



Fine Dust in Korea

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Introduction

As one of the fastest developed countries in the world, Korea allowed diverse environmental problems during its industrialization. Now, looking back upon its past, Korea is facing a public demand for sustainability. Especially as the most visible environmental factor, the air quality problem, has been getting more and more attention during last few years. Google Korea said 'fine dust' was the most searched keyword among Korean users over the first half of 2018. With the attention and demand for improvement, this issue is changing governmental policies and market structure.



View of Seoul with fine dust [Yonhap News]

An effect on Policy

According to a report of Korean National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER), 51~66% of the entire fine particulate matter (which is dust with diameter less than 2.5 micrometer) is from outside Korea. And since China is considered to account for a great part of this externally generated fine dust, the Korean government made an agreement with the Chinese government about environmental cooperation between the two countries and launched the Korea-China Environmental Cooperation Center this year.

However, since Korea and China cannot manage these external factors in a short period, the Korean government is mainly trying to manage internal factors which still account for 34~49% of entire quantity of fine particulate matter. The Ministry of Environment set improving the quality of the air, which has direct impact on daily life, as a top priority task in 2018. As a result, each local



government is creating various policies such as regulating the use of outdated construction machineries, constructing air pollution measurement network and running dust filtering cars every day.

And the government is planning to invest 4.4 billion euros in the environmental industry during the next 5 years which is an increase of 20% compared to the past 5 years. As one of the top priority sector of environmental industry in Korea, improving air quality sector is expected to get more investment.

An effect on Market

Fine dust affects market structure as well. During the last 3~4 years, when the fine dust issue has been getting more attention, the market size of air cleaners increased by average 40% every year reaching 2.5 million sales volume in 2018 which is five times higher than in 2014. In 2018 for the first time the air cleaner became the best selling home appliance beating air conditioners, washing machines and refrigerators. Since the government is planning to put air cleaners in every kindergarten and school within the next 3 years and potential demand of public institutions and medical institutions is high, the market size of air cleaner seems to increase continuously.

The demand for other products related to the fine dust such as a face mask, a window screen and a clothing master is also increasing. The window screen keeps dust outside and the clothing master removes dust on clothing.



People wearing face masks [Newsis]



Conclusion

Not only because the air quality in Korea is bad, but also because the bad air quality has been getting attention significantly by people, the effect on policy and market is being amplified continuously. With the demand of people who want to keep the air clean inside their homes and buildings, the market for the fine dust related products is growing. There is a room for relevant companies.

Source and more information

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