

Jack A. Ristau
Vice President Business Development
Wheelabrator Technologies Inc.

ABSTRACT

Many countries overseas, for the first time, are beginning to explore the use of waste-to-energy plants as part of their integrated solid waste management plans. They are doing this for a number of reasons, which include geopolitical and economic pressures, as well as environmental. Overseas markets are actively seeking out, and wanting to apply the advancements made by U.S. waste-to-energy companies in the last three decades. U.S. companies have made U.S. waste-to-energy plants the least costly and most efficient plants in the world. U.S. waste-to-energy companies may be poised for new business opportunity for their systems in overseas markets. However, there are many obstacles to overcome in marketing technology and waste disposal services overseas. Where are those markets of opportunity? There are three criteria which can be used to screen for potential waste-to-energy markets: 1. Living standards; 2. Limitation on land use; and, 3. Rule of law. What are the cultural, geographic and competitive obstacles in marketing overseas? Can obstacles such as language, development costs, time zone differences, institutional experience with privatization, local and foreign competitive advantages be managed or medicated? An understanding of how a global economy impacts the marketing of U.S. waste-to-energy services is essential to formulating an overseas marketing plan.

Introduction

As U.S.-based waste-to-energy companies are grappling with the continued outlook of little to no domestic growth, other countries are beginning to use waste-to-energy disposal technology for the first time. U.S. waste-to-energy companies are peppered with calls from overseas developers and government officials requesting plant information and plant tours. Requests come in from all over the

world for cost information and solicitations to become equity partners in new projects. Does this signal, for U.S. waste-to-energy companies, a new opportunity to offer waste disposal services overseas? Where are the viable waste-to-energy markets, and what are the obstacles to marketing waste-to-energy services overseas? My remarks in this paper will address these and other similar questions.

Changing Global Landscape

For many, the fall of the Berlin wall signaled the beginning of a new era of global peace and a more open and dynamic world economy. While these changes have been embraced by most of the countries, governments and their domestic businesses must now be more innovative and more competitive than ever before. Ever expanding domestic budgets for infrastructure services burden a country's businesses with new taxes, and reduce their competitiveness in the global economy. In addition, domestic pressures and international treaties have increased the liability for countries to turn a blind eye to pollution within their borders. With respect to the waste management industry, the EU Packaging Directive and EU Landfill Directive require diversion of packaging and organics, respectively from landfill by increasing amounts over the next 20 years. Failure to comply with these directives could lead to severe economic sanctions. These directives will likely revitalize the waste-to-energy industry in Europe.

In summary, geopolitical and global economic pressures have caused governments to reevaluate how infrastructure services can be more effectively and economically procured, without degradation of quality of service and the environment. Some countries, for the first time, are passing laws enabling privatization of many historically owned