

## Strategies to Promote Sustainable Consumption, 2012

*The Environmental Information System acronymed as ENVIS was implemented by the Ministry of Environment & Forests by end of 6th Five Year Plan as a Plan Scheme for environmental information collection, collation, storage, retrieval and dissemination to policy planners, decision makers, scientists and environmentalists, researchers, academicians and other stakeholders.*

*The Ministry of Environment and Forests has identified Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), Ahmedabad, as one of the centers to collect and disseminate information on "Eco-labelling and Promotion of Eco-friendly Products". The main objective of this ENVIS Centre is to disseminate information on Eco products, International, and National Eco labeling programs.*

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# Foreword



The impact of our economic activities has reached a stage that is unbearable for the earth and the human health. And the recent global financial and economic crisis demonstrated the degree of vulnerability of the existing economic model.

In these challenging times, there is an urgent need for measures that connect economic, social, and environmental aspects and achieve sustainable development.

## ***The International Greening Education Event (IGEE), 2011***

The climate change and global warming heats up the debate on sustainability of the natural resources on which consumer banks on. Consumers play a key role in making progress towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns. But due to a lack of independent and reliable information on the environmental quality of products, low awareness of consumers and misleading green claims, the consumers' possibilities to make the right purchase decisions are very limited. There is an urgent and increasing necessity to educate and motivate consumers to change their consumption patterns towards more sustainability as rising incomes and consumer spending in India increases the negative impact of consumption on the environment and climate.

Eco-labels offer information on the environmental impact of particular products or services and are increasingly used to help consumers to make informed choices. The idea is that the consumer will express a preference for environmentally friendly products, encouraging producers to adhere to sustainable management practices. Hence Eco labels rely on the acceptance of consumers and strategic market moves by companies and professional procurers.

Consumer Education and Research Center (CERC) in cooperation with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) have organised a two day conference on "Strategies to Promote Sustainable Consumption" on 23-24 April 2012 to suggest ways for the revision of Ecomark

,the eco-labelling scheme which India has introduced in 1991 with unfortunately little success,



and to identify possible synergies between different stakeholders towards the promotion of sustainable consumption patterns.

This newsletter has reproduced the executive summary and presentations of eminent experts who have recommended

for making concerted efforts to establish viable consumptions patterns through collaborative efforts, revival of Indian Eco Mark Scheme, establishing an independent eco-labelling board, policy formation, and enlightenment of public at large.





# Strategies to Promote Sustainable Consumption, 2012



# Executive Summary

Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC) in cooperation with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) organized a two-day Conference on the subject of "Strategies to Promote Sustainable Consumption" on 23 and 24 April 2012. The Conference was held at India Habitat Centre (IHC), New Delhi. The event was well attended with representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Forest & Consumer Affairs as well as the Embassy of Germany, corporates and NGOs. More than 60 participants attended the inaugural session followed by 5 thematic sessions.

Mr. Surjit Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and Mr. Manoj Parida, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs inaugurated the Conference. In their welcome addresses Ms. Swarn Kohli, Trustee, CERC and Mr. Stefan Helming, Country Director - GIZ, stressed the promotion of eco-friendly products. The "Sustainable Shopping Basket", a Lifestyle and Shopping Guide, similar to the Guide launched in Germany to help consumers make informed shopping decisions, was launched by Mr. Manoj Parida, Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Dr. Antje Goellner-Scholz, German Embassy.

Mr. Rajan Gandhi, Society in Action Group, moderated the First Session. This Session was devoted to Eco-labeling. Mr. Gandhi, also a speaker in the Session, provided insights and details regarding the Ecomark an eco-label established by the Government of India in 1991 and its subsequent failure. He went on to elaborate why this Ecomark scheme was not successful and suggested several remedial measures. Ms. Susanne Heutling from The Federal Environment Agency of Germany dwelt at length on the implementation of the German eco-label "Blue Angel" and its resounding success. In the panel discussion that followed various measures to make the Ecomark successful were suggested. The Government of India (GoI) is committed to make the eco label a success and assured all present that steps would be

undertaken to make implementation effective and expansion of the criteria as well as a re-look at the product range would be advisable.

