Segments:

The Environmental sector is very broad. At its simplest, it could be divided into four segments, which are not totally independent:

- Treatment of wastes (solid, liquid, and gaseous);
- Upgrading of the infrastructure (water & air systems, purification and pollution control equipment);
- Technology transfer (upgrading of industrial process);
- Medium-to-long term investment for sustainable development in the field of agriculture and forestry.

Immediate to short-term needs

Consultants say that the immediate growth prospects lie in the treatment of wastes (mainly liquid, but also gaseous). The urgent need for treatment comes from the fact that the quality of water resources has been affected in several basins of the country. This is due to the discharge of sewage and raw wastes and un-processed industrial effluents, the recycling of drainage water with high salinity for irrigation, the leaching of pesticides from the soil, fuel spills and other sources. Sectors that have shown considerable growth and that are also highly polluting are: paper and paper paste; chemicals, plastics, petrochemicals, aluminum, iron, and steel; and food preparation (re: Appendix 1, for list of companies within the aforementioned sectors). Other effluent generating industrial installations to consider are: paint; pharmaceuticals; tanneries; and slaughterhouses. Industrial installations in these sectors would need technology transfer, waste management services, and equipment for waste treatment.

Even though meaningful statistics about the environmental market (exact size, growth, segments, market shares,...) are not available, it is certain that great potential lies for businesses involved in the safeguard of the environment.

For example, industrial plants in the province of Buenos Aires (approx. 30,000, including the capital), account for about 60% of the national industrial production. It can be said that usually, around 90% of all industries have operations that affect, in one way or another, the environment. From interviews with consultants, it was approximated that around 30% of the industries in the B.A. province use adequate waste treatment. This means that about 80% of 27,000 industries (over 21,000) will be in need, in the future, of products and services to allow for treatment of their wastes or transformation of their operating process. Furthermore, the average industrial plant in the greater Buenos Aires area apparently needs to invest US$ 300,000 in installations