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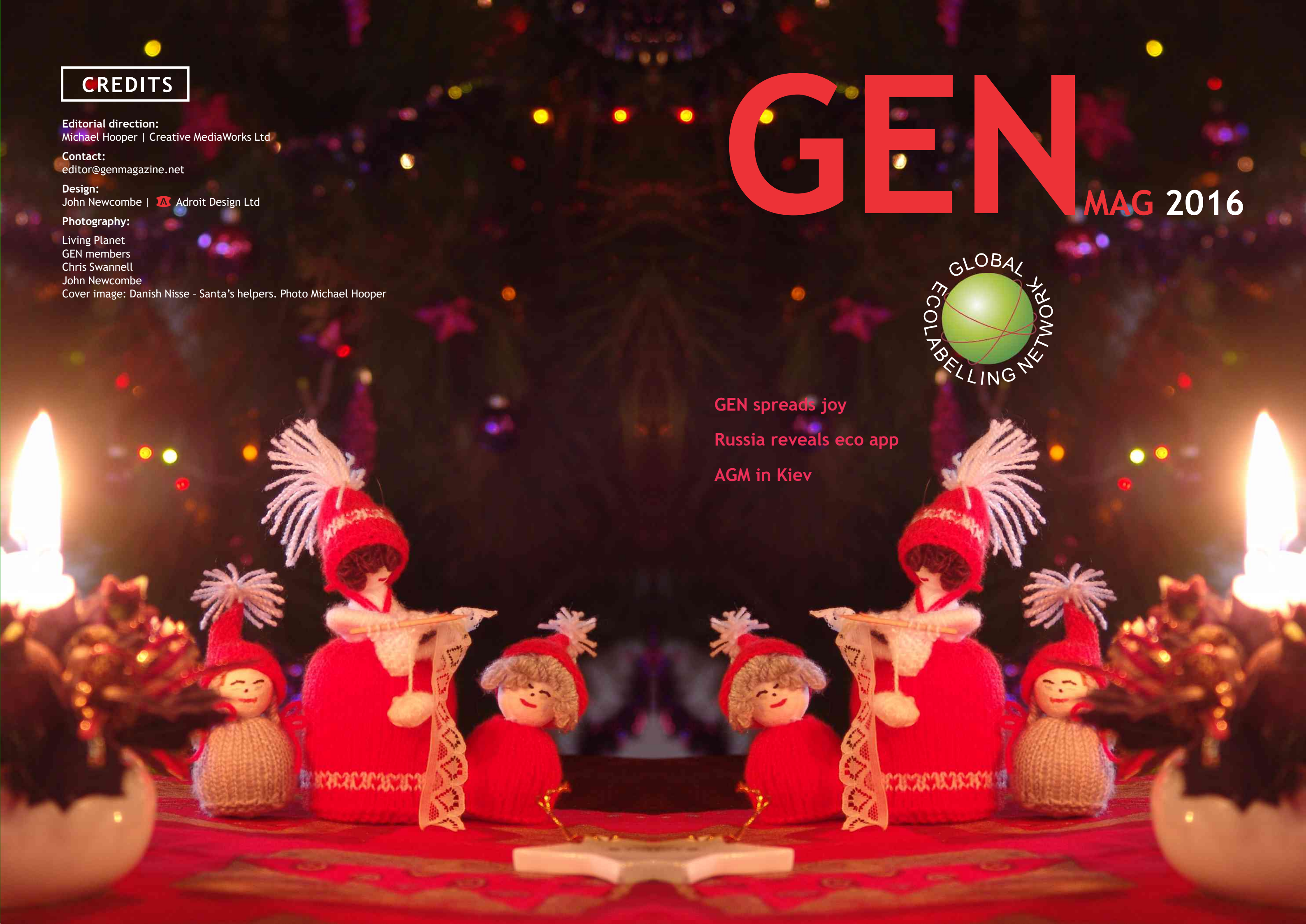
# GEN MAG 2016



GEN spreads joy

Russia reveals eco app

AGM in Kiev





## EDITORIAL

### “We don't have as much time as we thought”

*David Carlson, director of climate research programme, World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).*

If you thought 2016 was hot, you are right. In July we had smoke signals - it reached 54 degrees Celsius in Kuwait, and was the world's hottest month in recorded history (records began in 1880). Temperature records have now been busted for more than 10 consecutive months according to NASA, and for 14 months according to the US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). October was the warmest October on record and this whole year is about to be declared as the warmest since 1880 (provisional WMO annual report, Marrakech).

