

1,278 officials held accountable in environmental inspections

A total of 1,278 officials have been held accountable for inadequate environmental protection in the latest round of state inspections, according to a statement released Friday by the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

In late April, seven teams reviewed local government work in the third round of inspections, which took place in areas including Tianjin Municipality and Shanxi and Liaoning provinces.

The teams have looked into a total of 3,324 cases and imposed fines totalling 90 million yuan (about 13.05 million U.S. dollars) in 1,531 of those cases.

Some 481 officials from Liaoning Province were found to have been at fault, the most of the seven municipalities and provinces investigated.

As of May 9, the teams had received a total of 14,479 public complaints, of which the most came from Hunan Province.

The inspected areas have been told to rectify the irregularities found as soon as possible. Their progress has been reported in local media on a daily basis to give the public a response on reported environmental violations.

The central government is fighting pollution and environmental degradation after decades of growth have left the country saddled with problems such as smog and contaminated soil.

The teams are currently inspecting prefecture-level cities to verify key issues that emerged from provincial level inspections.