

Phasing out HCFCs by 2020

Starting 2013, Bhutan will stop in stages the use of appliances that produce the gas

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To cut down carbon and promote energy efficiency for a green economy by 2020, Bhutan will gradually stop using appliances that produce an ozone depleting substance (ODS), called hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) starting 2013.

ENVIRONMENT

Since Bhutan is not a big consumer nor a producer of this gas that is responsible for depleting the ozone layer and global warming, environmentalists say that Bhutan can easily phase out HCFC, ten years ahead of the Montreal protocol phase out schedule.

Bhutan, as a signatory to the Montreal protocol, will have to phase out HCFC by 2030 but is confident to phase out by 2020, according to national environment commission (NEC) officials.

National ozone officer, Peldon Tshering said that Bhutan banned the import of chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) emitting appliances in 2005. "But then people started using appliances that produce HCFC, such as

refrigerators, air conditioners, chillers and many other cooling appliances," she said.

By 2020, Bhutan has committed to phase out the consumption of HCFC producing products that are mainly used by big industries, hotels and resorts, corporate offices, governmental sectors, as well as domestic service sector.

"We've already talked with all these sectors and they've agreed, so they're now aware," Peldon Tshering said.

NEC will soon come up with policy and legislative plans on export and import of products containing HCFCs. They will also train and do capacity building activities, as well as create awareness on removing HCFC gas.

"We'll also introduce 3D stamps as an advocacy material to create awareness on impact of HCFC," Peldon Tshering said. "A study of how much HCFC gas containing appliances is consumed will be done before we start phasing out."

Senior regional network coordinator, Atul Regai, said the commitment made by Bhutan is good but challenging as well. "Bhutan should make sure they control

the imports of HCFC appliances from India and China," he said. "The policy should clearly influence consumers to purchase non HCFC appliances only."

He explained that phasing out doesn't necessarily mean immediate switching off of appliances that contain and emit HCFC gas. Countries like China, India and Argentina, he said, who produce 400,000 tonnes of gas every year, have also committed to stop producing HCFC appliances and instead use alternative better adoption.

If a country fails to phase out HCFC by 2030, then an international level meeting would be held to decide on providing additional funding and technical support

The decision to phasing out HCFC gas plan was finalised yesterday in the capital. "We'll discuss the plan and review the strategy in November this year in Montréal," Atul Regai said. "Committee consisting of seven developed and developing countries will decide on how much funding should be allocated for Bhutan," he said.

Bhutan is the 193rd signatory to the Montreal protocol out of 196 countries today.