

Press Review 3/2013 - Vietnam, Water and Sustainability Research,

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No	Title	Date	Source	Region	Catalogue	Description
1	Comprehensive insight needed for bauxite project	1/3/2013	VN Net	Vietnam	Environment	The Government is continuously pushing for the application of advanced technology in bauxite mining in a bid to make the process more environmentally friendly and to enhance socio-economic efficiency.
2	Public opinion consulted to perfect Land Law revisions	1/3/2013	VN News	Hanoi	Land Use	Land-related matters – including eviction, compensation and resettlement – have dominated the feedback sent to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment over the past month.
3	PM calls for Mekong water unity	2/3/2013	VN News	Can Tho	Water	PM Nguyen Tan Dung has asked countries in the Mekong River basin to share water resources and prepare plans on cooperative exploitation and use of water.
4	Mekong Symposium 2013 from 5th – 7th March 2013 in HCM City	5/3/2013	VD Office	HCM	Environment	From 5th – 7th March 2013 Mekong Symposium has organized in Ho Chi Minh City with the participation of more than 400 experts and scientists.
5	International workshop on “Solid waste treatment and management technology”	11/3/2013	Can Tho News	Can Tho	Waste	On March 11th, Can Tho People’s Committee coordinated with the AKIZ Project of Germany to hold the Workshop about Technology for solid waste treatment and management”.
6	Experience sharing in wastewater treatment and management	11/3/2013	Can Tho News	Can Tho	Waste Management	On March 12th, 2013 workshop “Experience sharing in wastewater treatment” jointly held by Can Tho DOST and German -VN Joint Research Project AKIZ.



V-D Office for Water and Sustainability Research

Vietnamese – German Office for Water and Sustainability Research

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7	Workshop “Experience sharing in wastewater treatment”	12/3/2013	Can Tho News	Can Tho	Waste Management	On March 12th morning, 2013 at Can Tho Centre of Information and Documentation of DOST, there was a workshop which was jointly held by IDC, AKIZ Project and Dai Viet company, about “Experience sharing in wastewater treatment”.
8	Pilot bauxite projects ‘will pave the way for aluminum industry’	12/3/2013	VN Plus	Hanoi	Other	Investing in two pilot bauxite projects in the Central Highlands is the right move for Viet Nam and will pave the way for the country's aluminum industry to take off.
9	Lai Chau tightens controls on mining	14/3/2013	VN News	Lai Chau	Mining	PPC of northern mountain Lai Chau Province has instructed district-level authorities to clamp down on illegal mining.
10	Asia-Pacific faces looming waste crisis	19/3/2013	VN Net	Vietnam	Waste	Delegations from more than 20 Asia-Pacific countries came together in Ha Noi yesterday, March 19, to discuss practical policies for waste - an ever growing challenge in the region.
11	HCM City seeks loans for flood works	19/3/2013	VN Plus	HCM	Environment	Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat has asked the World Bank to provide loans to help fund HCM City’s flood control plan, known as Project 1547.
12	International help sought over climate change	19/3/2013	VN Breaking News	Vietnam	Climate Change	Viet Nam has expanded international co-operation in its efforts to protect the environment and water resources in face of climate change, which is expected to pose a serious threat to the country.



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13	Early hot weather covers north region	23/3/2013	VN Breaking News	Hanoi	Environment	Hot weather has started to cover the northern region earlier than normal, with temperatures forecast to hit up to 36 degrees Celsius. The National Hydro-meteorological Forecast Centre made the conclusion.
14	Water supply to capital city disrupted	25/3/2013	VN News	Hanoi	Water	A rupture in the water mains on the Thang Long Highway running from Da River to Hanoi on March 23 led to water shortages for more than 70,000 households in the city's six districts.



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1. Comprehensive insight needed for bauxite project

The Government is continuously pushing for the application of advanced technology in bauxite mining in a bid to make the process more environmentally friendly and to enhance socio-economic efficiency, the head of the Government Office Vu Duc Dam has confirmed at his monthly press briefing.

He told reporters that more research will be undertaken to see what areas of bauxite exploitation and processing should be changed.

The long-standing policy of the Party and State is to explore and sufficiently exploit natural resources to contribute to the country's socio-economic development, he said.

Effective processing of bauxite is dependent on many factors including infrastructure, investment, the environment and the world market, Dam continued.

An eight-year plan to pinpoint several key sites for exploration, exploitation, processing and usage of bauxite was approved in 2007, with a view towards 2025.

Each of these project sites continues to improve its general socio-economic development efficiency, Dam said, citing the example of the Dung Quat oil refinery project, which has significantly contributed to the development momentum in the central region.

Answering questions about the decision of the Viet Nam National Coal and Mineral Industries Group (Vinacomin) to halt the construction of the Ke Ga deepwater port in central Binh Thuan Province, Dam said the decision was reasonable.

The port was planned to take bauxite from mines in Tay Nguyen (Central Highlands) and the project was stopped due to a reduction in bauxite production, one of the main sources of income for the port, according to Vinacomin.

After calculating the volume of goods set to be transported via Ke Ga port, the company reported to the Ministry of Trade and Industry that it was not viable for them to invest in the project at present, Dam said.

He said that the region's bauxite could still be sent to other existing ports in the area, such as Go Dau and Phu My.

State management agencies have declared that subsequently the halt of work on the Ke Ga project will not have a great impact on their long-term strategy and have therefore agreed to stop investing in the project, he said.

2. Public opinion consulted to perfect Land Law revisions

Land-related matters – including eviction, compensation and resettlement – have dominated the feedback sent to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment over the past month.

