), and foster them concrete actions related to climate change.

#### The Basic National Policy

The Basic National Policy was decided by the Cabinet in April 1999. Core elements of the Policy include the following:

- Guiding principle
  - Kyoto Mechanisms are supplemental to domestic actions
  - Economic incentives should be given to taking mitigation measures
  - Participation of businesses, citizens, NGOs
- List of measures to be taken by the government
- Encouragement to business sectors to take actions

#### Mandatory development of five-year action plans

The law requires that central and local governments (47 prefectures and more than 3,000 cities, town and villages) to prepare action plans for limitation of emissions from their business activities.

#### Voluntary development of action plans

Business enterprises are also encouraged to voluntarily formulate their own action plans to limit emissions and improve their products.

#### Assistance to activities of the public

Since it is important to provide information to citizen and facilitate their actions against the global warming, the Centers for climate related activities are being established in accordance with the provision of the law. The roles of the centers are:

- Provision of information, research, advice, ...
- Designate individuals as “promoters of climate related activities” and provide training to them