



# Eco Mark News

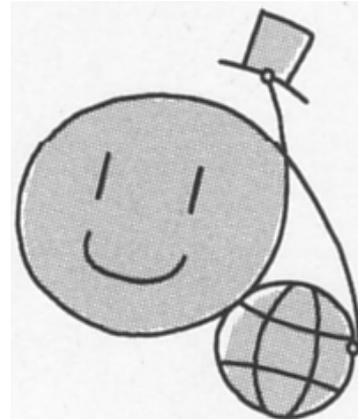
The Eco Mark is a voluntary program ran by Japan Environment Association. Contract fees from licensing companies and application fees from applicants cover whole budget for our activities. In this "Eco Mark News", the information related to Eco Mark Program such as newly selected Eco Mark product category and proposals for certification criteria is provided on the basis of the "Guidelines for Eco Mark Program Implementation".

Published on September 1, 2004 No. 52

Sendai International Center:  
Venue of the International  
Conference



The logo is based on the letter "g" from green purchasing, and symbolizes the interchange between the people who gather at the International Conference.



## 6 Ecolabels in the World including Blue Angel, Nordic Swan will Give Presentations about Future Development, etc. in Japan

Global Ecolabelling Network will co-organize a Special Group Discussion in The 1st International Conference on Green Purchasing in Sendai (October 6, 2004 at Sendai International Center)  
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Annex 3: Eco Mark Product Category "Toner Cartridge Version1.0 (draft)"

Annex 4: Eco Mark Product Category No.123 "Building Products Using Recycled Material" (Excerpts of the Revised Sections only)

Annex 5: Eco Mark Product Category No.126 "Paint Version1.1" (Excerpts of the Revised Sections only)

\* Annexes are separate from our newsletter and please contact our office if you wish to obtain them. They are also available on our website.

## Interview The 4<sup>th</sup>

### Promoting “Independent Consumer” Activity Interview with Mr. Yoshiki Midorikawa, Chairman of Green Consumer Research Group

Although Green Purchase activity has been pressed forward among the governmental agencies and the business organizations in Japan, the awareness to purchase the eco-friendly products among the general public hasn't been promoted in the wider layers of the society. We interviewed Mr. Yoshiki Midorikawa, Chairman of Green Consumer Research Group, and asked what kind of viewpoint is required and what we should do to promote the activity throughout the society in the future. Mr. Midorikawa has been approaching the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) issue including the environmental issues from the consumer's point of view. He is also a member of Eco Mark Steering Committee.



#### Enhancement of Volume and Quality of Information

*- The awareness of environmental issues in the society has been increasing steadily. What is your opinion about the awareness and activity among the general public ?*

**Mr. Midorikawa** I think there are less Green Consumers, in other words “Independent Consumers”, in Japan in comparison with those in European countries. More specifically we don't have sufficient number of consumers who collect the information, think and choose the products and services proactively, and ask the manufacturers and shops for the improvement if there is any problem. Especially male consumers have less awareness as being “Independent Consumer” partly because they have less opportunity to act as consumers.

I consider the background to such tendency is that we put weight on the cooperativeness centering on the companies and organizations and there is the culture of putting long working hours while depending on the organizations. Because of our background we haven't been able to promote the proactive attitude and activity among the public in many aspects including the consumption behavior.

*- How should we approach to promote “Independent Consumer” movement in wider society in the future ?*

**Mr. Midorikawa** If we are going to change the awareness and activity of the general public into the eco-friendly style, we need to improve the information in volume and quality and provide it appropriately so that they can consider by themselves. We can think about three information sources, which can influence the consumption behavior: 1. Information directly provided by the manufacturers through the product labels, catalogs, and advertisement in the shops and through other media, 2. Information provided with the third party ecolabelling, etc. and 3. Information provided by the third party on the result of survey/test conducted by them independently. Currently our information source is centered on 1 in Japan. 2 is far from sufficient and 3 is not at all available.

They have various magazines related to the product tests in any bookstores in European countries and many consumers read them. For instance they have a magazine called “Test” in Germany and its circulation is 800,000. If you convert this figure into the population scale in Japan, it becomes about 1,200,000. These kinds of magazines are issued also in Sweden, France and America, and the circulation figure is far greater than that in Japan. Based on such information from the third parties as well as the manufacturers, the consumers in those countries consider and choose the products they purchase on their own account.

Some business people consider too much information only makes the consumers confused. However what we need to do first is to secure the volume of information, and then it will be sorted out naturally into the useful information and the unnecessary information for consumers.