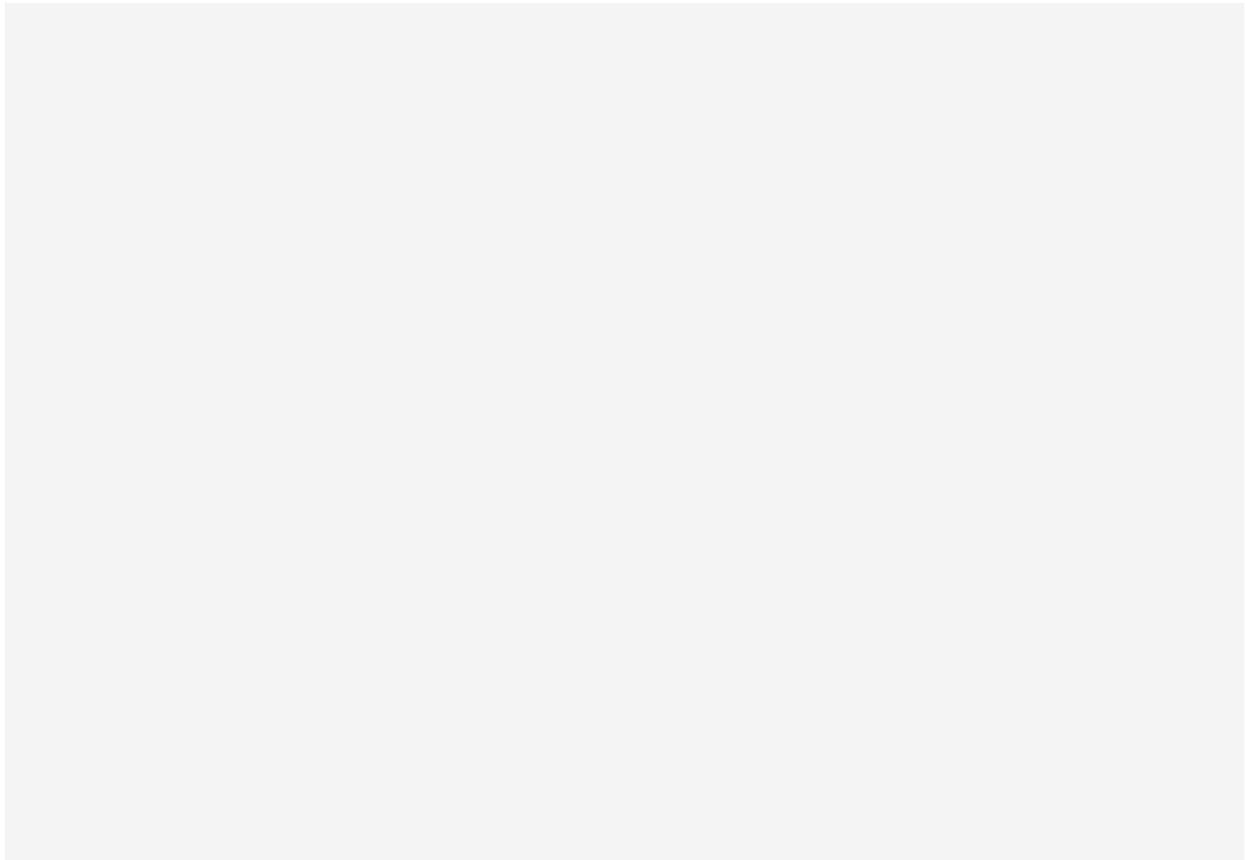
The ministry will consider valuable ideas to perfect the amendments, while other ideas will be clearly explained to the public, said Deputy Minister Nguyen Manh Hien at a press meeting held yesterday in Ha Noi.

“If the amendments are approved, methods of compensation, who will receive them and who will not, will be clearly regulated,” he said.

“Land evictions are expected to be conducted under the Land Law instead of under a Government decree as they have in the past,” he said.

He added that the State would assess the price of land for compensation under a land-use purpose at the time when a land eviction decision is being made.

Under the current law, the price of land for compensation is



3. PM calls for Mekong water unity

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung has asked countries in the Mekong River basin to share water resources and prepare plans on cooperative exploitation and use of water.

"Neighbouring countries' cooperation on transboundary water resources is important for the sustainable development strategy of Viet Nam for the 2011 – 2020 period," he said.

Dung spoke at the National Meeting for World Water Day (March 22) and at a ceremony during the ASEM Seminar on Water and River Basin Management held yesterday in Can Tho City.

Two-thirds of Viet Nam's water volume is derived from international water resources that flow into the Mekong and Red rivers.

"Water, which is essential for all manufacturing activities, has become the second-most important strategic resource, after human resources," Dung added.

In recent years, pollution and salinity intrusion have threatened existing water sources while demand for water is increasing.

The world's second-largest rice exporter, Viet Nam is experiencing increased demand for water from industries and services as well as for navigation purposes.

Dung urged ministries, agencies and local authorities to develop information exchanges and a legal framework on the exploitation and sustainable use of water resources.

Globally, about 150 countries share water resources for daily life and economic development.

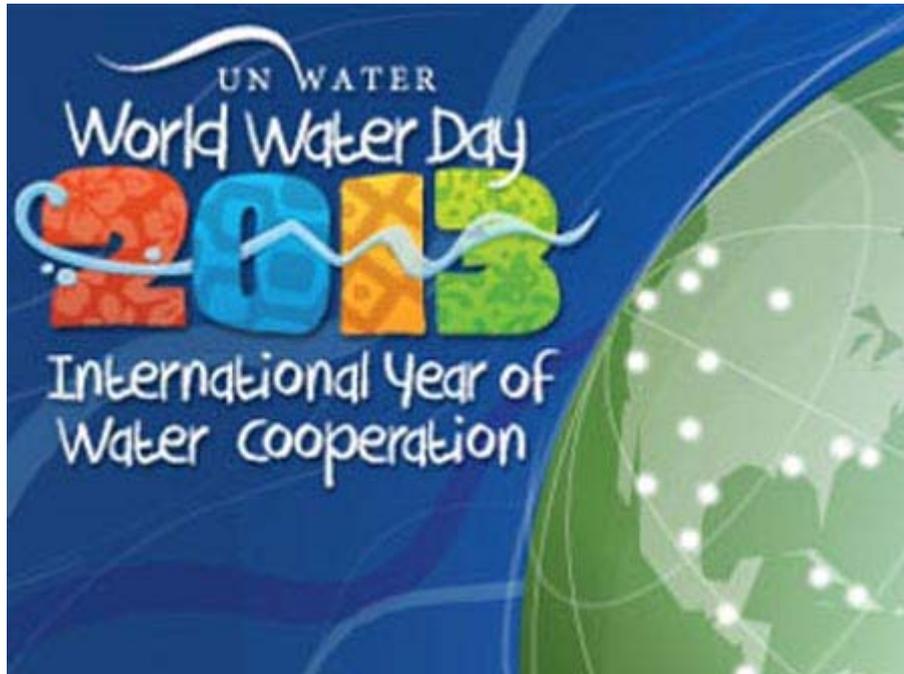
"Transboundary water resources will require cooperation among countries about these common issues, especially during a period of globalisation," Dung said.

