EU SWITCH Asia Lead Paint Elimination Project

Report on
Preliminary Stakeholder Meeting on
Third Party Certification for Decorative Paints

April 9th, 2013

Conference Hall – 2
India Islamic Cultural Center
87-88, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003

Supported by
Organized By
Introduction

Lead is a well-known neurotoxin which damages, destroys or impairs the function of the nervous system. It has been historically used by paint manufacturers as a colouring agent, to enhance durability, longevity and to make it corrosion resistant.

Lead in paints is a toxic threat to the young children, especially between the age group of 0-6 years. It impacts 40 million children worldwide, over 97 per cent of whom live in developing countries. Health and environmental concerns have prompted the governments across the globe to ban the use of lead in household paints.

The way lead was removed from gasoline at a war footing, elimination of lead from paints being a part of the millennium development goals 2020, will be dealt with in the same way.

The international standard for lead in paints is 90 parts per million (ppm).

In India, some paint companies have voluntarily shifted from lead to lead free formulations of decorative paints. But even if lead is not added directly to the paint, still the paint can have varying levels of lead content due to the raw materials containing lead used during formulations.

It is in this light that Toxics Link in collaboration with Quality Council of India (QCI) organized a Preliminary Stakeholder Meeting on Third Party Certification for Decorative Paints on April 9th, 2013 at India Islamic Cultural Center, New Delhi. The meeting was held under the auspices of the seven-nation EU-SWITCH Asia Lead Paint Elimination Project which took off in July 2012. The meeting sought to share the current status of lead in paint issue (in general and health based) and the bottlenecks of shifting from leaded to lead free paints by the paint manufacturers.

Inaugural Session

Speaking about the Indian scenario, Ravi Agarwal, Director of Toxics Link, said that the country had witnessed a gradual shift from lead to lead free paints mainly due to health reasons. The major paint brands have already shifted while the rest are in the process of shifting over.

Lead in paints is not an emerging issue in the western world. Many European countries banned the use of lead in 1935 while the United States did so in 1971. But it is an emerging issue for the developing countries, particularly due to lack of public awareness. Also, issues related to technology and formulations add to the grim scenario.
India does not have a third party certification program for any consumer product. It has had eco-labeling which did not work very well because of varied reasons. This kind of program could help companies with less brand visibility. For them certification could work as a marketing USP.

It is in this light that the meeting attempts to bring-forth third party certification for decorative paints with the help from Quality Council of India (QCI). It also endeavors to examine if a third party certification program for paints can serve any useful purpose; if it can be perused further and if it is business friendly.

**Dr. Manish Pande** from QCI shared the offer of the organization for a voluntary certification scheme and assured that once an agreement is reached, QCI will start making the scheme. The organization will seek nominations from the paint industry for the technical committees to make it more participatory. The ultimate aim was to have a scheme which is business compliant and relates to the consumer as well.

Briefing about accreditation, he explained that once the scheme is ready, National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) will identify certain accreditation bodies that will do the auditing of the units manufacturing paints as per the scheme and give certifications based on the terms set under the scheme.

Elaborating the term ‘voluntary’, he said it is all about demonstrating shared responsibility. “When we talk of voluntary schemes, there are no compulsions, it is chosen/used by people who feel they need to do something different and what to demonstrate that they care,” Dr. Pande added. The need for certification is very well explained in the slide below:
In the absence of the European Union Delegate, Dr. Prashant Rajankar, Senior Program Officer from Toxics Link briefed about the EU-SWITCH Asia program and the Lead Paint Elimination Project.

**SMEs views on elimination of lead from paints**

A small discussion followed the inaugural session where SME representatives asked Asian Paints to share their experience of removing lead from decorative paints. The company representative Mr. Amit Singh assured the gathering of sharing information about the paint technology. He said **Asian Paints is all supportive of any initiative towards elimination of lead from decorative paints** and that the company will work together towards this goal with its counterparts.

The paint industry is aware of the health problems due to lead. Thus, as per the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) voluntary mandate, many have brought down the lead content below 1000 ppm. However, they are now keen to achieve the 90 ppm benchmark.

Another pertinent issue raised by them was that of product testing. They asked for information about laboratories where they could get their products tested at reasonable rates.

