

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In part because all the local firms covered in this survey were relatively large and majority are from the electrical and electronic industry, there were no glaring difference in their environmental management policies and practices. A study on a larger sample is recommended in the future to determine a better representation of the impact of each industry on the characteristics discussed.

After looking at all the findings of the survey, there are several suggestions on improving environmental protection to gain sustainable development in Malaysia.

It is undeniable that there is a need to ensure the government regulations should not be jeopardize the economic viability of industry. However, more stringent, and consistent enforcement of existing regulations shall be taken, for example stepping up checks on polluters and for stronger deterrence measures. Suggestions for enforcement include making it mandatory for firms to declare the toxic and flammable materials used, the relocation of hazardous industries and stricter zoning of industrial and residential areas. While calling for stricter enforcement of existing regulations, the Government should also assist industries to meet these regulations and standards by providing advice and expertise particularly to small firms facing technical difficulties; providing central treatment plants for toxic waste from industries, particularly the small ones without the capital to set up their own treatment plants and identifying safe disposal sites for toxic and hazardous wastes. To encourage the private sector to demonstrate greater concern for environmental management and control, the government should also consider incentive systems for them. Grants, subsidiaries, rebates, tax reduction, tax and duty exemptions on the import of technologies related to environment control are a few examples that the government can consider.

The main impression gleaned from the survey was that while environmental concerns and environmental management have clearly featured in the policies, they have yet to be fully institutionalized within the organizational structure. The common pattern was that lack of knowledge in interpreting the environmental standards. There is a loose control with broad guidelines provided but no global basis of performance measurement, evaluation or rewards system for environmental matters. The person or department who is made responsible for EMS are given to discretion to interpret and implement guidelines given by parent company to suit local conditions and the main approach is to ensure compliance with statutory regulations and government imposed standards.

Whether an environmental management system is ultimately successful may depend in part on factors outside the control of the firm. But apart from the existence of a growing legislative framework aimed at directing firms, the most significant determinants of success will be range of internal factors including commitment, the appropriateness of the organization of the system and the success of the company in measuring and assessing its environmental performance. There also has to be a good reason for instituting the EMS and this need to be thoroughly explained and discussed with everyone involved in the firm, including workers, shareholders and customers. Over time the aim must be develop a positive culture surrounding environmental management and its constituent parts.