#### Improvement of System to Promote Consumer Activity

*- What kind of viewpoint does it require for the government and local governments policy in order to increase Green Consumers ?*

**Mr. Midorikawa** We need a proper system as well as information in order to promote the eco-friendly consumption behavior. Even if the awareness among the public has been promoted, the actual consumption behavior cannot be improved unless there is a proper system, which enables us to act upon the cause.

For example if there isn't a system to collect and recycle the used products, you cannot be Green Consumer even if you want to be. Current system in Japan is not sufficient for various products we have. We also have issues to consider such as the recycling system for containers and wrappings which burdens the local government greatly, and the recycling system for electric appliances which covers only limited number of items.

The consumer-orientated policy in many countries is promoted based on following 3 points: 1. Correction of the business activities, 2. Consumer support, and 3. Price adjustment. However we have less than sufficient measure in the area of consumer support in Japan. In European countries they put the large sum of budget to support consumer groups including providing the correct information whereas we are in the opposite trend in Japan. Instead of increasing the support fund, we are decreasing the fund and many local governments have cut their budget.

*- What do you think about the current situation of the business people's role and effort in terms of promoting the eco-friendly products ?*

**Mr. Midorikawa** In the area of the business-to-business, so called B to B, I think the development of eco-friendly products has been advanced and we have more eco-friendly products in the market. Some companies adopted the environmental view in their sales activities and some grasp the effect of reducing the environmental burden against the sales based on the means such as eco-efficiency index.

On the other hand I don't think enough effort has been put into the consumer products partially because the consumer awareness is still low. Many Japanese manufacturers and distributors have established their own criteria and labeling for their eco-friendly products. Such criteria can explain the scientific basis, however I can't say they are efficient in providing the appropriate information when consumers select the products. It is difficult to compare the products due to the different criteria between the manufacturers, and in fact some manufacturers change their criteria often.

We need the evaluation based on the unified criteria and the labeling, which is easier to understand, in order to promote the correct judgment among consumers when they select the products.

### **Expansion of Eco Mark Products for General Public Use**

*- When we consider changing the consumption behavior to more environmentally friendly, what do you suggest Eco Mark can do in the future ?*

**Mr. Midorikawa** I think we need to have more Eco Mark products in the general goods fields, which we buy and use everyday. Even if we want to buy them, if they are not available at the shops we have no option. In this regard we need to consider the product categories that can be corresponding to the purchase pattern of consumers if we are going to improve the situation.

As for the PR activities, besides the activities directly organized by Eco Mark Office, we should put more weight on collaboration with the local governments, consumer related organizations and schools. We also need to establish closer communication with such organizations and consumers. For instance we can setup a support system to which consumers can join as a promoter or counselor of Eco Mark. In this way we will be able to promote our activities in more layers of the society. And through such activities we can establish the awareness of "eco-friendly products are Eco Mark certified products", and we can build up more trust on Eco Mark itself as well.

I am hoping to improve the function of Eco Mark so that it becomes useful when consumers choose the products. I am sure that this kind of activity will lead to promote "Independent Green Consumer" activity among the society in Japan, too.

*- Thank you very much, Mr.Midorikawa.*

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### **Profile of Mr. Yoshiki Midorikawa**

Mr. Midorikawa is Co-chairman of The Valdez Society, which researches and suggests the responsibilities of companies in the environmental issues, and is also Chairman of Green Consumer Research Group, which is related to The Valdez Society. Mr.Midorikawa collaborated in issuing "Shopping Guide to Become Green Consumer" for Green Consumer Network Japan. He is a executive director of Green Purchasing Network, and has also established CSR Research Group in August 2004.

## Committee Report/Decisions

### Eco Mark Committee for Establishing Category and Criteria (30<sup>th</sup> meeting)

The 30<sup>th</sup> Eco Mark Committee for Establishing Category and Criteria (EMCECC, Chairman: Prof. Takashi Gunjima, Doshisha Univ.) was held on August 18, 2004 at Japan Environment Association. After the discussion, the following decisions were made;

#### Decisions

- It was decided that certification criteria for Eco Mark product category No.112 “Stationery/Office Supplies Version 1.0” and No.113 “Paper Packaging Materials Version2.0” are to be established on September 1, 2004.
- According to the establishment of certification criteria mentioned above, it was decided that existing Eco Mark product category No.112 “Paper Stationery” and No.113 “Packaging Paper” are to be discontinued on September 1, 2004.
- Primary assessment of 3 categories presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EMCECC was conducted. As a result, none was subjected to secondary assessment.
- Partial revision of certification criteria for Eco Mark product category No.123 “Building Products Using Recycled Material” and No.126 “Paints Version1.1” that are submitted by Eco Mark Committee for Product Certification was approved and decided to be revised on August 18, 2004.
- It was decided that certification criteria for Eco Mark product category “Toner Cartridge Version1.0 (draft criteria)” is to be publicized. (Scheduled to be established on January 10, 2005)

