CHILDREN’S HEALTH FIRST, ELIMINATE LEAD PAINTS!

MINIMIZING AND ELIMINATING THE MANUFACTURE, IMPORT, SALE AND USE OF LEAD DECORATIVE PAINTS IN 7 ASIAN COUNTRIES
THE CHALLENGE

Lead is a toxic metal, which is why it is banned for use in paints in Europe, the U.S. and Australia. Lead is especially harmful to children since it interferes with the developing brain and causes for example a lower IQ, attention deficiencies, poor impulse control and aggressive behavior even at very low exposures. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that there is no safe level of childhood lead exposure. However, in developing countries, lead is still used in paints as pigments and drying agents, and when these paints are used in homes and schools lead will contaminate the household dust and be ingested by children through hand to mouth contact. The damage caused during development is irreversible, but entirely preventable. The challenge for the project is to achieve a switch to lead free paints in Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia.

OBJECTIVE

The project aims to reduce childhood lead poisoning by working for elimination of lead decorative paints in the markets of the seven participating countries. This will lead to improved school performance, which in turn will help battle poverty. In addition, this will help reduce trade barriers for small and medium sized paint manufacturers.

TARGET GROUPS

In order to make as large an impact as possible, the project targets the following groups:

- **The Civil Society**, by public awareness campaigns on the hazard of lead for children, and information about lead content of common household paints;
- **The Industry**, by promoting certification of lead free paints, and support to SMEs to adapt to a changing public demand and regulatory pressure by switching to safer alternatives;
- **The Government**, by having dialogues promoting effective, enforced legislation on maximum allowed lead content of household paints.

ACTIVITIES / STRATEGY

The target groups will be addressed through several activities:

- **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGNS**

  There is a very low public awareness in the project countries about the health hazard of lead, the common use of lead in household paints and the particular sensitivity of children. Through a public awareness and information campaign, consumers will be empowered to make informed decisions and put pressure on paint manufacturers and policy makers to address the issue and make necessary changes to eliminate decorative lead paints in the project countries.

- **THIRD-PARTY PAINT CERTIFICATION AND LABELLING PROGRAMMES**

  There is currently no third-party certification in Asia protecting against lead, and to establish this requires a carefully prepared design to ensure credibility. The project will start by engaging stakeholders such as paint manufacturers and accreditation bodies in discussions aiming at developing terms of a third-party certification program. It is expected that this program will be operational at the end of the project with participating paint brands on the market in at least five of the seven countries.

- **PROVIDING INFORMATION AND ADVICE TO SME PAINT MANUFACTURERS**

  Many SME manufacturers may lack the necessary information to effectively reformulate their products. Therefore, the project partners will engage SME paint manufacturers in discussions on what the hurdles are that they need to overcome to remove lead from their production. Then national strategies will be developed for how to address the concerns in the different project countries, as well as common issues for all SME manufacturers interviewed.

- **POLICY DIALOGUES**

  At the start of the project, all project countries lacked binding legislation that limits lead content of household paints. There are voluntary standards in a few, but it has been shown previously that they make a very small impact. Therefore, the project partners will engage in dialogue with government officials and political leaders to promote enactment of effective national policy instruments to prohibit or control the manufacture and sale of lead based paints.
SCALING-UP STRATEGY

EVIDENCE BASED AND STAKEHOLDER ORIENTED COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGNS
Many paints in the project countries lack reliable information on content and potential health hazards. Therefore, a total of 1000 paints will be analyzed for lead content to assess the current situation. At the same time, National Alliances to Eliminate Lead Paint consisting of stakeholders such as Paint Associations, health professionals and Non-Governmental Organizations will be established to further increase credibility and impact of the campaign. By specifically targeting the media throughout the campaign, the message about the hazards of lead paint will be disseminated to a larger audience. As more people get informed, the public pressure to eliminate lead paints will increase.

THIRD-PARTY PAINT CERTIFICATION AND LABELING PROGRAM
An Asian certification program ensuring no added lead in household paints will help the impact of the project last much longer than the project lifetime. This effort starts with training the Project Partners in e.g. development of certification standards, organizational structures and governance. The Partners will then engage stakeholders in dialogue to develop a set-up and terms of reference of the certification. Ideally, one certification can be developed for the whole project region and the program will be designed to be self-sustaining based on fees paid by participating paint manufacturers.

This project promotes a crucial switch from lead to non-lead alternatives in the production of household paints, a major source of human exposure to lead that is associated with irreparable brain damage, birth and reproductive disorders, developmental delays, learning disabilities and behavioral problems. Such a switch will, without doubt, contribute to the improvement of child, family and community health, particularly the health of our most vulnerable populations such as young children, pregnant women and paint workers, and help nations achieve their chemical safety and sustainable development goals.”

