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4-Green industries

Promising sectors

Waste treatment (industrial waste, contaminated site cleanup, soil decontamination); water management (urban water purification and treatment); fight against pollution (air pollution control and the fight against this form of pollution); noise pollution (a problem of increasing severity in France: acoustical engineering studies, improved building methods and materials).

A. The potential

The green industries market has a great deal of growth potential, although this potential is taking longer to realize than predicted. A study prepared by BIPE (Bureau international des prévisions économiques) [international bureau of economic forecasting] for the Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire et de l'Environnement [department of land use planning and environmental management] forecasts 1.5% growth in value for the year 1999 for green industry markets as a whole and 3% growth excluding recovery markets. However, cyclical factors varying from market to market have led BIPE to issue very different sectoral forecasts for 1999 and 2000.

Water

On the water market, the **services** sector continues to be pulled up by the **wastewater treatment** sector, whose continued growth is partially offsetting the sluggishness of the **drinking water** market. The latter is suffering from a slower rate of increase in the price of water (the average increase in the price of water dropped from 13.3% in 1994 to 3.9% in 1998) and the downward trend in consumption. All in all, the growth in sales on the part of the drinking water production and distribution sector, pulled up by the wastewater treatment market, is expected to come in at around 3% a year in 1999 and 2000.

In the field of **waterworks and purification**, 1998 saw a quasi-stagnation in sales (+ 0.9% in current francs), but the forecast is rosier for 1999 (+ 3.5%) and 2000 (+ 4.4%) since local communities are being increasingly confronted with the need to pump money into this sector.

As for **equipment**, the **sewage treatment plant** market should decline in 1999 (- 6%), with the completion of various large-scale projects. However, things are expected to pick up again in the year 2000 (forecast growth of 5%) with the development of smaller-capacity units. On top of that, existing equipment will need to be refurbished or replaced and work will be required in connection with new housing construction (housing starts are showing strong growth).

As for **water measuring and monitoring instruments**, the market-as a whole-remained stable in 1998 (+ 1.2%), with strong pressure on prices. According to BIPE, this market could grow by 3% in 1999 and 6% in 2000, with such growth attributable primarily to expected investment in the drinking water sector (the sewage treatment plant market will likely remain weak, with elected officials deferring investment decisions as electoral deadlines draw near).