



“Boosting Environmental Technologies by Verification” – Conference and Parliamentarian Evening (15-16 September 2008)

“Global Cooperation to Enhance the Development and Implementation of Environmental Performance Verification as a Decision Support Tool”

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Technology Innovation and Procurement – Independent third-party verification of environmental performance is an effective tool for providing reliable information to procurement managers and investors. Governments at all levels are significant purchasers of goods and services. By promoting environmental sustainability and integrating environmental performance requirements as part of the procurement process, governments are well positioned to support the market acceptance effective commercialization of environmentally sound technologies. This further encourages the adoption and use of environmentally sound technologies by corporations and industry around the world. Collaborative efforts are needed to integrate environmental performance verification within the procurement process, including the selection, use and disposal of technologies, taking into account factors such as cost, operational performance and overall quality. Equally important is the inclusion of performance testing and verification as part of the cost of technology development and demonstration programs and initiatives. Actions in these areas would greatly improve the overall effectiveness and positive outcomes of global efforts to commercialize and deploy innovative environmentally sound technologies.

Quality Management and Conformity Assessment – Only a few countries currently operate comprehensive national ETV programs (e.g., United States, Japan, Korea, Canada). Although these programs are well positioned to provide independent verification of technology performance and to select qualified testing and verification experts, there is no formal international designation or accreditation presently in place that directly recognizes the ETV process. This issue needs to be addressed taking into account established conformity assessment mechanisms and procedures, both within individual countries and internationally. Linkages to existing standards development organizations should be encouraged to augment global capacity to respond to national and international environmental priorities.

Market Recognition and Mutual Acceptance of Data – Different jurisdictions have different technology selection and approvals processes and it is often difficult to obtain agreement on common approaches. Companies are also concerned about the relevance and proper use of specific protocols and test methods. Furthermore, the development of test methods and protocols to generate credible, high quality “mutually acceptable” data for verification purposes can be both resource-intensive and costly. To encourage inter-jurisdictional acceptance of independent environmental performance verification, it is recommended that governments work towards an agreed generic approach with common parameters and standard test methods that reflect basic requirements, while recognizing the possible subsequent inclusion of additional site- and technology-specific performance criteria where needed. Without international recognition of accredited independent environmental performance verification, the “proof of performance” efforts of technology innovators will be fragmented. This needs to be addressed within the context of a conformity assessment framework that supports mutual acceptance of data, equivalency and a level playing field within the global marketplace.

Continuous Improvement – The complexity and diversity of technical issues addressed by independent environmental performance verification requires a comprehensive “distributed” network of testing and verification experts. This network needs ongoing development and nurturing to ensure that the required capabilities and competencies exist and are qualified to meet the evolving needs and expectations of the global marketplace. Effective communication and coordination within this technical network is essential.

Stakeholder Engagement – Effective market-driven environmental performance verification requires stakeholder engagement to help define relevant and meaningful testing and verification parameters. The relevance and usefulness of the environmental performance verification process is enhanced through consultations with industry sector associations, local governments and other stakeholders. The opportunity exists for governments and other stakeholders to collaborate internationally to identify priority issues where independent performance verification adds value.