

## SYRIAN GOVERNMENT IS GOING AHEAD IN EXECUTING ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

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In August 2005, I wrote an article for the EISU's magazine, *Environmental Opportunities Overseas*, on the Syrian government plan for the environment sector.

The indicators show a degree of seriousness in the government attempts to minimise the environmental pollution in the country. But the task is heavy, starting from raising public awareness of the environmental issues up to the execution of the projects set out in its 10<sup>th</sup> 5-year plan and most importantly to ensure that the system is up and running.

The government has actually awarded a number of projects for sanitary landfill in various cities in the country to private sector companies. It has also issued a tender for the supply of a number of fixed stations with sensors for monitoring air pollution in one of the major cities in Syria. The stations will be equipped with a computerised network connected to the offices of the decision-makers and a big screen in the city centre to show the people some Indicators.

The relevant authorities are also in the process of issuing tenders for expanding two major landfills, establishing compost plants and 7 sewage treatment plants in various cities of the country, projects for the treatment of hazardous waste, supply of 6 movable laboratories for testing land pollution and other sorts of pollution, and tenders for the supply of medical incinerators.

In brief the Environment Sector in Syria is now emerging as one that can be of interest and offer UK firms good business opportunities.

The EU is currently providing some funding for projects in support of the Syrian Government's modernisation process, including the Environment. Projects launched so far include the • 18 million Municipal Administration and Modernisation project, which includes solid waste collection and environmental protection. A • 512,600 project to promote sustainable development and

environmental protection in Syria, that will be implemented by a Syrian NGO FIRDOS. A • 30 million EIB loan and a • 5 million EU funded loan subsidy to improve the water and sanitation systems in the two Palestinian refugee camps; Khan Esheih & Khan Dannoun and the 14 surrounding villages, and integrate them in the regional water network. British companies are advised to visit the EU website [www.delsyr.cec.eu.int](http://www.delsyr.cec.eu.int).

In fact only within the last few years has the Syrian government paid serious attention to environmental issues. The Ministry of Environment was established in 1990 and recently merged with the Ministry of Local Administration. But the law that regulates environmental activities and projects was not issued until 2002. It originally gave industrialists and investors a grace period until the end of 2005 to rehabilitate their existing establishments to respect environmental regulations. Meanwhile the government prepared a National Strategy for Syria and established three Industrial Cities in 2003 in the Damascus countryside, Aleppo and Homs to accommodate all new industries. Industries established in those cities MUST accommodate for environmental treatment of