The Second Session was on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and Green Public Procurement (GPP). Mr. Prabhjot Sodhi, CEE-UNDP Small Grants Program, moderated the Session, while he touched upon the importance of Life Cycle Assessment, the other speakers in the session added to the various aspects of LCA. The failure of understanding and appreciation of a 'green' product especially with regard to carbon footprinting and product footprinting were further highlighted. It was, however, reassuring that there was increasing awareness on the subject not only in Europe and USA but also in China, India, and Brazil.



The Panel Discussion dwelt on the relatively new subject of Green Public Procurement (GPP) process. Due to a severe lack of knowledge on the subject its associated issues were discussed at length. It was recommended that serious efforts be made at the earliest to understand the implications of GPP.



Ms. Swarn Kohli, trustee Consumer Education & Research Centre, moderated the third session on Consumer Awareness. The speakers of the session outlined the importance of early education of children and training of teachers / educators to recognize the adverse effects of excessive consumerism. The need for environment protection, through education on consumerism was advisable to create enlightened consumers.

Before the commencement of the Fourth Session on Day Two of the conference, Ms. Gauri Wagenaar, CERC, summarized the main inputs of Day One and introduced the agenda for the day two. Session Four was devoted to Comparative Testing, which was a panel discussion moderated by Mr. Patrick von Braunmuehl, GIZ. It was pointed out that Comparative Testing (CT) criteria needed to be contemporized for eco friendliness and LCA.



The Conference concluded with expression of thanks to the participants by Mr. Patrick von Braunmuehl. He was greatly appreciative of the high quality of papers presented and active participation by all attendees.



The Fifth, and the last, Session was again a Panel Discussion on 'Responsible Business and Sustainable Consumption'. Mr. Manfred Haebig, GIZ, who also outlined the details of product focused 'Hamburger' model, moderated this session. The panelists recognized their responsibility to nature with regard to balanced and sustainable production. They would thus be able to fulfill their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) more consistently, effectively, and efficiently. Their willingness to participate became more pronounced after Mr. Manfred Haebig's 'Hamburger model' on the Indian scenario.

To know more about the conference please visit <http://www.hrdp-net.in/e8451/e8981/e41200/e41953/e41954/>



**Ms. Vineeta Kanwal, Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**

**Ms. Susanne Heutling, The Blue Angel Germany**

**Mr. Rajan Gandhi, Society in Action Group**

**Ms. Simi T.B., CUTS International**



## India's Energy Efficiency Standards & Labeling Program by Ms. Vineeta Kanwal, Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)



Ms. Vineeta Kanwal from Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) informed the gathering that about 14-15 BEE programs on eco-labelling were currently underway and discussed about the importance of energy saving with statistics. She discussed per capita consumption of electricity in India and legal framework for energy efficiency. A system of voluntary labels for refrigerators and air-conditioners was introduced, through aggressive marketing and outreach, in 2006. The manufacturers piggybacked on label advertising. By 2009-10, 95% of refrigerators and 70% of air-conditioners sold in the market were labelled-showing consumer preference and market transformation. Around 98% of the people felt that 'star' rating was important for products' contribution to energy efficiency. Currently the labelling of four products, namely air-conditioners, refrigerators, distribution transformers, and tubular fluorescent lamps (TFLs) have become mandatory. Eight other appliances adopted voluntary labelling. It was advisable to continue this thrust in the coming Five Year Plans.

She has discussed why we need Energy Efficiency and Standards & Labelling Programs because there is

- Wide variation in energy consumption by products of manufacturers is observed.
- Information on energy consumption often not easily available, sufficient or easy to understand from the nameplate.
- Lead to continued manufacture and purchase of inefficient equipment and appliances.

And discussed about advantages of Energy Efficiency and Standards & Labelling Programs.

- They can produce very large energy savings.
- They can be very cost effective and helpful at limiting energy growth without limiting economic growth.
- They treat all manufacturers, distributors, and retailers equally.
- The resulting energy savings are generally assured and verified.
- They not only save energy, but also save money and improve product quality.

Benefits of Energy Efficiency and Standards & Labelling Programs are also elaborated.

- Reduces capital investment in energy supply infrastructure.
- Enhances national economic efficiency by reducing energy bills.
- Enhances consumer welfare.
- Strengthens competitive markets.
- Reduces pollution and helps meet climate change goals.

The harmonization of Energy Efficiency and Standards & Labelling Programs often brings additional benefits:

- Reduces program costs by adopting existing program;
- Avoids or removes indirect barriers to trade.