Manny C. Calonzo, Project Coordinator, Southeast Asia Region

Push and Pull Strategies of the Lead Paint Elimination Project

MECHANISMS TO BUILD CAPACITY WITHIN SMES
Large paint manufacturers generally have the necessary information and technology to remove lead from their paints. To ensure that the local SMEs will be able to stay competitive in the changing market climate, special efforts will be taken to provide technical information and other support for them to switch their production.

DIALOGUE WITH POLICYMAKERS
The most efficient way to eliminate lead paints is effective, enforced legislation. Therefore, the Project Partners with support from the National Alliances will engage politicians and policymakers in dialogue to promote standards for maximum allowed lead content of household paints.
The main activities during the first year of the project have been an inventory of paint manufacturers and brands on the national markets, and communication to increase public awareness. By visiting as many paint stores as possible, information was gathered on the number of paint manufacturers who sell paint in the country, what types and colors of paint they offer, where the paint was manufactured, the price of the paint, and the information offered on the label. 1000 paints have been purchased and will be analyzed for lead content, e.g. 300 in India and 150 each in Indonesia and the Philippines. The results will be used to gain further momentum in the public awareness campaign. The response from the media to the communications activities has been good, with more than 30 newspaper articles published and 5 TV-broadcasts. Judging from the commitment gained from a diverse set of stakeholders to work for elimination of lead paints, not only has the message been conveyed but also well received. The effort to establish a paint certification program started with training of representatives from all seven Project Partners at the Project Inception workshop. After the workshop, the partners proceeded with engaging paint manufacturers and other stakeholders in conversations about certification. At the end of 2012, five of the seven Project Partners received positive response from the paint manufacturers for engaging in a certification scheme. Discussions are being held in India with a potential accreditation body for the certification, with the aim of expanding the certification also to the other project countries.

SME paint manufacturers are one of the key stakeholders in the effort to eliminate lead paints, and the Project Partners started this activity with identifying national SMEs active in each project country. This was followed by outreach activities to investigate what information and advice they need to cost-effectively reformulate their products. In Sri Lanka a special SME meeting has been held, and in the Philippines a survey has been conducted among the SMEs to assess their needs. Also, the paint associations in the Philippines, Sri Lanka and India are supporting the campaign.

All partners have engaged government officials in dialogues regarding the national policy on lead content of paints. As a result of the ongoing campaign by CEJ in Sri Lanka, new legislation was decided upon just before the project started, which came into force in January 2013. In India, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is investigating the possible implementation of a mandatory standard for lead in household paints. In the Philippines, the Environmental Management Bureau has issued a draft Chemical Control Order that will, when approved, demand a discontinuation of the use of lead in all paints.
## IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### ECONOMIC IMPACT
- For every US$1 spent to reduce lead hazards, there is a benefit of US$17–220 (source WHO)
- Possibilities for SMEs to sell paints on a wider market

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
- Reduction of toxic chemicals in the home and work environments
- Reduction of hazardous waste

### SOCIAL IMPACT
- Increased school performance
- Reduced crime rates
- Reduced poverty

### ENGAGEMENT OF TARGET GROUP
- Active support in forming National Alliances from stakeholders such as health professionals, academics and paint associations
- Paint manufacturers committed to certification effort in 5 of the 7 project countries after year one
- Active dialogue with government representatives in all project countries

### POLICY LINKAGES
- New legislation in Sri Lanka limiting the amount of lead allowed in household paints
- New mandatory lead standards in progress in India and the Philippines
- Positive responses from governments in Nepal and Bangladesh to work for lead paint elimination
**OBJECTIVES**
The project aims at eliminating the manufacture, import, and sale of all decorative lead paints in seven Asian countries including Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia.

**DURATION**

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<th>Year</th>
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**FUNDING**
1,798,563 EUR (EU Contribution 77.8%)

**PROJECT CONTACT**
Dr. Sara Brosché
International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN)
Box 7256, SE-402 35, Gothenburg, Sweden

Email: sarabrosche@ipen.org
Telephone: +46-31-7995900

**PARTNERS**
- Arnika – Toxics and Waste Programme, Czech Republic
- Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO), Bangladesh
- Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ), Sri Lanka
- Ecological Alert and Recovery Thailand (EARTH), Thailand

Legend
- Eligible countries where SWITCH-Asia projects are implemented
- Eligible Asian countries for the SWITCH-Asia programme
- Non-eligible Asian countries for the SWITCH-Asia Programme

Project implementation area
- City
- Region
- Country

The boundaries shown on this map do not imply on the part of the European Union any judgment on the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

**Eligible countries where SWITCH-Asia projects are implemented**

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<td>Bangladesh</td>
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**Eligible Asian countries for the SWITCH-Asia programme**

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<td>Arnika – Toxics and Waste Programme, Czech Republic</td>
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<td>Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO), Bangladesh</td>
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<td>The Just Environment Charitable Trust (Toxics Link), India</td>
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<td>Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ), Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Ecological Waste Coalition of the Philippines, (EcoWaste Coalition), Philippines</td>
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<td>ISEAL Alliance, UK</td>
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**Non-eligible Asian countries for the SWITCH-Asia Programme**

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