He said that cooperation on water use of the Mekong River was especially important.

In only one decade, the Mekong River has become one of five in the world with reduced water volume due to drought.

This has had an impact on the Mekong (Cuu Long) Delta, the country's rice basket.

"Protecting water resources brings more cooperation opportunities," said Dung.



The World Water Day emphasises the need to strengthen water cooperation and develop solutions that harmonise water allocation between economic sectors.

At an earlier event, during the National Meeting for World Water Day, Koos Neefjes, the UN representative in Viet Nam, noted that one-third of the world's people were living in countries with moderate to high water stress.

"Competition is growing between farmers and herders, industry and agriculture, town and country," he said, quoting UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

The Secretary-General also called on parties both upstream and downstream as well as across borders to cooperate on water usage.

Victoria Kwakwa, the World Bank's country director for Viet Nam, noted that water played an important role in agriculture development, food security and energy security.

In the poorest areas of Viet Nam, access to water was fairly low, one of the reasons that made poverty reduction challenging, she said.

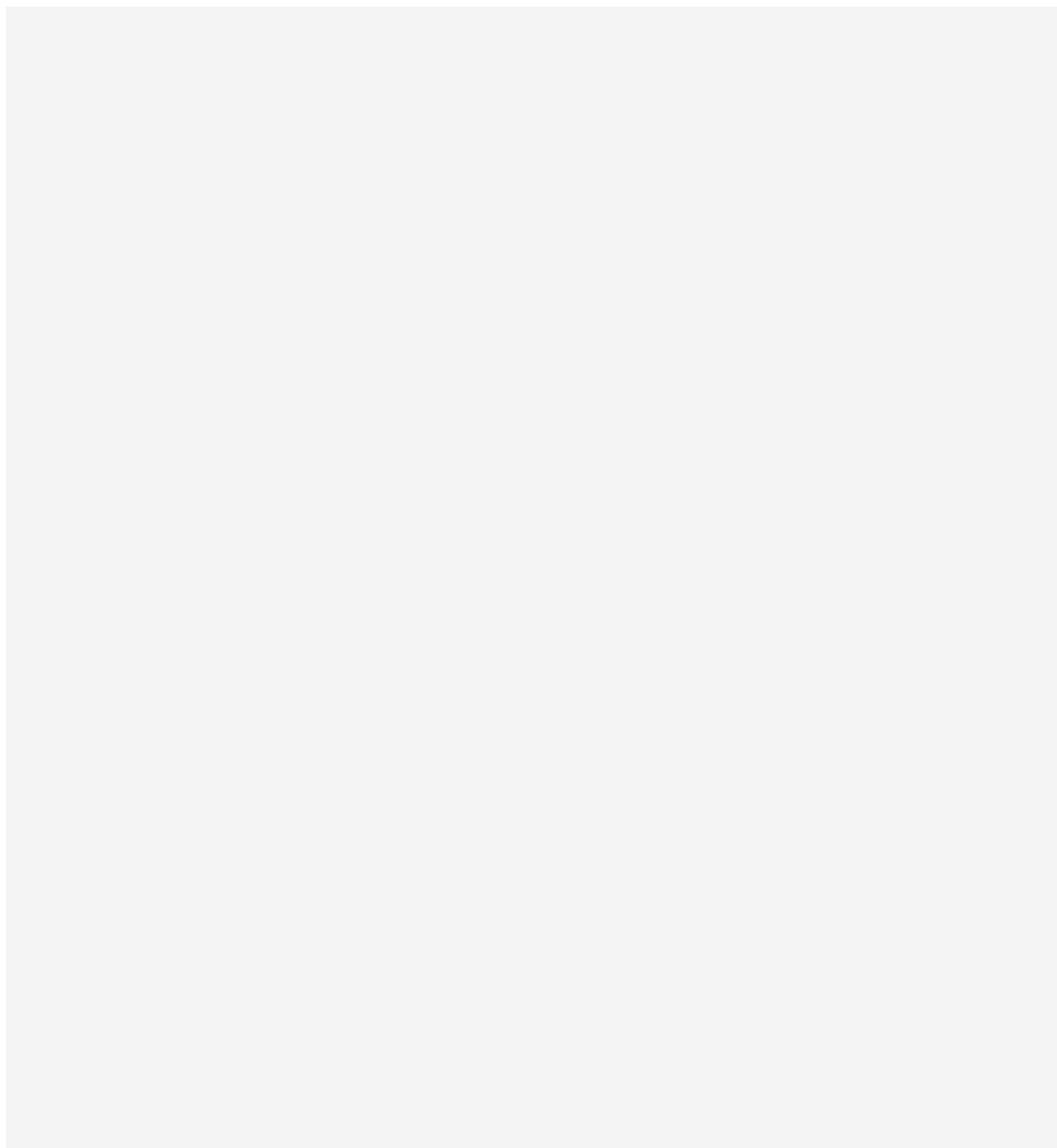
Influences from climate change and sea level rises made it even tougher, Kwakwa said, adding that dialogue between countries upstream and downstream of the Mekong River was vitally important.

