

Support Project of Total Pollutant Load Control System Introduction

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Pollution was produced throughout Japan's period of high-level economic growth in the 1960s, and this became a major societal issue. With the concentration of population and industry in coastal regions, large quantities of pollutants and substances that cause eutrophication flowed into the ocean, and damage to fishing operations due to "red tides" occurred in addition to environmental pollution from oil spills. To mitigate this situation, the Water Pollution Control Law and various other laws and systems for pollutant control were established, and construction of sewer systems, waste water treating facilities and so on was promoted.

One of these measures was the implementation of a Total Pollutant Load Control System (TPLCS) based on the Water Pollution Control Law and the Law Concerning Special Measures for Conservation of the Environment of the Seto Inland Sea. The TPLCS are designed to reduce the total pollutant load of pollutants flowing into enclosed coastal seas, into which large quantities of water from domestic and industrial activities flow due to the concentration of population and industry in these areas, and for which it would be difficult to achieve and maintain a desirable water quality with effluent regulations based on emission concentrations alone. In Japan, the TPLCS was introduced to Tokyo Bay, Ise Bay and the Seto Inland Sea, and efforts have been promoted to improve the water environment in these water regions.

Moreover, in other countries that are now experiencing dramatic economic growth, eutrophication of water regions due to the generation of large quantities of pollutants is becoming a serious problem in some areas, as it was previously in Japan. TPLCS are thought to be effective in dealing with this problem, but in some cases the technical and institutional knowledge needed to introduce these systems is not in place.

For this reason, Japan is now making use of its accumulated experience in TPLCS to provide international assistance to various countries, primarily countries in East Asia with which it has close ties, in order to help these countries achieve sustainable economic development. Beginning in April 2009, Japan conducted joint research with China on total pollutant load reduction for nitrogen and phosphorus. This cooperation resulted in ammonia nitrogen being introduced as a new target item for total pollutant load reduction in China. Moreover, based on Japan's experience and knowledge and its joint research with China, plans are underway to prepare and release guidelines for the introduction of TPLCS.

Through these activities, Japan hopes to contribute to efforts to improve water environments in other countries that are now facing the same problem of serious eutrophication of their water regions.

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