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Country needs to establish more industrial waste sites, study finds

THAILAND must look for enough appropriate sites to dispose of industrial waste to support rising requirements over the coming decades, said Deputy Industry Minister Pramote Vittayasuk.

Pramote, who presided over the opening of the "Toxic Industrial Waste Disposal Management Master Plan 2015-2019" seminar, said Thailand accumulated 470,000 tonnes a year of toxic industrial waste, and 8 million tonnes of non-toxic waste from industry.

A study conducted by the Department of Industrial Works (DIW) and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, which began in April and will end this September, has found that Thailand must establish three more industrial-waste disposal sites for the Northern, Northeastern and Eastern regions.

For toxic industrial wastes, seven provinces are suitable for fully integrated industrial-waste disposal sites: Nakhon Ratchasima, Lamphun, Rayong, Prachin Buri, Pathum Thani, Ayutthaya and Ang Thong. Lampang and Rayong are suitable for non-toxic disposal sites.

DIW director-general Pasu Loharjun said the government has included the issue of tackling inappropriate industrial-waste disposal on the national agenda.

Moreover, the government's investment promotion policy, which has attracted no less than Bt500 billion worth of investments in disposal sites, should take care of about 3 million tonnes of toxic waste and 50 million tonnes of non-toxic waste each year. Thus, the government has instructed the Industry Ministry, the DIW and the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand to find six appropriate disposal sites nationwide to support the rising volume of industrial wastes for the next 20-30 years.

The tentative list of seven provinces that are suitable for disposal sites is yet to be confirmed, likely by late September.

The Industry Ministry plans to announce that operation permits will not be renewed for factories that have failed to comply with the industrial rules and regulations. It hopes this will force at least 90 per cent of the factories to upgrade their operations gradually to comply within the next five years.

Thailand currently has 5,300 factories that have proper industrial-waste disposal systems, which is 7 per cent of the 68,000 registered factories nationwide.

About 1 million of the 3 million tonnes of toxic industrial wastes are properly disposed of annually, while about 13 million of the 50 million tonnes of non-toxic industrial wastes are properly disposed of each year, Pasu said.