Water cooperation contributes to poverty alleviation, social justice, improved living conditions and education opportunities, especially for women and children.

By 2025, there will be 1.8 billion people in the world living in areas without water, and two-thirds of the world's population will have difficulty accessing water resources.

The UN has named 2013 the International Year of Water Cooperation.

The World Water Day emphasises the need to strengthen water cooperation and develop solutions that harmonise water allocation between economic sectors.



4. Mekong Symposium 2013 from 5th – 7th March 2013 in HCM City

From 5th – 7th March 2013 Mekong Symposium has organized in Ho Chi Minh City with the participation of more than 400 experts and scientists supported by German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and led by Mr. Wilfried Kraus – the Deputy Director General – Directorate 72: Sustainability, Climate and Energy, he also paid visit to some projects in the Mekong area such as AKIZ, LEGATO, MEGACITIES, etc..

Mekong riparian countries are facing severe human-induced challenges, due to socio-economic transformation, urbanization, and the ever increasing interlinking and economic growth of the riparian countries. Hydropower developments on the main river streams are just one example of many controversial topics related to the Mekong Basin. These developments, in addition to climate change and associated shifts in flood pulse or river ecology are taking their toll on a highly sensitive aquatic ecosystem and affect the livelihoods of millions of people in the region. These effects are negatively reinforced by the increasing and often conflicting demands of the different riparian countries of the Mekong. Our six years of experience working on the environmental, economic, and social topics related to the Mekong has shown us that there is a need for intensified, inter-disciplinary exchange on these topics for all riparian countries. Our experience has also shown that there are already many excellent projects in place that address the most pressing overarching theme of the Mekong: to find a sustainable equilibrium between economic development on the one hand, and the protection of natural resources on the other.

The United Nations has declared 2013 as the year of “International Year of Water Cooperation”. Actors from all backgrounds and disciplines will take advantage of this to actively promote the internationally agreed water-related goals, which were set out in Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals, and prior climate-related summits in Johannesburg, Kyoto, Cancun, and Rio. At the Mekong Environmental Symposium 2013 we focus on the most pressing issues in one of the world’s largest transboundary river catchments. The Mekong Basin is home to over 70 million inhabitants. The river flows for over 4800 km through six countries. Nations active in the Mekong include not only the riparian countries themselves, but also countries such as Japan and other ASEAN nations, Australia, the USA, and many European countries.

5. INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP On “ SOLID WASTE TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY”

On March 11th, Can Tho People’s Committee coordinated with the AKIZ Project of Germany to hold the Workshop about Technology for solid waste treatment and management”.



The workshop was aimed to create a forum among management agencies, enterprises of provinces in the Mekong Delta region to directly discuss together and with experts from Germany in managing and treating solid waste, thus that would help cities, provinces in Mekong Delta to have more information, solutions for management and treatment which are suitable to the real conditions, aiming to sustainable development.

The workshop stated that cities, provinces of Mekong Delta release about 600.000 tons/a of domestic solid waste, industrial solid waste about 47 million m³/a. most of those solid waste haven't been throughly treated and managed before being discharged. As forecasted, the total amount of solid waste will be 5,000 tons/day by 2015 and will increase up to nearly 8,000 tons/day in 2020. Especially for Can Tho, the current domestic solid waste is 818 tons/day and is expected to increase up to 1,393 tons/day in 2020. In the mean time, the average ration for solid waste collection is just 60% and is mainly treated by landfilling. In order to help provinces, cities in Mekong Delta to effectively manage solid waste, experts from Germany did propose some solutions in which landfilling was highly appreciated because it is most appropriate to the local conditions, easily to be implemented and with low expense. This method can minimize air, surface water and ground water pollution; when the landfill is full it can be renovated to other places for public purposes...

At the workshop, experts also introduces advanced solid waste treatment technologies which are applied in the world, investment models and financial investment models to implement solid waste treatment projects...