#### Status of Certification Criteria (as of Sept. 1, 2004)

Classification	Category No.	Category	Period of Open to Public	Date of Establishment/Revision/Discontinuance	Certification Criteria	Status
Establishment	112	Stationery/Office Supplies Version1.0	2004.3.1-4.29	2004.9.1	Annex 1	Closed
	113	Paper Packaging Materials Version2.0			Annex 2	
Discontinuance	112	Paper Stationery	2004.3.1-4.29	2004.9.1	-	Closed
	113	Packaging Paper				
Announcement of Draft	-	Toner Cartridge Version1.0	2004.9.1-10.30	2005.1.10 (scheduled)	Annex 3	Open
To be Established	-	Products for Civil Engineering Version1.0	2004.7.1-8.29	2004.11.1 (scheduled)	-	Closed
Partial Revision	123	Building Products Using Recycled Material	-	2004.8.18	Annex 4	
	126	Paints Version 1.1			Annex 5	

## New Certification Criteria

### “Stationery/Office Supplies Version1.0” (Established on Sept. 1, 2004)

Certification verification of the stationery and office supplies had been conducted under the product category No.112 “Paper Stationery”, No.115 “Wooden Products Using Waste Wood, Thinned-out Wood, Small-diameter Logs, etc.” and No.118 “Plastic Products Using Recycled Materials”. In accordance with the revision of “Paper Stationery”, we integrated criteria items regarding above stationery/office supplies to new certification criteria for the product category “Stationery/Office Supplies Version1.0”. We hope not only it will make those who wish to apply for the certification easier to access but also the consumers will find it easier to choose Eco Mark products when the product category is set by function as such.

Specifically the new criteria include the higher composition rate of recycled-paper for some products and the new item for the expendable parts such as ink.

## “Paper Packaging Materials Version2.0” (Established on Sept. 1, 2004)

We revised the current product category No.113 “Packaging Paper” and established No.113 “Paper Packaging Materials Version2.0”. Scope of the products was reviewed this time and we decided to deal with only material paper and semi-manufactured products under this product category and the final products such as wrapping bags and envelopes, etc. under No.112 “Stationery/Office Supplies Version1.0”. Also we considered the social background of increasing interest in chemical substances, therefore chlorine gas used during the bleaching pulp process and azo colorants, etc. are newly included in the criteria.

## Announcement of Draft of Certification Criteria

We will accept opinions against above draft announcement from Sept. 1 (Wed) to Oct. 30 (Sat), 2004. For details on submitting opinions, please refer to the following;

### Acceptance of Opinions on the Proposed Criteria of New Product Category

Please send a summary of following matters in either way;

- Address, Name, Sex, Occupation, Contact Address, Telephone number, Fax number
- Name of the certification criteria for Eco Mark product category to give opinion
- Opinions on the above proposal criteria

#### (1) Acceptance by mail and Fax

A summary of the above matters should be sent in writing (on A4 size paper) to below by October 30 (Sat), 2004 (postmark effective).

Eco Mark Office, Japan Environment Association  
Prime Kamiyacho Building 2F, 1-11-9 Azabudai, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0041  
TEL: +81-3-5114-1255 FAX: +81-3-5114-1257

#### (2) Acceptance by e-mail

A summary of the above matters should be sent to the address below by 17:00, October 30 (Sat), 2004 by e-mail. When you attach a file to e-mail, please use MS-Word, Ichitaro, or Excel format.

e-mail: [ecomark@japan.email.ne.jp](mailto:ecomark@japan.email.ne.jp)

## Information

### 6 Ecolabels in the World including Blue Angel, Nordic Swan will Give Presentations about Future Development, etc. in Japan

Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) will co-organize a Special Group Discussion in “The 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Green Purchasing in Sendai” (at Sendai International Center) with sponsor organizations.

Speakers from German Blue Angel, Nordic Swan, EU Flower, China Environmental Label, Korea Eco-label fill this group discussion with interesting latest information on present status and future developments and mutual recognition. Other latest information including Type I environmental label in Indonesia will be presented as well. Presentations are done in English and translated into Japanese simultaneously. Admission free (registration is necessary).

This dreamy program has come true in line with GEN Annual General Meeting in Japan. This is the great opportunity for you to participate in the international fora. We are looking forward to seeing you in Sendai.

