



Feature No. 40: Landwasher



If developing sustainable toilets does not seem to be the most glamorous venture in China, it is certainly one of the most important – and potentially lucrative. With a projected population of 1.4 billion by 2050, the country is under increasing pressure to find sustainable solutions to waste management and resource use. As Wu Hao, the founder of environmentally-friendly Landwasher toilets, reflects, “Assuming all of our country uses water-flushing toilets, not even the Yangtze River and the Yellow River will be enough.”

Since beginning operation in 2001, Landwasher has grown to become China’s leading company in designing energy efficient and water conserving toilets. The company has experienced growth rates averaging 100 percent in each of its first five years, set up six sales outlets throughout the country covering 27 provinces, and grown assets to 40 million Yuan (over \$5.2 million USD). Landwasher’s success results from the design and patenting of a technology superior to that of its competitors, including those associated with foreign companies. Specifically, its special-purpose agent and sterilization process requires no water and little electricity to flush – two resources in growing demand and of decreasing availability. Moreover, because the special-purpose agent is free of heavy metal and phosphorous, discharge composts quickly and poses no harm to the environment. Landwasher’s technology is patent-protected in China, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, and is awaiting approval in eight additional countries and regions including the United States, Japan, Russia, India and the EU.

Driving the company’s success is Wu Hao, the company founder and general manager. After graduating from Peking University’s Physics Department, Wu Hao spent three years in manufacturing, five in securities investment and eight in corporate management. He has put together an impressive management team with degrees and experience in business establishment, technological development, law, marketing and finance.

Perhaps most importantly, Wu Hao exudes the dedication of a successful entrepreneur. He has served as the executive director of the Beijing Municipal Environment Sanitation Association, and in 2006, was elected a managing director of the Public Toilets Professional Committee belonging to the China Urban Environment Sanitation Association. He knows his market completely, and when asked about what drives him, he reflects that “on a personal level, I love the natural environment...I can’t endure the large scale waste and damage to the environment caused by the process of construction in China.”

Wu Hao and Landwasher show no signs of slowing down. This past year, the company was selected by the 2008 Olympic Organization Committee as a manufacturer of mobile toilets for the Olympic Games. Landwasher is expanding from the urban utility and tourism sectors to the travel, cargo vehicle and residential markets. In order to finance this growth in production, R&D and sales, the company is looking for an investment of about \$4 million. This relatively small capital inflow has the potential to realize China-sized returns – for both investors and the environment.

For more information on Landwasher, please visit www.landwasher.com.

Written by Jesse Last, World Resources Institute ©2007 – The Rising Ventures Series features articles, announcements and profiles of investors and entrepreneurs related to the theme of innovative small and medium businesses (SMEs) in emerging markets that deliver social and/or environmental benefits. These business models have been identified through the New Ventures (www.new-ventures.org) and Development through Enterprise (www.nextbillion.net) projects. To view other Features in the Series, visit <http://www.new-ventures.org/risingventures>.