

CSR briefs

Vietnam leads way in forest protection

Countries that border the Mekong River can learn from Vietnam's excellent management of its Payments for Forest Environmental Services programme, said Luca Tacconi, associate dean of the College of the Asia and Pacific at Australia's Crawford School of Public Policy.

Tacconi made the statement in Hanoi at a seminar on payments for environmental services. Enterprises benefiting from unharmed forests fund the programme in Vietnam, while in Thailand, for example, the government must provide the funding.

The programme creates incentives for individuals and communities to protect environmental services by compensating them for any costs incurred in managing and providing those services.

In 2004, Vietnam, drawing on an internationally recognised system, laid the foundations for a nationwide programme set out in the revised Forest Protection and Development Law.

In 2008, a government decision created support for pilot projects in Lam Dong and Son La provinces, and in 2011, the programme was implemented across the country.

Vietnam is the first country in Asia to use the Payments for Forest Environmental Services system nationwide. Thirty-six of the country's 63 provinces have established steering committees to oversee the programme's implementation.

The programme collects up to US\$55 million (Bt1.8 billion) annually.

Three years after it was set up, it had collected a total of \$150 million for protecting and developing forest areas - and helping residents involved protect the environment.

Nguyen Dac Lam, director of Nghe An Province's Forest Protection and Development Fund, said investors and business owners should be responsible for paying for environmental services.

"It's reasonable to pay to protect nature when you benefit from it," Lam said. - Viet Nam News/ANN

Packaging firm recognised

Tetra Pak Thailand has once again won recognition for its business strategy, with the Asia Corporate Excellence and Sustainability Awards (ACES) under the Sustainability category.

Along with three other companies from Hong Kong, India and the Philippines, it received the award in Singapore on November 26.

"We are pleased and honoured to be recognised for our sustainability commitment through our social and environmental initiatives, in particular our Green Roof Project for [the] Princess Pa Foundation," said Henrik Hauggaard, managing director of Tetra Pak (Thailand).

"As a leading food processing and packaging company, we consider the full value chain [in] our approach to sustainability and the environment, starting from our suppliers and continuing with our production processes and of course end [products]. We work with our customers and various stakeholders to protect the environment by using paper which is a renewable material as our main material, developing carton collection and recycling systems, and promoting the benefits of sustainability to consumers."

The Top Green Companies in Asia Award is given to companies whose operations have minimal negative impacts on the environment, communities and society. The winning firms undertake environmentally friendly activities at all facets of the organisation to ensure that their processes, products and production activities adequately address environmental concerns.

GM Rayong plant wins environmental star

General Motors' truck-assembly plant in Rayong province is among 14 GM plants around the world to be recognised under the US Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Challenge for Industry, thanks to its policy to reduce energy consumption.

The plant reduced its energy consumption by 20 per cent, amounting to an avoidance of 7,983 tonnes of carbon-dioxide emissions in total. To meet the challenge, industrial sites must reduce energy intensity by 10 per cent in five years or less. Rayong has met the challenge two years in a row, according to a statement.

The Rayong plant manufactures the Chevrolet Colorado pickup truck and Trailblazer sport-utility vehicle.

"Energy management is an important consideration at the Rayong plant and at GM facilities worldwide," said Chaowarit Boonphongsri, manager of energy and site utility at the plant.

"Environmental responsibility - and its corresponding business benefits - continues to be an everyday driver within our facilities."

Rayong implemented a number of energy-saving measures that contributed to the achievement. All actions at GM facilities around the world have helped the company save US\$33 million (Bt1.1 billion) in energy costs, it says.

"Our employees are dedicated to our global customers and communities," said Jim DeLuca, GM executive vice president of global manufacturing.

"They not only contribute to our energy-saving activities every day, they proactively suggest innovative ideas that help to further reduce our impact on the environment."

Rayong's commitment to energy reduction and continuous improvement is shared by GM employees globally, the automaker says. GM has set a goal to reduce energy and carbon intensity from its facilities by 20 per cent by 2020, and says it is close to this meeting this commitment.

The company has also received back-to-back Energy Star Partner of the Year - Sustained Excellence awards.