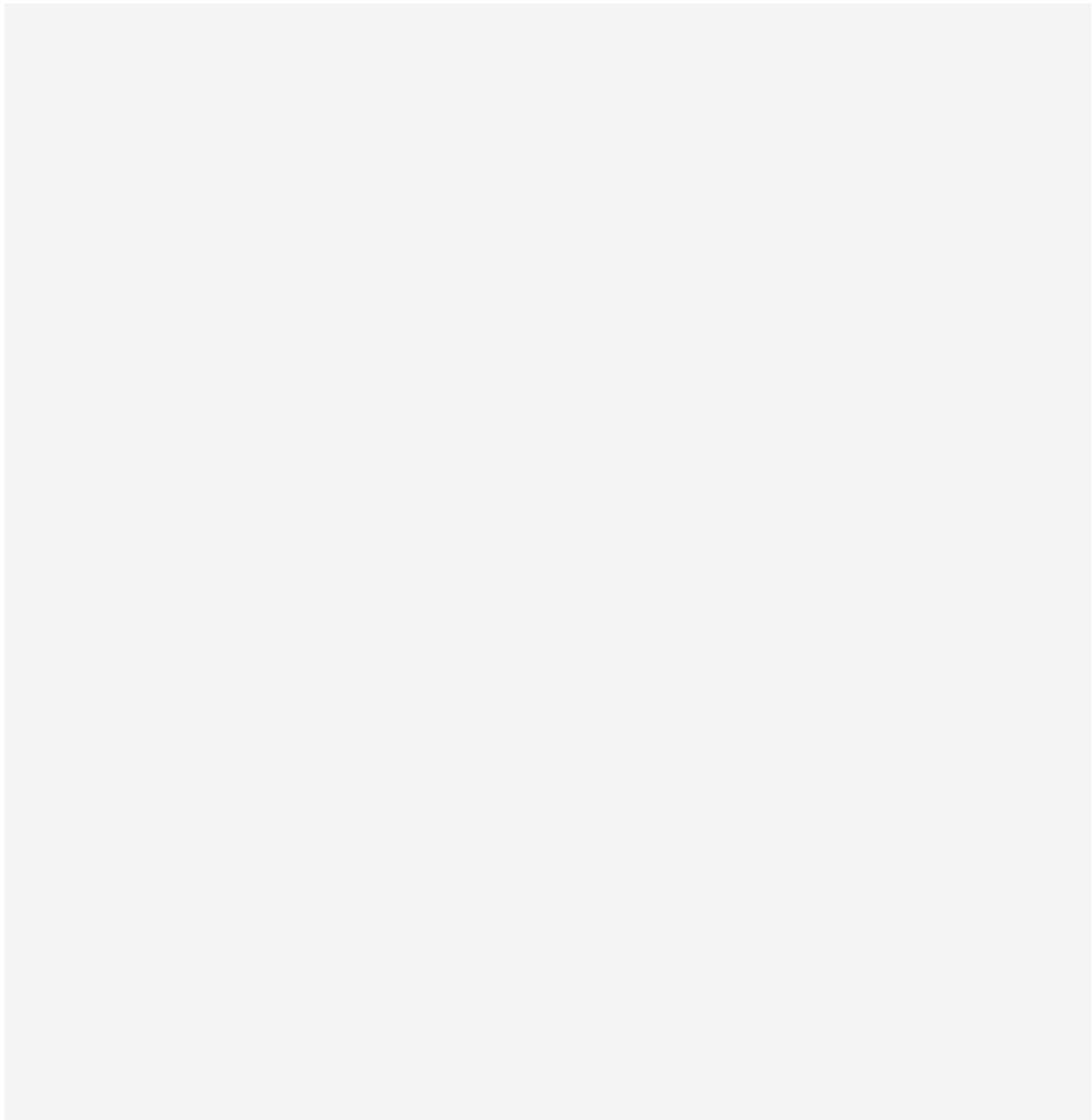
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6. Experience sharing in wastewater treatment and management

In the morning of March 12th, 2013, more than 100 staff from agencies in charge of environmental protection and students from Can Tho University, Can Tho Technical and Economical College participated the so-called workshop “ Experience sharing in wastewater treatment” jointly held by Can Tho Centre of Information and Documentation (DOST) and German-Vietnam Joint Research Project AKIZ.

AKIZ is implementing wastewater treatment activity in Tra Noc IZ. Thus, the City allows scientists and experts (Germany) and enterprises (HCM City) to invest technology on wastewater treatment for Tra Noc IZ, share experiences on carrying out projects to treat environmental pollution, manage technology and equipment for energy saving. This activity is to get rid of the fact that enterprises in Can Tho lack information and waste money in equipping the wastewater treatment system.

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7. Workshop “Experience sharing in wastewater treatment”



On March 12th morning, 2013 at Can Tho Centre of Information and Documentation of DOST, there was a workshop which was jointly held by IDC, AKIZ Project and Dai Viet company, about “Experience sharing in wastewater treatment”.

More than 120 delegates from hospitals, environmental management agencies of Mekong Delta and students of environmental fields from Colleges, university in Can Tho and mass media did come to this event.

At the workshop, delegates listened to 4 presentations of domestic and international experts about aspects of wastewater pretreatment, detoxification in wastewater; analysis of requirement for operation of wastewater treatment system and introduction of the mobile lab system, application of microorganisms in wastewater treatment...

The workshop was the chance to get experience from German experts and also to create a forum for agencies to discuss, exchange knowledge in environmental field.

<http://www.canhostnews.vn/?tabid=96&NDID=26202&keyword=Hoi-thao-%E2%80%9CChia-se-kinh-nghiem-trong-xu-ly-nuoc-thai%E2%80%9D>

8. Pilot bauxite projects 'will pave the way for aluminum industry'

Investing in two pilot bauxite projects in the Central Highlands is the right move for Viet Nam and will pave the way for the country's aluminum industry to take off, according to Minister of Industry and Trade Vu Huy Hoang.

"The decision to go for these two projects was made after careful consideration of the Party, State, National Assembly and Government," assured Hoang, as he sat down for an interview with Viet Nam Television aired on Sunday.

He was addressing concerns from some economic and industry experts who had suggested these projects should be halted because of low economic efficiency.

The two projects are based in Lam Dong Province's Tan Rai District and Dak Nong's Nhan Co District. The construction of the Tan Rai plant was completed last December and has already manufactured the first batch of alumina products, which meet quality standards. The Nhan Co plant is still under the construction and will become operational in the first half of 2014.

Regarding concerns about why these two plants lagged behind the initial schedule, Hoang explained it was because of complications emerging from installing the sophisticated technologies which had never been used in Viet Nam previously. In addition, there were difficulties inherent in the Central Highlands region itself.

"The construction of the storage for red mud (bauxite residue after alumina has been extracted) has had to be extended because the reality has prompted us to review the technical design and implement additional solutions to ensure safety," he said, saying it was the main reason for all the delay. "Our stance is that we'd rather buy some time to ensure maximum safety," Hoang said. "However, I have to admit that another reason for that was our lack of management experience for this type of project."

The minister went on to give assurances about the economic efficiency of the plants. The price of alumina recently plunged to US\$326.5 per tonne, 10 per cent lower than the price planned for in 2009. "The efficiency of these projects should be evaluated from a long-term perspective. These projects are running at a pilot stage so I think we need more time to gather a more accurate assessment."

He said that although the alumina price was comparatively low now, the situation could easily change in the five or ten years. He declared that the two projects were not only economically important to the investors but to the socio-economic development of the region as a whole. Hoang said that the environmental impacts of these projects had been taken into consideration with extreme caution. Viet Nam is said to have 10 to 11 billion of tonnes of bauxite, mainly found in the Central Highlands. The country has to import 100 per cent of alumina for production.

