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Listed firms ordered to submit green data

By Sun Xiaohua (China Daily) Updated: 2008-02-26 06:58

The government will enforce mandatory environmental disclosures for companies with high pollution emissions and energy consumption, according to a regulation released by the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) Monday.

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The environmental watchdog said the regulation applies to companies that are already publicly listed as well as those seeking listing.

According to Pan Yue, deputy director of SEPA, most domestic listed companies either do not report their environmental performance or submit "only qualitative descriptions" and "scantily useful facts".

The regulation is designed to make environmental disclosure a key criterion for companies raising funds from the Chinese capital markets, he pointed out.

The so-called green securities are meant to help curb the unhealthy expansion of heavily-polluting and energy-intensive industries by preventing them from siphoning funds from the capital market.

The green securities scheme is among SEPA's latest moves to inject the green factor into the nation's financial policies, the others being endeavors to influence lending and insurance practices.

In the green securities scheme, companies with cross-provincial business in any of the 13 listed industrial operations that may cause heavy pollution will be required to obtain SEPA approval of their environmental performance.

The results of the inspections - to be conducted by SEPA specialists - will be a necessary part of information disclosure to the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) for either initial pulblic offerings (IPOs) or refinancing.

The 13 types of industrial operations include thermal power generation, and the making of iron and steel, cement, and electrolyte aluminum.

Prior to Monday's release of the regulation, environmental disclosure and inspection were already required of companies filing for IPOs.

Domestic firms have to report on environmental conduct through the 36 months prior to their floating of shares. Deliberate cover-ups are subject to administrative penalties and criminal charges.

Making environmental reporting compulsory is a joint program of SEPA and the CSRC, officials at the environment watchdog told China Daily. The two agencies worked together in reviewing the information submitted by 37 companies applying for IPO last year.

Ten companies were forced to delay their IPOs as their applications were rejected on environmental grounds.

Their applications were rejected because their performance had failed to meet government standards or because their reporting was inadequate, according to a SEPA statement.

According to Pan, now that the practice of environmental disclosure in the IPO process has become more or less established, it is time to tighten disclosure rules for companies that listed before environmental impact became a required reporting item.

The SEPA deputy director said that of all listed companies on the mainland, only half included environment performance in their 2006 annual reports. Even for those which did touch on the issue,

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the quality of reporting was generally poor and car	nnot help shareholders, he said.	Local Resources: Sichuan to restore
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