
ABSTRACT

Solid waste management problems have been gaining prominence in Malaysia due to increasing waste generation and the ineffectiveness of the existing mechanism to tackle the problem holistically. This study seeks to formulate a policy for Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) in Malaysia. This has been done by reviewing the legislative and institutional framework as well as the existing practices and trends in Malaysia. Based on this, key issues and needs of solid waste management in Malaysia have been derived. These key issues were then used as a basis to formulate policy instruments to achieve the main objective of ISWM in Malaysia – *which is to reduce solid waste generation and increase resource recovery.*

A review of the legislative framework reveals that a basic comprehensive law on solid waste management is lacking. Solid waste management is currently implemented through the use of four subsidiary laws which are the Local Government Act, 1976, Environmental Quality Act, 1974, Town & Country Planning Act, 1976 and the Streets, Drainage & Building Act, 1976. In terms of the institutional framework, there appears to be a lack of a single legally empowered agency to tackle solid waste management for the country. The most prominent institution involved currently in solid waste management is the Local Authorities. However, the privatization of solid waste management recently and the proposed Solid Waste Act are expected to introduce significant changes to the existing framework. It is anticipated that solid waste management will be more streamlined under a single agency when these two developments take place.

International trends on the other hand reveal that Malaysia is still far behind in the development of its solid waste management policies. These trends are in the area of legislative development, formulation of strategies / policies, targeting waste generation reduction at source and increasing resource recovery as well as increasing use of economic instruments in solid waste management through investment, taxation and market development of resource recovered products. Environmental protection standards for waste management are also increasing with concerns about hazardous household waste and land contamination from ex-landfills. Finally, trends also reveal countries are increasingly limiting disposal at landfills and increasing imposition of producer responsibility for packaging materials.

Based on existing practices and trends in Malaysia, five key issues in solid waste management were identified. These are the need for strategic planning and legislative reforms, incorporation of integration in the decision making process, the need to consider economic factors in waste management, the lack of stakeholder awareness and finally the need for research in the field to gather basic data on solid waste management to facilitate the decision making process. Consequently, seven policy initiatives have been advocated to provide the policy framework for ISWM. These policy initiatives assume that the government has the lead role to play in moving the country towards integrated solid waste management. The main objective of these policy initiatives is to reduce solid waste generation at source and increase resource recovery. Each of these policy initiatives are complemented by Action Plans which describe specific mechanism to achieve the policy initiative. The policy recommendations formulated for ISWM are as follows :-