Indian Paint and Coating Association (IPCA) members mentioned that at Shriram Institute for Industrial Research, a laboratory testing cost Rs. 10,000/- per sample. If they spend that much amount on testing, whether they get a certificate from a certified body or not, the customer is not ready to pay. The customer wants value for money; he is not ready to pay for the testing or the certification. For him, the manufacturers’ assurance is good enough. Another problem is that a batch takes 21 days for testing. It is unfeasible to hold on to a batch for that long.

Speaking of the testing protocols, Dr. Pande said that one needs to understand the benefits and costs the scheme would incur. First the testing frequency needs to be decided upon. “MSME, we believe, gives grants to people who want to go for a voluntary certification scheme and there are some subsidies attached to it. MSME could probably support the paint industry by taking care of about 50-70 per cent of the testing and certification cost. This would encourage more and more people to go for certification,” Dr. Pande added.

Dr. Rajankar shared that other than Shriram Lab, there are many other labs in Delhi/India which will do the same tests at an affordable cost and in less time. He also informed the gathering about pigment manufacturers who deal in lead free pigments which could serve as an impetus. To this, one of the participants’ pointed that it is not necessary that every lead free pigment works. There
are certain properties of leaded pigments which are needed. To replace those, the technology is not widely known. There are alternates to these properties that the leaded pigments contain, but the infrastructure involved is huge.

Another critical problem sited by the paint industry was corruption. They said that when it comes to certification, there is corruption and that is the biggest worry of the industry. QCI should design a scheme which does not leave room for corruption. They were all ready for a voluntary certification scheme which is compelling from the customers’ side and not the government.

Acknowledging the concerns of the industry, the QCI representative said the paint industry will only help in deciding as to who will own the scheme and that the government will not play any role in the scheme. At the end of the day, the scheme has to be self-sufficient and easy on the industry and the consumer.

Mr. Ashim Sanyal, COO, Consumer Voice, said that in their experience, a voluntary certification scheme is a good way to wipe out the sarkari raj. It also ensures competence in operations, ownership and easy flow of operations which do not hinder the normal routine of the company. It has to be part of the system. He mentioned that sooner or later BIS will come up with standards. Therefore, it is better to have voluntary standards in place much before that so that once the standards are there, the industry does not come under any pressure and is safe.

Mr. Sanyal highlighted the fact that the consumer was ready to pay that extra money provided he knows what he is paying that extra for. If the consumer knows that a particular product is safe, though expensive, he will still pay extra as he is conscious of the environment and his health.

- Asian Paints expressed support to any initiative towards elimination of lead from decorative paints
- IPCA members sought information about laboratories where product testing could be done at reasonable rates and in less time
- The technology for shifting from lead to lead free formulations is not widely known

PPT I - Lead in Paints: The Indian scenario

Dr. Rajankar, in his presentation spoke about the impacts, sources and exposures of lead, how it behaves after entering the body and the health afflictions caused due to lead.

Elaborating on the regulation across the world he pointed that countries like Brazil, Canada, China, Sri Lanka and USA have standards and regulations in place while, India
does not have any mandatory standards and regulation for Lead in Paint. Though a BIS draft is ready with 90-300 and 1000 ppm for different category of paints, it is yet to be notified.

Dr. Rajankar also displayed a few logos being used by various Indian Paint companies.

![Different Logo's by Indian Paint Companies](image)

**PPT II – More attractive means more dangerous: Pediatrician**

**Dr. Anupam Sachdeva**, a pediatrician at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, in his presentation emphasized on the global metal pollution scenario, which shows that the emissions are much more than the production. This results in 15-18 million children in developing countries suffering from permanent brain damage due to lead poisoning. For him, more attractive the color, the more dangerous it is for the child. Lead plays no role in the human body.
The following chart shows the effects of inorganic lead on children and adults.

Dr. Sachdeva also shared the timeline of the of lead poisoning which is as follows –

150-475 CE - Lead and the Fall of Rome
1890s - Sentinel Case: Queensland “Seasonal Colic”
1900s - Occupational poison, lead oxides in paints
1920s - Tetraethyl lead as fuel additive, lead “natural”
1930s - Childhood poisoning from chewing paint
1960s - Childhood epidemic urban slums
1965 - Lead in the human body not “natural”
1974 - Children absorb and metabolize lead differently
1980s - Population BLLs fall as gas de-leded
1980s - Long term studies show damage at low levels

**PPT III – The Voluntary Certification Scheme**

Dr. Pande from QCI touched upon the key drivers for a voluntary scheme such as consumer health on health and safety, environmental organization, favorable regulatory environment, traceability, willingness to pay more and production and supply strength. Talking about the development of a voluntary scheme, he said that this would be done in 5 stages-

Stage I - Nominations of committees – Steering Committee/Technical Committee /Certification Committee

Stage II - Meetings of each committee – at least 3 meetings

Stage III - Criteria for technical, certification requirement agreed

Stage IV - Logo mark – designed with usage guidelines

Stage V – Once the Steering Committee agrees, the draft scheme is ready for launch.