9. Lai Chau tightens controls on mining

The People's Committee of northern mountain Lai Chau Province has instructed district-level authorities to clamp down on illegal mining.

The move was made in response to the resumption of unauthorised exploitation of natural minerals in the province.

In September last year, a provincial interdisciplinary mission inspected and cleared illegal mining activities, particularly in hot spots such as Noong Heo commune, Sin Ho border district and along the Da River running through Muong Te border district.

However, illegal mining has resumed in many areas.

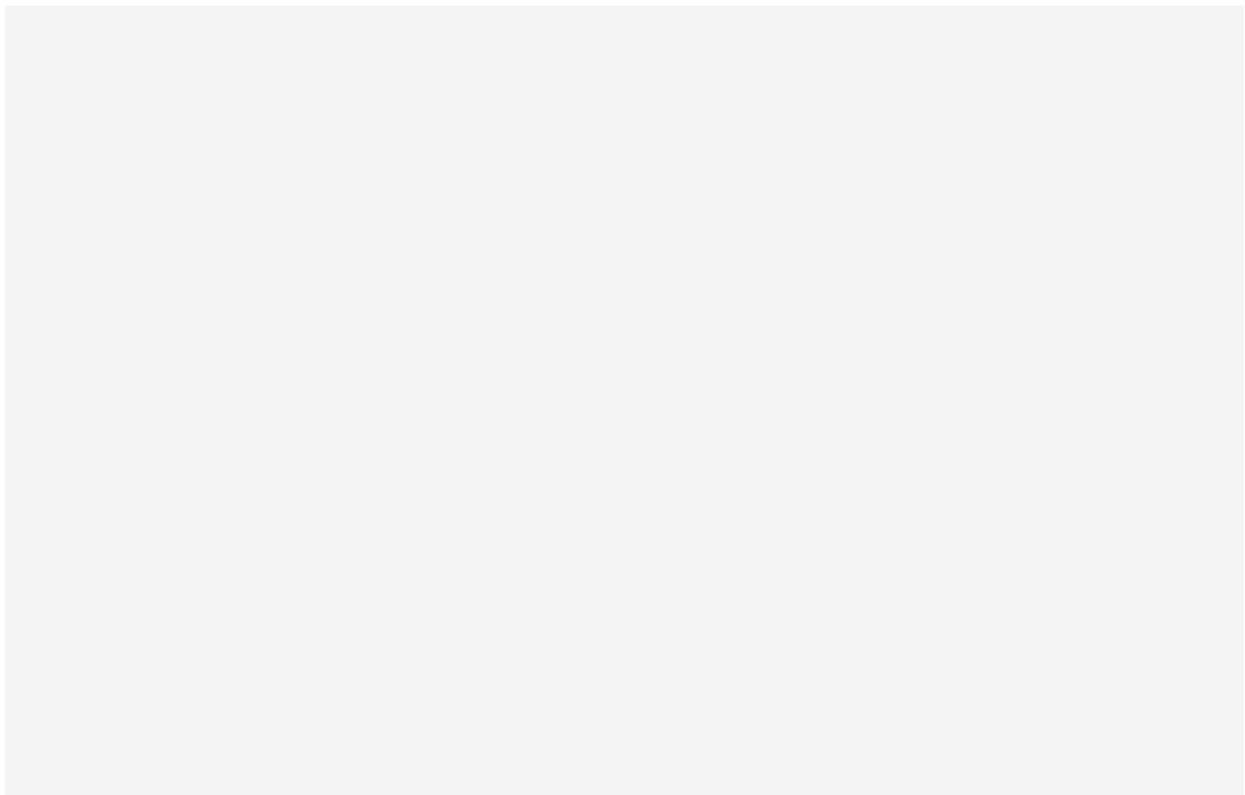
The inspections conducted in late January by the local Department of Natural Resources and Environment found that many local people were gold-mining in areas that had previously been closed by local authorities in Sin Ho district.

Director of the provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment Vu Van Luong said there was a high risk for of illegal mining in the province and admitted that small-scale illegal exploitation had been reported in some areas.

"An interdisciplinary inspection team, including the police and local department, will commence their work from March 10," he said.

"Any illegal activities will be shut down," he said.

In 2012, local authorities uncovered 11 illegal mines looking to exploit gold ore, rare earths and minerals. They also destroyed mining equipment and makeshift accommodation, and seized nearly 1,000 kilos of explosives.



10. Asia-Pacific faces looming waste crisis

Delegations from more than 20 Asia-Pacific countries came together in Ha Noi yesterday, March 19, to discuss practical policies for waste - an ever growing challenge in the region.

Addressing the opening day of the three-day forum yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan, said the gathering was an excellent opportunity for exchanging experiences and best practices of 3R policy formulation and implementation. He said he was sure Viet Nam would acquire valuable lessons from it.

Prasad Modak, president of the Mumbai-based Environmental Management Centre, said Asia had to deal with many problems and should create a regulatory framework.

More waste generated per capita (the continent produces about 700 million tonnes of garbage annually), emerging waste streams such as electronic waste and a variety of associated health risks are just a few of the problems he mentioned at the plenary session.

Municipal solid waste continues to be the largest waste stream and is still growing due to population growth, urbanisation and economic growth.

Modak said that the best approach would be to view waste disposal as a business opportunity, rather than an obligation.

He and other speakers advocated the 3R approach, which called for reduction (that is, minimising waste) followed by reusing and recycling.

Ideally, this would establish a global circular economy in which the use of brand-new material was minimised and less waste was produced.

Doctor Heinz Schandl, from Australia's national science agency Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, said that Asia also had to take into account the booming middle-income consumer class and its extremely high level of consumption.

"Lifestyles and consumption patterns of millions of consumers in Asia's developing countries are now converging with those of OECD countries," he said, suggesting that curbing consumption would also help reduce waste.