For details, please look at the website [http://www.ics-inc.co.jp/icgps/index\\_e.html](http://www.ics-inc.co.jp/icgps/index_e.html) .

### Application for Green Label (Taiwan) is Now Available in Japan

Japan Environment Association signed agreement on Mutual Recognition of Certification Verification (Either of ecolabelling organizations can subsidize the verification operation for the other mutually.) with Environment and Development Foundation (Green Mark) in Taiwan as of July 1, 2004.

Upon the mutual recognition advantages such as simplification of procedures and documents and speedup in certification are expected for the sake of a company who wish to acquire the environmental label for their export products.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> mutual recognition agreement following Korea Environmental Labelling Association in December, 2003 and Thailand Environment Institute in February, 2004.

## Good for Cooling the Summer Heat! Eco Magazine “FeEEL” Summer 2004 Issue has been Published

The latest “FeEEL” has been published on August 14. “FeEEL” is a popular ecology magazine issued by Eco Mark Office, and you can find it at MOS Burger stores throughout Japan.

“FeEEL” Summer 2004 features the theme, “Water”. It contains an interview with Dr. Masaru Kitano who appears frequently on TV and the report on the spring in Rokugo, Akita, which is used as a “water” source for living. With the unique style of “FeEEL”, we approach the water that reflects the environment state directly.



“FeEEL” Summer 2004 Issue

The size of “FeEEL” is easy to read (A5 Landscape). It has “cool” design, which gives the readers healing and comforting effect. The contents are appealing and sophisticated. You can experience a bit of ecology while you relax at a café.

## Workbook for Children “Let's Find Eco Marks ! (Vol.5)” has been Published

We published a workbook “Let's Find Eco Marks ! (vol.5)” targeted at elementary school children. We highlight “Wooden Products Using Waste Wood, Thinned-out Wood, Reused/Unused Wood, etc.” in this volume and children can learn the importance of use of thinned-out wood and so on through illustration and quiz.



Workbook for Children  
“Let's Find Eco Marks ! (Vol.5)”

## No.12 “Biodegradable Lubricating Oil” of Eco Mark Introductory Leaflet “Discover! Eco Mark around You” has been Published

“Biodegradable lubricating Oil” is added to the series of leaflet “Discover! Eco Mark around You”, which describe environmental problems underlay, how the environment can be better protected and so on.

Eco Mark Office will provide the Eco Mark pamphlets including this leaflet for free. (Please note that you need to pay for the postage. If you are going to use them for business purpose, you are also requested to pay for the actual printing cost.) Please look at website “Eco Mark Panel Lending and Material Distribution Service” (<http://www.ecomark.jp/panel.html>).



No.12 “Biodegradable Lubricating Oil”  
of Eco Mark Introductory Leaflet

## Exhibition Booth at “Enviro-Shiga 2004”

The Eco Mark Office will have a booth at “Enviro-Shiga 2004”, which will be held for the 7<sup>th</sup> time. This fair compiles the latest information, technology and products of many companies and organizations not only from all over Japan but from overseas. It is so lively that 40 thousand visitors are expected in 3 days. Please drop by. Admission free.

**Date and Time:** October 20 (Wed) - 22 (Fri) 10:00- 17:00 (last day 10:00-16:00)

**Place:** Shiga Prefectural Nagahama Dome (1320, Tamura-cho, Nagahama-shi, Shiga Prefecture)

**Sponsors:** Enviro-Shiga 2004 Executive Committee (Shiga Industries Association, Shiga Prefecture, etc.)

**Contact:** Eco Mark Office Ms.Mizuno TEL 03-5114-1255

## Topics

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> Eco Mark Products Consumer Monitoring and Recognition/Credibility Survey

Eco Mark Office has conducted the nation wide survey on the Eco Mark household products. This survey was also done last year and this is the second in series. It has been conducted between December 2003 and January 2004 with the cooperation of the Japan Association of Consumer Affairs Specialists, JACAS. We asked 600 members (number of valid answer = 567) of JACAS to send us the Eco Mark labellings on their household goods, and investigated the unauthorized use/misuse of Eco Mark (I). At the same time we conducted a survey targeting 1,800 general consumers (number of valid answer = 1680). Questionnaire included “Image of the Eco Mark licensee company”, “The product category you like to refer to Eco Mark if they are certified” (II). Details of the survey are available on Eco Mark website.

