

Workshop on Eco-labelling for Textile Industries
UNEP/EC Project ‘Enabling developing countries to seize eco-label opportunities’
Coimbatore, India, July 27, 2009

Objective

- Build on the momentum generated by the first national workshop on eco-labelling and follow on the recommendations of the conference in Mumbai on global textile opportunities;
- Present the ‘Enabling developing countries to seize eco-label opportunities’ project and engage relevant stakeholders; and
- Increase textile industry stakeholders’ knowledge of the EU Eco-label, its procedure, criteria and related market opportunities.

Background

This four-year project [duration: 2007-2010] is implemented by Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP) Division of Technology, Industry and Economics together with InWent – Capacity Building International in close association with the local country partners and is co-funded by the EU (EC Programme on Environment in Developing Countries) & the Federal Ministry for the Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ, German Ministry).

The project involves six countries, e.g. Brazil, China, India, Kenya, Mexico and South Africa which have selected different export product groups, i.e. textiles, footwear, televisions and paper for which the project will help to seize eco-labelling opportunities.

Leveraging on trade and specifically on developed countries’ demand for environmentally friendly products, the project intends to foster target countries’ use of eco-labels that represent voluntary, participatory, market-based and transparent economic instruments aiming at decreasing the environmental impact of products throughout their life-cycle, promoting natural resource efficiency of industrial processes, while enabling consumers to make informed decisions based on environmental preferability of a product.

Primary objective of this project is to increase the number of export products from target countries eco-labelled with the EU Eco-label or other European countries’ eco-labels (Type 1) mainly through capacity building and technical assistance to relevant stakeholders (business, including industrial designers and retail sector, governments, NGO’s).

Thus, in India the project aims at increasing the number of textile products from India to EU with the EU Eco-label through capacity building and technical assistance to the textile industries and relevant government officials in India. Product compliance with EU environmental standards and regulations will increase their competitiveness in the international and specifically in the EU market, leading in the mid-term to economic benefits for industry (and government) representatives, as a result of less natural resources being employed and to the reduced recovery costs of environmental degradation.

Context

The first on the ground activity of the project consisted in the organisation of a National Ecolabelling Workshop in each of the countries involved in the project. In India, the workshop was organised in Jaipur on 23-24 June 2008 by Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS), the Indian partner of the project and the Confederation of Indian Textiles Industries (CITI), in collaboration with UNEP.

The national eco-labelling workshop brought together relevant government decision makers, representatives from textiles industry, industrial designers, textile associations, national laboratories associated with the manufacturing of textiles, national representatives of the Ecomark scheme and standardisation bodies, NGOs and consumer organisations, representatives of the EU eco-label scheme, international eco-label and sustainable consumption experts, industry representatives that got their textiles successfully eco-labelled, as well as UNEP and the European Commission representatives.

However, during this event many stakeholders expressed the need for a similar workshop in southern part of India to generate wider awareness among the stakeholders about the project activities and its related benefits. Giving this view considerable importance, now a similar workshop is going to be organised at Coimbatore, which is a major textile hub in the south.

The Event

The event is an occasion to introduce to textile stakeholders the ‘Enabling developing countries to seize eco-label opportunities’ project.

Expected Outcome

- More awareness among relevant stakeholders on the opportunities related to eco-labelling and to the increase of sustainability of the textile sector;
- Stakeholders well-informed about the ‘Enabling developing countries to seize eco-label opportunities’ project and relevant stakeholders are kept engaged under the forthcoming project activities; and
- Textile industry stakeholders’ familiarised with the EU eco-label, its procedures, criteria and related market opportunities.

Participants

Around 40 stakeholders from textile industries, associations and textile laboratories in and around Tirupur Textile Cluster.

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AGENDA

Chairman: *Mr. Bas de Leeuw, Head, SCP Branch, United Nations Environment Programme*

09:30 – 10:00 **Registration of participants**

10:00 – 10:30 **Welcome remarks** – *Dr. Arindam Basu, Director, South India Textile Research Association*

Introduction and brief summary of the national workshop on eco-labelling held at Jaipur, India – CUTS

Session I: Setting the scene

10:30 – 11:00 **Enabling developing countries to seize eco-label opportunities' project** - *Mr. Bas de Leeuw, Head, SCP Branch, United Nations Environment Programme*

Questions and answers

11:00 - 11:30 *Tea Break*

11:30 – 12:00 **The textile sector in India: eco-labelling challenges and opportunities** - *Mr. Shaju Mangalam, Joint Secretary, Confederation of Indian Textile Industries*

12:00 – 12:30 **Growth opportunities for Sustainable Production of Textiles** – *Mr. Rahul Bhajekar, Chief Operating Officer, Texanlab Laboratories Pvt Ltd*

Questions and answers

12:30 – 01:30 *Lunch*

Session II – Working Session

01:30 – 02:30 **EU Eco-label: the scheme, the product categories, criteria** - *EU Flower Representative (yet to be confirmed)*

Questions and answers

02:30 – 03:00 *Tea Break*

03:00 – 03:30 **Eco-friendly Textiles: A general overview** – *Mrs. C. Vanithamani, Senior Laboratory Assistant, South India Textile Research Association*

03:30 – 04:00 **Enabling developing countries to seize eco-label opportunities project: the way forward** - *Mr. Bas de Leeuw, Head, SCP Branch, United Nations Environment Programme*

Questions and answers

04:00 **Closing remarks** – *UNEP*

Thanks Giving – *Mr. S. Kadirvel, Asst Director, SITRA*