The countries participating in the forum will likely adopt the "Ha Noi 3R Declaration – Sustainable 3R Goals for Asia for 2013-23," which aims to provide a basis for Asian countries to voluntarily develop and implement 3R policies and programmes.

The basic idea of a 3R approach is a shift away from a mass consumption society to one that is based on a life-cycle, sound material flow society.

The 3Rs usually refers to reduce, reuse and recycle.

The 3Rs regional forum is an initiative launched by Japan in 2004.

11. HCM City seeks loans for flood works

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat has asked the World Bank to provide loans to help fund HCM City's flood control plan, known as Project 1547.

On March 17, Phat and representatives of the city's People's Committee and the World Bank visited several flood-prevention projects in the city.

The plan for Project 1547 includes the building of a river dyke system and tidal sluices to control tides at the mouth of big rivers and canals.

The proposed 146-km dyke system runs from Ben Suc in Cu Chi district to the Kinh Lo River in Long An province.

The city has already built a dyke along the right bank of the Sai Gon River and sluices, including the Nhieu Loc – Thi Nghe, Binh Trieu, Rach Tra, Vam Thuat and other small sluices, according to the HCM City Steering Centre for Flood Control.

Project 1547 has helped to prevent floods in these areas, but, downstream of Thu Duc district, where the project has not been implemented, rain and high tides have caused severe flooding.

This area has also had the highest incidence of riverbank erosion in the city, accounting for six of the city's 29 erosion prone sites. The dyke section in this area is about 11km long, and investment is estimated to be 2.6 trillion VND (123 million USD).

In the near future, the city will build four tidal sluices at Kinh, Phu Xuan, Vam Thuat and Tan Thuan rivers.

It will also build dykes and dredge rivers and canals in the city's low-lying areas and southern area.

However, the city continues to struggle to find investment capital.

12. International help sought over climate change

Viet Nam has expanded international co-operation in its efforts to protect the environment and water resources in face of climate change, which is expected to pose a serious threat to the country.

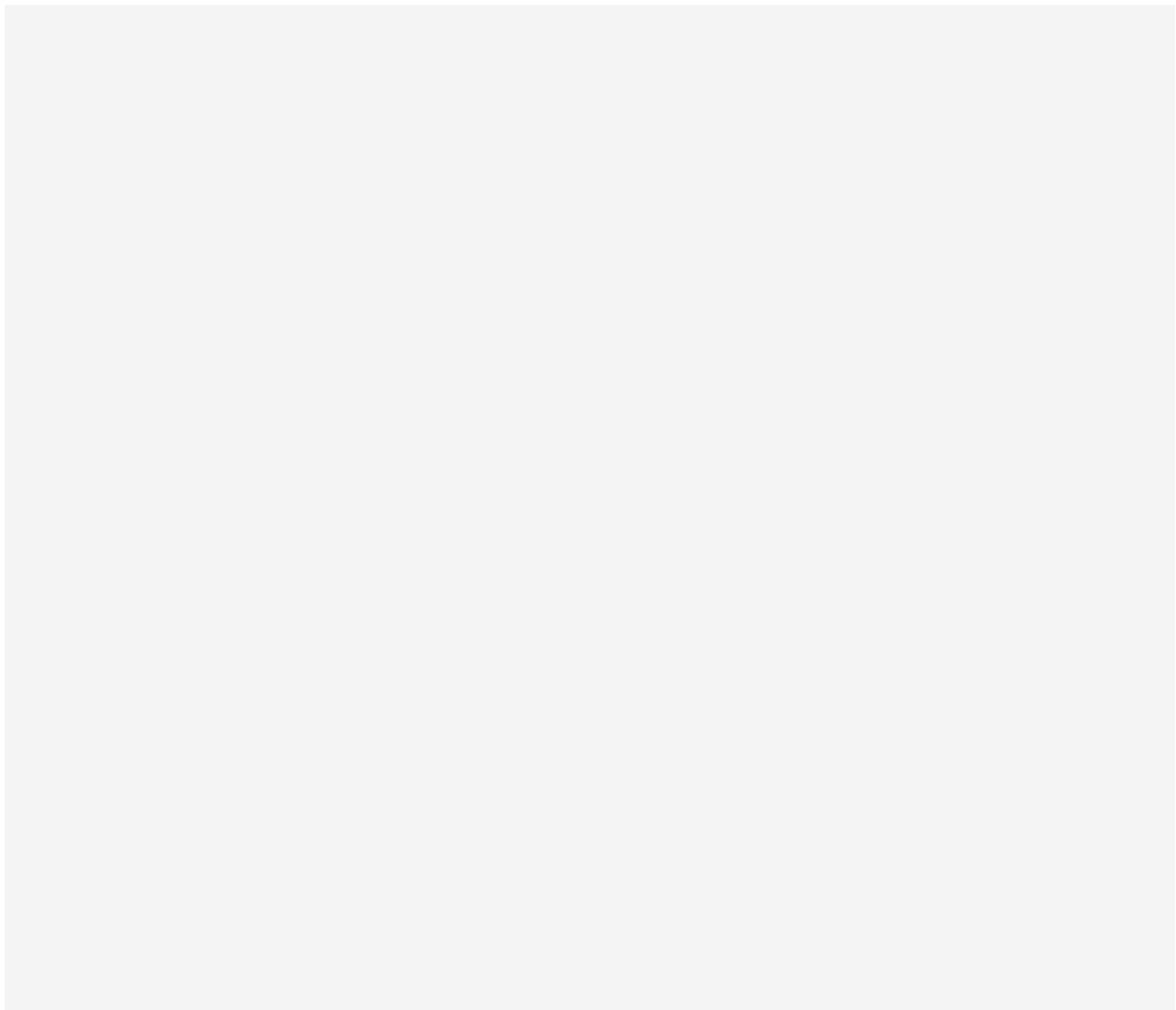
The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment now runs 58 programmes and projects with international assistance at a total cost of US\$430 million.