**In about 3-6 months, a responsible voluntary certification scheme will be ready for lead in paints** with regular interaction with the stakeholders like the paint industry, consumer boards, Toxics Link and IPEN. The scheme will have multiple benefits which are listed below –

- It would not be thrust upon operators
- There will be no pressure of timeline or deadline
- It will help screen out unstable practices
- It will have defined objectives decided by the stakeholders
- Entry level standards will eliminate worst practices and help business to take their first steps forward in a sustainable manner
The Paint Industry Speaks

Ashwin Mehra from IPCA said that the industry understands that lead is hazardous. IPCA is in the process of educating its members about removing lead from paints. But in case of lead pigments, there are no 100% alternatives available in the market and thus the manufacturers are forced to use them. Alternatives are available only to a few, but not for SMEs. Cost is a secondary issue when it is known that lead has harmful health effects.

QCI just spoke of auditing the consumers, the manufacturing unit etc. We welcome this kind of move provided it is designed in a way which is manufacturer and consumer friendly. We have to build up awareness and confidence among the consumer to demand and accept the certificate. **IPCA is in full support of a voluntary certification scheme.**

On being asked about the pigments available in the market, Mr. Mehra said that most pigments are imported. There are very few domestic ones which are not up to the quality standards. However, there are certain properties of leaded pigments which are very important for the paint but cannot be met by the organic pigments. Globally alternatives are available, but the problem is with availability. If a small manufacturer wants to purchase these alternatives, he is asked “how many containers you want?” Now a small manufacturer might not require such large amounts. Thus, may be, these international pigment suppliers could be asked or forced to keep and sell small stocks of the pigments as well.

Mr. Agarwal from Toxics Link summed up the problems as -

1. Quality of the domestic pigments, and
2. Availability of quantity of the international pigments.

This requires working with pigments importers and manufacturers.

Giving examples of some of the earlier campaigns on lead free pencils and star rating electronics, **Mr. Ashim Sanyal from Consumer Voice** said that once the consumer knows that a particular product is harmful for his family and that alternatives are available, they will pay extra for the safety of their family. Thus, if the consumer is aware of the harmful effects of lead, know that alternatives are available and the paint industry is also able to generate the confidence, the consumer will buy lead free paints.

He further mentioned that Consumer Voice always supports voluntary schemes. The organization is giving all the
required support to the campaign and will continue to do so. Another point raised by the paint industry representatives was that of a logo. If there is a common logo it will be easy for the consumer to identify and be confident of the product.

Mr. Chabbra from Hero Paints further suggested that the three paint associations be involved in the awareness campaign to give momentum to the awareness campaign.

**Key Points**

- The characteristics of leaded pigments are not fully replaceable by the available lead free pigments. The knowledge about the specific technology is not widely known.
- The quality of the lead free pigments manufactured within the country is below standard which does not substitute the benefits of the leaded pigments.
- Imported lead free pigments are available in the market but in large quantities. Hence making it difficult for the small and medium manufacturers to purchase imported pigments as their requirements are small. These are a few bottlenecks faced by the paint industry which hinder them from shifting from lead to lead free paints.
- The participants suggested that conversation be held with pigments importers and manufacturers to improve the availability of lead free pigments.
- IPCA rendered full support to the project but no individual commitments were made.
- IPCA members sought information about more laboratories where product testing could be done at reasonable rates and in less time.
- Asian Paints expressed support to any initiative towards elimination of lead from decorative paints and offered to share information on how to shift from lead to lead free formulations of decorative paints.
List of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name &amp; Designation</th>
<th>Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manoj Malhotra, Technical Manager</td>
<td>Superlac Paints Pvt Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ashwin Mehra, Director</td>
<td>Sunlac Paints Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Suresh Kumar Jain</td>
<td>Jain Paints &amp; Chemicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hitesh Kumar</td>
<td>Kansai Nerolac Paints Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ashok Kumar</td>
<td>Acro Paints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Santosh Chhabra</td>
<td>Hero Paints (P) Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rajat Chhabra, Director</td>
<td>Hero Paints (P) Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Amit Kr. Singh</td>
<td>Asian Paints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lavakush, Sales Manager</td>
<td>REDA Chemicals (I) Pvt. Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Suksh Mehta</td>
<td>Jasmin Paints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sandeep Vij</td>
<td>Orchid Colors &amp; Shades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ashim Sanyal, COO</td>
<td>Consumer Voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Manish Pande, Joint Advisor</td>
<td>Quality Council of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dr. Anupam Sachdeva, Pediatrician</td>
<td>Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ravi Agarwal, Director</td>
<td>Toxics Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dr. Prashant Rajankar, Senior Program Officer</td>
<td>Toxics Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Shivani Bhakhry, Senior Program Officer</td>
<td>Toxics Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Rambha Tripathy, Information &amp; Communication</td>
<td>Toxics Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Piyush Mahopatra, Senior Program Officer</td>
<td>Toxics Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Divakar</td>
<td>Toxics Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Anubhuti</td>
<td>Toxics Link</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DRAFT AGENDA