She has also informed about the products covered under Indian Energy Efficiency and Standards & Labelling Programs•

- Frost-free Refrigerators
- Tubular Fluorescent Lamps (TFL)
- Air-conditioners
- Direct cool Refrigerators
- Distribution Transformers
- Motors
- Pump sets
- Ceiling fans
- LPG Stoves
- Colour TVs
- Storage Water Geysers
- Washing Machines
- Laptops & Notebooks
- Ballast

She ended her presentation by highlighting the achievements of 11th Plan which was launched in 2006.

## *Strategies to Promote Sustainable Consumption: The Blue Angel By Ms. Susanne Heutling, The Blue Angel Germany*



Ms. Susanne Heutling from the Federal Environmental Agency described the Blue Angel Eco mark scheme - the first and oldest eco-labeling program in the world. She has explained about its creation in 1978 on the initiative of the Federal Minister of the

Interior and approval by the Ministers of the Environment of the federal government and the federal states. It considers itself as a market-conform instrument of environmental policy designed to distinguish the positive environmental features of products and services on a voluntary basis. She said that the Blue Angel supports to speed up the structural change of the economy towards a sustainable development. More than 13,000 products and services were labeled under this scheme. It was ensured that those products were environment friendly, safe in handling, and had good overall performance.

The following institutions are in charge of the Blue Angel.

- The Environmental Label Jury - independent decision-making body composed of representatives from environmental and consumer associations, trade unions, industry, trade, crafts, local authorities, science, media, churches and federal states
- The Federal Ministry for the Environment Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety official owner of the Blue Angel
- Federal Environmental Agency - develops criteria for new product groups
- RAL gGmbH awards contracts with license holders and is the label-awarding agency.

The Blue Angel updates criteria regularly and has required expertise. She mentioned that their most popular product categories include low pollutant varnishes, printers, low emission wall paints, recycling paper, recycled cardboard, and sanitary paper products made out of recycled products. As part of the National Climate Initiative of the German Federal Environment Ministry, the Blue



Angel had launched a new Carbon Footprint Label to inform consumers about a range of energy efficient and climate friendly products. For public awareness they have different environmental education programmes and organises regular workshops with the Ecolabel Jury, NGOs, and companies. Celebrates "Blue Angel Day". For marketing of the scheme, the organisation regularly publishes Ads in daily papers, prepare Image film, develop Press relations, distribute Brochures, participate in Trade-fair, and do Promotions in cooperation with companies. According to Ms. Heutling the consumer wants quick, reliable, and ready to use products. The Blue Angel is recognized as an environmentally suited products' label and stands for product control, transparency of product selection, and safe purchasing.



## *The Indian Eco Mark Scheme: Analysis and suggestions for Revival by Mr. Rajan Gandhi, Society in Action Group*

Mr. Rajan Gandhi, Society in Action Group described in length about the Indian Eco Mark Scheme and its failure. He attributed its failure due to indifferent attitude, insufficient commitment on the part of the government and poor communication between various ministries and the stakeholders. Poor marketing, inclusion of the so many products, and lack of media support are also reasons for the failure of the Scheme. Only paper industry has adopted the label of Eco mark. He has narrated various reasons for this failure and suggested some remedial measures to revive the scheme.



He also suggested some remedial measures to revive the scheme. These were:

- Careful life-cycle analysis of products before their selection and launch
- Logo of Ecomark be suitably modified. Earthen Pot to be replaced with something more appealing. The manufacturing process mentioned in the symbol was unsustainable.
- Establish an independent eco-labelling board
- Provide adequate funding to promote the scheme
- Make the scheme manufacturer friendly
- Introduce graded ranking system for products, like 'Star' rating
- Institute intensive research facilities
- Create more effective alternatives like green procurement / institutional purchases / focus on schools.

He ended his presentation by explaining problem areas and giving a possible roadmap for revival.

Various reasons for the failure of this scheme as said by Mr. Gandhi were:

- Lack of hard-selling
- Uncertain target audience consumers, traders, and manufacturers
- The scheme was directly lifted from the Blue Angel scheme of Germany and lacked Indian context.
- Difficulty in obtaining Ecomark due to BIS insistence on getting ISI mark
- Life-cycle approach was not considered in 1991 and still not very well known even today.
- Consumers were more concerned about their rights or responsibilities.