Besides a VND250 billion (\$11.9 million) project to combat the effects of climate change, conserving mangrove forests gets top priority.

This year, it will also undertake a three-year programme to replant mangrove forests with the help of international consultancy at a cost of VND1.9 trillion (\$90 million).

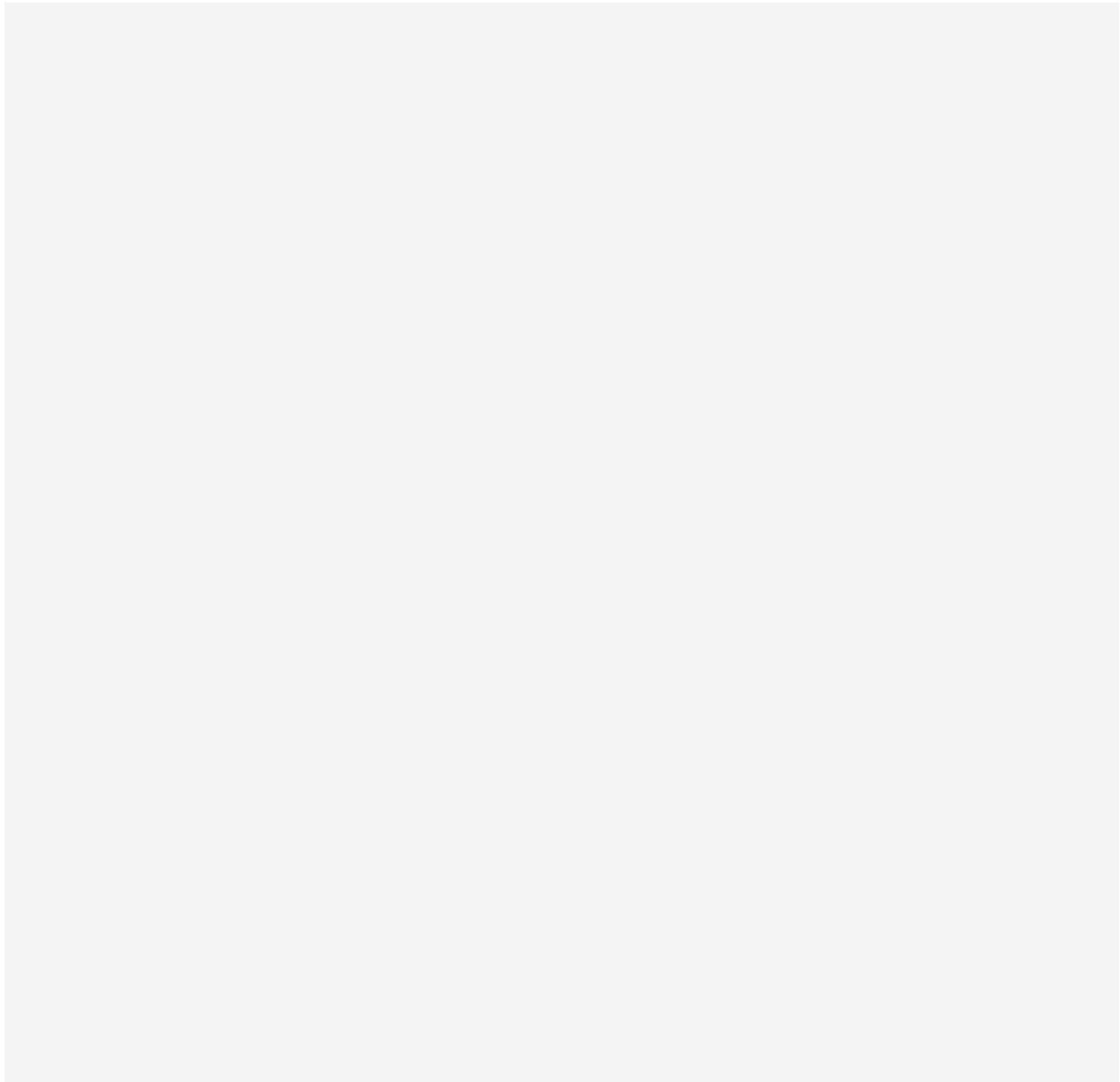
Since 1994 around 22,000 hectares of mangrove have been replanted.

Mangrove forests are known to absorb 50 per cent of the energy of tidal waves and rising seas caused by climate change.



13. Early hot weather covers north region

Hot weather has started to cover the northern region earlier than normal, with temperatures forecast to hit up to 36 degrees Celsius. The National Hydro-meteorological Forecast Centre made the conclusion, adding that the temperature in Ha Noi yesterday ranged between 29-32 degrees Celsius, even though it's not even April. This winter saw fewer cold spells than previous years and those that did occur were less intense, said the centre's director Bui Minh Tang. The temperature in February, for example, was one to two degrees Celsius higher than the same period in previous years, he noted. "The northern region is likely to suffer more cold weather, but it will not be so severe, with the daily average temperature dropping to around 15 degrees Celsius," he said. Tang attributed the warm streak to global climate change, which has also caused an increase in natural



14. Water supply to capital city disrupted

A rupture in the water mains on the Thang Long Highway running from Da River to Hanoi on March 23 led to water shortages for more than 70,000 households in the city's six districts.

Repair work is expected to finish on March 25 to resume water supplies for the districts of Thanh Xuan, Hoang Mai, Cau Giay, Tu Liem, Thanh Tri and Dong Da.

Nguyen Anh Viet, director of the Vietnam Water Company (Viwaco), said the subsidence of the highway coupled with high water pressure had possibly resulted in the problem.

The company had sent 30 workers to fix the line and diverted water from the spare station to partially meet demands of affected households, he said.

This is the second time the pipeline has broken since it opened in 2007.

The previous incident in February 2012 left 40,000 households without water.

