

## Top auditor: US\$2.6 bln environment funds not effectively used

China's top auditor has found that 17.6 billion yuan (about 2.56 billion U.S. dollars) of fiscal funds earmarked in 2016 for pollution control and resource management was not used effectively.

The finding was part of the results released after the National Audit Office (NAO) sent inspection teams to 18 provincial regions to review the use of fiscal funds for water pollution prevention and control.

The NAO inspectors also found that a total of 397 water pollution protection projects had failed to achieve desired effect, and some environment funds were not distributed in accordance with special protection plans.

The NAO noted increasing pressure from regional water environment protection, adding that in some regions, environment protection laws were not enforced strictly.

In response to the audit, local authorities in the 18 provincial regions have improved the distribution and use of more than 3 billion yuan of environment funds, and pushed forward the progress of 77 water pollution control projects.

Meanwhile, the NAO urged local auditors in 31 provincial regions to audit the funds meant for water pollution prevention.

Chinese authorities have punished 3,229 government officials for fiscal violations found when auditing the central government's 2015 budget.