#### (I) Survey conducted with the members of Japan Association of Consumer Affairs Specialists

##### (1) Eco Mark Indication “Survey on Unauthorized Use/Misuse”

There are 24 cases of Unauthorized/Inappropriate Use and Misuse out of the total number of 2194 reported products. We are handling these cases strictly in accordance with “the manual for countermeasure against incorrect use of Eco Mark”.

Survey items	Number of products
Total number of reported products	2,194
Unauthorized/Inappropriate use	17
Misuse (B)	7
Total (A+B)	24
Rate of unauthorized use/misuse 1.09% (last time 1.64%)	

##### (2) “How do you decide when you buy Eco Mark Products”

Although “Put higher priority to price” was the answer chosen by the largest group of respondents, 1/4 of people answered that they utilize Eco Mark as a tool of judgment when they bought Eco Mark products found at home. Total 24.7% chose “If there is a mark and its indication below the mark” and “If there is a mark (and that's it)” as an answer.

How do you decide when you buy Eco Mark products	Answer rate
Put higher priority to price than the mark	24.9%
Credibility of the retailer	18.3%
Social recognition/credibility of the company	16.9%
Purchase without knowing if it is an Eco Mark	15.2%
If there is a mark and its indication below the mark	13.1%
If there is a mark (and that's it)	11.6%

#### (II) Survey conducted with general consumers

##### (1) “Image of the Eco Mark licensee company”

###### (Multiple answers accepted)

60% of the consumers have “Good image”, “Socially responsible to the environment” and so on for the Eco Mark licensee companies.

Image of the company	Answer rate
Have a good image of the company	60.2%
Socially responsible to the environment	58.9%
Have a trust on the company	58.6%
Good consideration for the consumers, etc.	56.2%
Don't have special image	10.2%

##### (2) “The product category you like to refer to Eco Mark if they are certified”

“Electric Appliances” was the answer chosen by the largest group of respondents, which occupies 40%, followed by “Automobiles” and “Services”.

The product category you like to refer to Eco Mark if they are certified	Answer rate
Electric Appliances	40.0%
Automobiles	15.3%
Services (hotel, public transportation, etc.)	10.9%
Food	8.8%
Residence	5.2%

## Report on Explanatory Meetings on Certification Fee Revision

Prior to the revision of Eco Mark certification fee structure as of April 2005, we had “explanatory meetings on certification fee revision” at 5 locations nationwide (July 22-Okayama, July 23-Fukuoka, July 29 morning/afternoon-Osaka, July 30-Nagoya, August 3 morning/afternoon-Tokyo).

Eco Mark officers explained the points of revision and actual procedures at the meeting. We have many questions and comments from the participants during the questions and answers session. We would like to thank very much for the participation in spite of the hot weather and spending precious time with us.

Opinions given by each company with a practical perspective were very helpful to the Office. We will reflect these opinions to the future program operations.

The material used at the meetings together with Q&A will be posted on Eco Mark Office website <http://www.ecomark.jp/> in early September. We appreciate it if those who could not participate in the meeting can utilize the information.

## “Environment-Conscious Management Promotion Program” has been Launched

Development Bank of Japan has started the loan program in accordance with “Environment-Conscious Management Promotion Program”.

This program is the world first loan system with the specialized method of “Environment Rating”. They rate the environment-conscious management level of the company by the screening system (the rating system) to set the appropriate interest level from the three levels in accordance with the rating. To be more specific, the terms of loan includes that the company has to have its own brand certified by Eco Mark or other eco-labelling program. They are currently evaluating about 50 companies from major to medium size. Expansion of the use in the future is expected. For the details of this program, please contact below.

**Contact:** Social Environment Group/Policy Planning Department, Development Bank of Japan.

Mr. Kohata, Mr. Takegahara TEL 03-3244-1170 e-mail [sekikak@dbj.gp.jp](mailto:sekikak@dbj.gp.jp)

## Invitation to the 1<sup>st</sup> Eco Products Award

Eco Products Award Promotion Council (office: c/o The Global Environmental Forum) is organizing the 1<sup>st</sup> Eco Product Award 2004 to commend the superior eco-friendly products/services (Eco Products), which contribute in reducing the environmental burden sponsored by Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, and Ministry of the Environment.

This is the first Eco Products Award, which has been organized to support the companies who put an effort in producing the eco-friendly products by commending their products and effort, and at the same time to convey the correct information regarding eco-friendly products to the consumer side (i.e. companies and general public).

For the details of application, please look at the homepage of Eco Products Award <http://www.gef.or.jp/ecoproducts/> or contact Eco Products Award Promotion Council Office (TEL 03-3592-9735). Application is accepted until September 10 (Fri), 2004.