## Strategies To Promote Sustainable Consumption: Possible Improvements of The Eco mark Scheme By Ms.Simi T.B., CUTS



Ms. Simi T.B. described the different eco schemes used world wide and compared with Indian Eco Mark scheme. She has discussed about the successful labels and their secrets like

- In Green Seals (Type-3) experience, the process of commenting, discussing issues, and resolving issues involving all relevant stakeholders is most critical for the success of a standard.
- In Nordic countries success of Nordic Swan (Type-1) is due to the positive attitudes towards eco-labels among the industry, the consumer and environmental organisations.
- Success of Blue Angel (Type-1) is to a large extent due to the contribution of media and consumer.

EU FLOWER LABEL	ECOMARK SCHEME
Product criteria revised every 3 years	No reference about revision of criteria
Develops Working Plan for every 3 years – an important strategic planning tool	Need for a forward looking agenda
Consultation forum involving industries, SMEs, crafts, business organisations, trade unions, environment and consumer organisations] part of EU Ecolabelling Board	Limited provision for external stakeholder participation in the identification of product categories. While there is no autonomous organisation.

She also elaborated that other countries' experiences suggest that when sufficient support on credibility, consumer and market awareness, advertising and marketing are provided, ecolabels

She had recommended:

- Need for a new, independent board with an advisory structure comprising of consumer, environmental, and business groups.
- Need for a reduction and prioritisation of the number of selected product categories.
- Product categories chosen should be based on certain measurable parameters such as maximum adverse environmental impact and high national consumption.
- Objective of the Scheme should include
  - a. To promote trade across borders.
  - b. Environmental groups need to be specifically involved in the Steering and Technical Committees of the Scheme.
  - c. Scheme should be managed by specialist who can remain in the institution till task is well accomplished.
  - d. Certification and licensing procedure needs to be more simplified.
  - e. Need to de-link the ISI mark from the Ecomark.
  - f. Scheme needs to be made more dynamic and forward looking by periodic revisions of criteria through wide stakeholder consultations.
  - g. Need to rethink about the Logo due to the message it conveys.
  - h. Period of license should be extended to two or three years. Like in case of Nordic Swan Label, Blue angel label.
  - i. Need for an effective National Awareness Campaign about the scheme.
  - j. Need to create a one- stop interactive website for the Ecomark scheme, modeled on the lines of the EU Ecolabel, or oeko-tex label.

Finally she has advised for giving some benefits to the industries for adopting the "Ecomark" Scheme.

- Better to initially go for the licence fee waivers, discount in testing charges etc., to attract industry participation.
- There should be provision for lower application fee for the SMEs, and eco- friendly traditional producers.
- Government procurement should give preference to ecolabelled products.

# Comparative Testing

One session of the conference was devoted to Comparative Testing, which was a panel discussion moderated by Mr. Patrick von Braunmuehl, GIZ. It was pointed out that Comparative Testing (CT) criteria needed to be contemporized for eco friendliness and Life Cycle Analysis.

## Criteria Setting

Mr. Patrick von Braunmuehl, GIZ, in his opening remarks, stressed the need of setting environmental criteria. He explained the concept of criteria setting and described its role in testing a product in a laboratory. He sought the views of empanelled organisations that were working in this area. Consumer awareness of the environment and preference for environment friendly products appears to be growing steadily across the developing countries. Government can play an important role in promoting programmes of Comparative Testing of products by Consumer Organisations and dissemination their results to the general public.



Mr. S. Ramani, Centre for Consumer Education, Research, Teaching, Training and Testing (CONCERT) had narrated the objective of the CONCERT. The organization is engaged in analyzing consumer products like food items, drugs, petroleum products, in their laboratory. He was of the view that technology would help in finding a solution to address environment crisis. Till then, however, eco-friendly products must be used. He felt that comparative testing had limitations in application of technologies like Life Cycle Analysis (LCA). He believed that consumers could be persuaded to buy eco-friendly products, which provided value for money.



