

# How to Go Green Overseas

## *Online information sources help you build sustainability into your international operations*

By Mark Wright

So, you're thinking about introducing the citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic to self storage, but you're hoping to both develop in an environmentally-benign manner as well as leverage any available government incentives to reduce your start-up costs. OK—but read this first.

Before you burden your company credit card with bargain-basement tickets for a flight on Mister Bill International Airways (motto: "Ooooo noooo...!") and parachute into someplace around the globe that looks to you like a potential self storage Nirvana, run some online searches to find out whether the government of your chosen country offers subsidies, tax credits or other enticements for developing—or operating—in ways it deems "green." Some of the links below employ pretty convoluted URLs, but they're nonetheless worth checking out.

One obvious caveat: "sustainability" means different things to different people. Nations' environmental priorities vary widely from one country to another. One nation might be most concerned about water supply, another might concentrate on electricity generation, and yet another might spotlight various forms of recycling. Some try to address a combination of green goals—but without offering financial incentives.

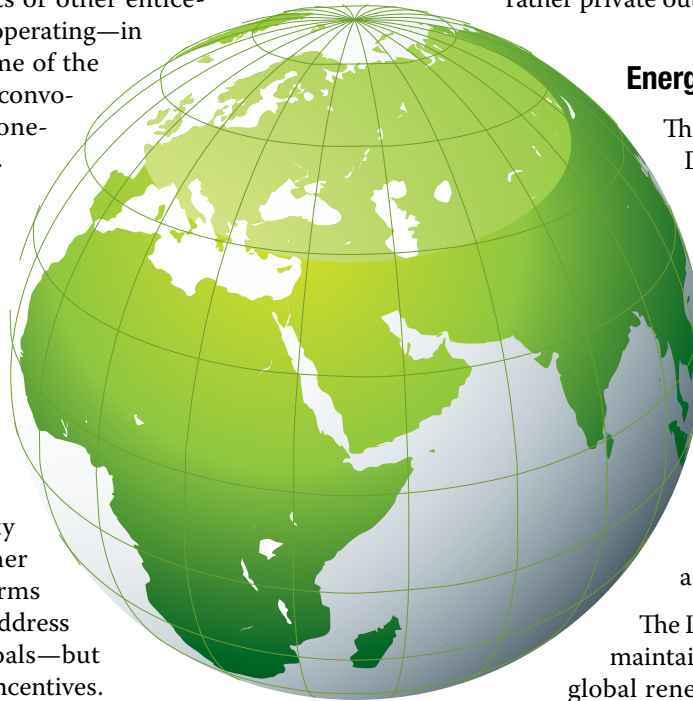
### **Sustainable Buildings**

Green building—an increasingly popular concept in the U.S.—has caught on as well in many parts of the world. An easy one-stop-shopping source for information on this aspect of sustainability is the World Green Building Council. (Thanks to Jeannie LaMarsh and Caesar Wright at Carlsbad, California-based Mako Steel, Inc. for this tip.)

You'll find the Council online at [www.worldgbc.org](http://www.worldgbc.org). Click on "Green Building Councils" and scroll down to "GBC Directory" for a comprehensive list, then choose the countries you're considering for development. The links

connect you with the green building organization of each particular country where one exists. Those, in turn, can orient you to the benefits and requirements of certified green building techniques for that nation.

Launched in 2002, the WorldGBC—to use its own words—"is rapidly building an international coalition that represents the entire global construction industry. Collectively, these nations represent 50 percent of global construction activity, and their councils touch more than ten thousand companies and organizations." Most green building organizations, by the way, are not government-run but rather private outfits (typically nonprofit).



### **Energy & Environment**

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization can be a source of information on environment and energy initiatives in various regions of the world. Visit [www.unido.org](http://www.unido.org), scroll down to "Thematic Priorities" and click on "Energy and Environment." While it's not a rich source of practical contacts, the information there serves at least as a useful primer.