Preliminary Stakeholder Meeting on Third Party Certification for Decorative Paints
**Event Details**

**Date:** 9th April (Tuesday), 2013  
**Timings:** 10:00am – 01:00pm  
**Venue:** Conference Hall – 2, 87-88, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003

**Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am – 10.30 am</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10:30 am – 10:45 am| Welcome address                                            | Ravi Agarwal  
Director, Toxics Link                       |
| 10:45 am – 11:00 am| Introduction                                               | Anil Jauhari  
CEO, Quality Council of India                 |
| 11:00 am – 11:15 am| Opening Remarks                                            | European Union Delegate                      |
| 11:15 am – 11:30 am| Tea Break                                                  |                                              |
| 11:30 am – 11:45 am| Need for certification in decorative paints                | Dr. Prashant Rajankar  
Toxics Link                                     |
| 11:45 am – 12:00 pm| Paint Manufacturer’s Overview                              | Indian Paint and Coating Association         |
| 12:00 pm – 12:15 pm| Lead poisoning and health                                  | Dr. Anupam Sachdev                           |
| 12:15 pm – 12:30 pm| Presentation by a paint manufacturer                       | (Yet to confirm)                             |
| 12:30 pm – 01:00 pm| Discussion                                                 |                                              |
| 01:00 pm – 2:00 pm | Lunch                                                      |                                              |
About Toxics Link

Toxics Link is a not-for-profit initiative of The Just Environment Charitable Trust based in New Delhi, emerged from a critical need to address a vacuum that existed on the issue of toxicity and its impact on life and environment. Toxicity has significant health and environment impacts, particularly on vulnerable social groups such as women, young people and the urban poor. The cross-sectoral nature of the issue entails engagement with a range of concerns, such as health, environment, occupational safety, social justice, choice of technologies and process, consumer awareness, etc. The environmental organization, engaged in disseminating information about to help strengthen campaigns against toxics pollution, provide cleaner alternatives and bring together groups and people concerned with, and affected by, this problem.

Since its conception in 1994, Toxics Link’s role has revolved around the basic function of generating and disseminating credible information on waste and toxic substances across diverse audiences. Toxics Link has been playing a vital role in connecting experts, civil society groups and individuals working nationally and internationally on issues related to toxics, both to each other as well as to other sectors.

For more information please visit: http://www.toxicslink.org/

About Quality Council of India

Quality Council of India (QCI) is registered as a non-profit society with its own Memorandum of Association and is governed by a Council of 38 members with equal representations of government, industry and consumers. The Council is playing a pivotal role at the national level in propagating, adoption and adherence to quality standards in all important spheres of activities including education, healthcare, environment protection, governance, social sectors, infrastructure sector and such other areas of organized activities that have significant bearing in improving the quality of life and well being of the citizens of India.

QCI was set up jointly by the Government of India and the Indian Industry represented by the three premier industry associations i.e. Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), to establish and operate national accreditation structure and promote quality through National Quality Campaign.

For more information please visit: http://qcin.org/

Toxics Link,
H-2, Jungpura Extension, New Delhi-110014, Phone: +91-(11)-24328006, 24320711
Fax: +91-(11)-24321747, www.toxicslink.org