Mexico has experienced rapid industrial growth in the past ten years, with industrial production increasing by 44% from 1997 to 2000. Mexico is the first producer of silver, honey, citric fruits and cement. It is an important producer of minerals and natural gas worldwide.

The Mexican legislation regulates 90% of industrial activities and services, leaving out consideration for the farming and stockbreeding, which generates a lot of contamination, thus contributing with a minimum of 5% of the country’s GDP, as shown in the following figure: Effects of productive sectors in the environment.

The national Environmental Protection Agency (PROFEPA) in 1994 initiated an environmental auditing program and has awarded 1763 certificates for Clean Industry since then. Some PROFEPA studies for the development of environmental performance indicators in different industrial sectors and considering different stages in the life cycle, have established relevant impact categories, which are: water quality and consumption, soil contamination and erosion, air pollution, loss of biodiversity and deforestation, use of non-renewable resources and health.

89% of solid waste generated in Mexico is from industry (8,000,000 tons/year in 1996, INE), mainly from manufacturing, mining and oil refinement activities. Hazardous waste is produced at an estimated rate of 8 million tons per year, mainly from oil and chemical industries. The main hazardous wastes generated in Mexico are solvents (36.20%) and lubricants (12.89%).

The lack of hazardous waste disposal areas as well as the lack of knowledge on the reutilization market, and the high costs of transportation, make generators -specially small and medium-sized companies- dispose of them under no control, or, in the best case, keep them on site under no control, thus creating an environmental liability.

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8. National Program for Environment and Natural 2001-2006, Environment and Natural Resources Secretaria, SEMARNAT.