The International Energy Agency maintains a Web-based database of global renewable energy policies and measures at: <http://www.iea.org/textbase/pm/?mode=re&action=result>. Founded during the 1973-74 oil crisis and headquartered in Paris, the IEA is an intergovernmental organization that advises its 28 member countries on energy policy.

The European Commission, one of the institutions of the European Union, offers a gateway to information about a variety of grants, organized by topic (i.e., climate action, energy, environment, etc.) at [http://ec.europa.eu/contracts\\_grants/grants\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/grants_en.htm).

The Green Power Market Development Group—Europe—convened by the World Resources Institute in collabora-

*See International Sustainability, page 30*

tion with The Climate Group—provides downloadable country-by-country briefings (in PDF format) on government incentives for renewable energy in European nations at: <http://www.thegreenpowergroup.net/policy.cfm?loc=eu>.

Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety has a free online portal to renewable energy information for European Union nations at: <http://www.res-legal.eu/>.

Renewable energy expert Paul Gipe maintains a robust collection of information on government tariffs at his Wind-Works.org site. Jump directly to: [http://www.wind-works.org/articles/feed\\_laws.html#What%20are%20ARTs%20or%20FITs](http://www.wind-works.org/articles/feed_laws.html#What%20are%20ARTs%20or%20FITs).

Clean Business Australia is a great resource for firms looking to set up shop Down Under. Visit: <http://www.ausindustry.gov.au/InnovationandRandD/CleanBusinessAustralia/Pages/CleanBusinessAustralia.aspx>. Or, jump to <http://www.business.gov.au/Grantfinder/Grantfinder.aspx> and answer the questions. The site asks what kind of grant you're interested in (e.g., "environment grant"), then asks "what sort of area do you work in" (e.g., "environmentally sustainable business"). Those particular choices reveal a dozen grant programs, ranging from "Commercial

Bathroom Retrofit Program" to "Re-Tooling for Climate Change." There's no guarantee any of these grants are applicable to a self storage business, but at least the Australian government makes finding eco-resources easy. For info on nearby New Zealand's environmental initiatives, visit <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/index.html>.

The Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network (AECEN), formed in 2005 by environmental agency leaders from 13 Asian countries to promote improved compliance with environmental requirements, is a good first stop for information on a broad range of eco issues there. Use the form at <http://www.aecen.org/aecen-good-practices?page=1>; under "Tools and Mechanisms" click on "Principal 13: Incentives-based instruments," and select any other qualifiers on the form that appear relevant to your situation. Clicking the "search" button generates links to articles such as, "The Clean Water Act Law of the Philippines: The Use of Incentives to Promote Investments."

The Canadian government's Office of Energy Efficiency publishes an online directory of energy efficiency and alternative energy programs at: [http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/corporate/statistics/neud/dpa/policy\\_e/programs.cfm?attr=0](http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/corporate/statistics/neud/dpa/policy_e/programs.cfm?attr=0).

Gateways to info about environmental issues in other regions of the world include:

- Africa: <http://allafrica.com/environment/>
- Caribbean & Latin America: [www.portofentry.com](http://www.portofentry.com)
- Middle East: [www.watsoninstitute.org/meef/english/index.cfm](http://www.watsoninstitute.org/meef/english/index.cfm)

## Anticipating Regulations

Finally, for insights into what environmental regulators have in mind around the globe, check out the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement ([www.inece.org](http://www.inece.org)). A partnership of government and non-government enforcement and compliance practitioners from more than 150 countries, the organization seeks to "contribute to a healthy and clean environment, sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of ecosystem integrity through effective compliance and enforcement of environmental laws using regulatory and non-regulatory approaches."

Oh, by the way—a quick note about that trip to the Kyrgyz Republic from Uncle Sam: "The Department of State urges U.S. citizens to avoid travel to Batken Oblast where violence has broken out several times in recent years. Land mines in Batken Oblast and near the Kyrgyz-Tajik border continue to be a concern." (Read more at: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_945.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_945.html).) No offense to future self storage customers in Kyrgyzstan, of course, but—as folks in the travel industry often say about treks anywhere in the world—"Know before you go!" ❖