## Market Research

Mr. Ashim Sanyal, Consumer VOICE, rued the lack of market research and promotion of brands through advertisements and aggressive marketing rather than educating the consumers on the nature of brands, products and services, and their impact on their lives. As the term Green is a recent, most consumers are unaware of terms like 'comparative testing' or 'sustainable development'. About 60% of the population in India was ignorant of the word 'green.' Creating Awareness is therefore of paramount importance. Mr. Sanyal, suggested a few simple techniques, which could enhance consumer awareness in areas like packaging. Simple slogans like 'saves electricity' or 'saves money' especially while selling electrical items could be useful.



## Evaluation of Tests

Ms. Shweta Mahajan, Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), remarked that environment criteria like energy, consumption, sound, disposal/recycling suggestions, material labeling including packing material etc were being increasingly used in comparative testing of products conducted by CERC for electrical products and testing for levels of toxicity like pesticides and heavy metals in food products.



Standards are available with eco parameters for some food products but BIS Standards for electrical products neither cover eco criteria nor the limits for eco criteria. To provide an informed choice to consumers CERC undertakes comparative testing in its in-house test laboratory by developing a 'test programme' for holistic comprehensive evaluation



of products including eco criteria. This is a very expensive process for consumer organisations.

She has explained the role of CERC in comparative testing and dissemination of information through its in-house magazine "Insight-The Consumer Magazine." Consumers are provided with 'Best Buy' information in the in-house magazine for sustainable consumption through comparative testing of products. For final evaluation of products environmental criteria is also given the weightage and highlighted with Green colour together with safety, performance, and convenience of use.

against malpractices. Panelists agreed that industry manufacturers were naive and unaware of testing standards on environment criteria.

The panelists of this Session agreed on the need for immediate action on the creation of a policy framework for environment criteria, market

Mr. A. Sathyanarayanan, Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC), had narrated the



mission of STQC. It supports industry and trade and protect consumer interest in electronic and IT sector by providing customer centric, accredited quality assurance services as per international standard for global acceptance.

He stressed to involve manufacturers to ensure the quality of the products. He felt that government could make efforts to educate consumers about unsafe goods, verify gains for branded products, provide funds for lab testing and take action



## About Green Seal

Green Seal is US based non-profit ecolabelling organisation. It is established in 1989 and acts as third party certifier. It is a standard development body. It provides independent, impartial, science based advice to the consumers, buyers, and industries to create a more sustainable earth. It meets the criteria of United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for third party certification and operates under the international guidelines for environmental labeling programmes, ISO 14020 and 14024 established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Green Seal is also a founding member of the Global Ecolabelling Network. Its standards are recognized and used by the US Federal Government, many State governments, and other important entities.

Green Seal certifies the products, services, and companies that meet Green Seal standards. The Green Seal mark represents compliance with a rigorous set of criteria designed to achieve leadership levels in sustainability.



Green Seal takes a life cycle assessment approach, evaluating a product from the raw materials through the manufacturing process and ending with recycling or disposal. After rigorous science based evaluation and on-site plant visits, products are certified.

Green Seal certification is not just a "one-time deal". Companies establish an ongoing commitment to health and the environment through annual compliance monitoring and work towards continuous improvement.

Green Seal does work internationally through mutual recognition agreements with other national ecolabelling programs. Technically, the Green Seal Certification Mark may be used in foreign markets provided purchasers are given information explaining the basis for the Mark. In most cases however, Green Seal is used in the United States and the ecolabelling program of another country is used for its own market.

Source: <http://www.greenseal.org/>

### Write to us

We value your views and suggestions. Please send us your feedback on this issue.  
We would also like to have your contribution on the information relevant to the Eco product and Eco labeling.  
Please mail: [cerc-env@nic.in](mailto:cerc-env@nic.in)



## A scheme on labelling of environment - friendly products

# Ecomark Logo

A scheme on labelling of environment - friendly products An earthen pot has been chosen as the logo for the Ecomark scheme in India. The familiar earthen pot uses a renewable resource like earth, does not produce hazardous waste and consumes little energy in making. Its solid and graceful form represents both strength and fragility, which also characterises the eco-system.

As a symbol, it puts across its environmental message. Its image has the ability to reach people and can help to promote a greater awareness of the need to be kind to the environment. The logo for the Ecomark Scheme signifies that the product, which carries it, does the least damage to the environment.



Source: [http://cpcb.nic.in/ecomark\\_logo.php](http://cpcb.nic.in/ecomark_logo.php)

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