The political climate this year also reached tinder point. Unexpected poll results headlined a year of change in some GEN member states that will see the character of leadership change in many areas including environment and climate action. But it need not be all bad.

The low-impact Marrakech COP22 “implementation” talks did little to enthuse wilting media. However, amidst the wearying wave of words and figures, a more positive perspective was voiced - a sentiment that the momentum for sustainability that came with COP21 is unstoppable, and indeed may increase. The Marrakech Action Proclamation confidently stated “extraordinary momentum on climate change worldwide...is irreversible.” This, claims Richard Branson's advisor and US business guru John Elkington (reported in Edie News), will come about not so much through governments, but by heightened networking by the “internal change agents” that are found in every business and organisation.

Meeting so many focused and canny people of great goodwill and commitment at the GEN AGM in Kiev underscored this for me. Many were not the public nor corporate faces of their organisations, and few were politicians, but they were tenacious and quite a force - people you would certainly credit as internal change agents. Their passionate pursuit of cooperation and communication for ecolabelling has become something of a beacon to me. These GEN members are an enduring wind of change that blows strongly and constantly across the changing political and business landscape.

While media storms swirl around the headline acts, I can only agree with John Elkington that environmental redemption is likely to come from the irresistible drive of private enterprise for more sustainable production and consumption. GEN's contribution is the motivation and authentication of ecolabelling, a powerful and voluntary collaboration among people of goodwill.

Michael Hooper

Editor



*Michael with GEN secretariat manager Catherine Sheehy*

## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

### Strengthening and spreading the good word: ecolabelling

When building partnerships and establishing contacts with global organisations like the green building councils, the UN organisations UNEP and UNCTAD, or with trade organisations like the WTO or OECD, our activity - ecolabelling of products - is gaining higher recognition and acceptance all the time.

All the GEN members have their geographical “home”, and only a few try to cover markets globally. We have learned that the recognition and credibility of an ecolabel logo can most easily be built nationally or regionally. As a consequence of this insight comes the need for mutual recognition agreements (MRAs), between the GEN members. However, while we communicate something genuine and well-established with our respective logos, we also recognise that environmental impacts do not follow any man-made borders. Environmental issues are global issues, and the requirements for environmentally more sound products should likewise be global. So there is a natural development towards having common core criteria among the established ecolabels.

It is not satisfactory to have only some 30 ecolabelling schemes worldwide. We know our information tool is a powerful tool in the markets for both business-to-business, and business-to-consumer, and also as an aid in public procurement. It is a natural thing, and in our common interest, to spread ecolabelling Type 1 to all markets.



For our own network, assisting newborn ecolabels is an effort we make to strengthen the position of ecolabelling Type 1 in general, consequently increasing our own market penetration and value. Therefore we should consider all contacts from people and organisations as interesting and worth putting initial effort into, even if we do not see any immediate benefit for our own ecolabels in that. Our secretariat is in a crucial position for this work, and GEN has budgetted funding for this kind of capacity building. So, let's spread the good word!



# Deck the halls

With the Christmas and New Year festive seasons come opportunities for GEN members to promote a safer, more sustainable holiday time.

In North America, UL Environment has partnered with the Hunger Resource Network and Feed6 to “take a bite out of hunger”. One in eight Americans do not have security of food supply, says Feed6 founder Bill Kanatas. The initiative saw over 240 UL employee volunteers in Illinois help with packaging of food parcels.

The company has also published a white paper that helps the users of 14 million artificial Christmas trees minimise fire hazards - \$1.2 billion is a lot of cheer to go up in smoke, frequently with devastating consequences. Some risk also applies to natural trees.

Visit <http://library.ul.com/?document=reducing-the-fire-hazard-of-pre-lit-artificial-christmas-trees>. Yule be glad you did.

Germany's Blue Angel has descended from on high for the children of SOS Village in Berlin, prompting a radical idea about reducing VAT! Read more below.

Ecolabelling Sweden is reminding us that some of those featured festive candles may be unworthy of our celebrations if they utilise palm oil or paraffin. With nearly 20,000 tonnes of candles sold every year in Sweden alone, there's plenty of opportunity to make an environmental choice at Christmas. Check the story here.

*From the Global Ecolabelling Network, promoting a more sustainable and safer environment year round, Merry Christmas to all and a happy New Year.*

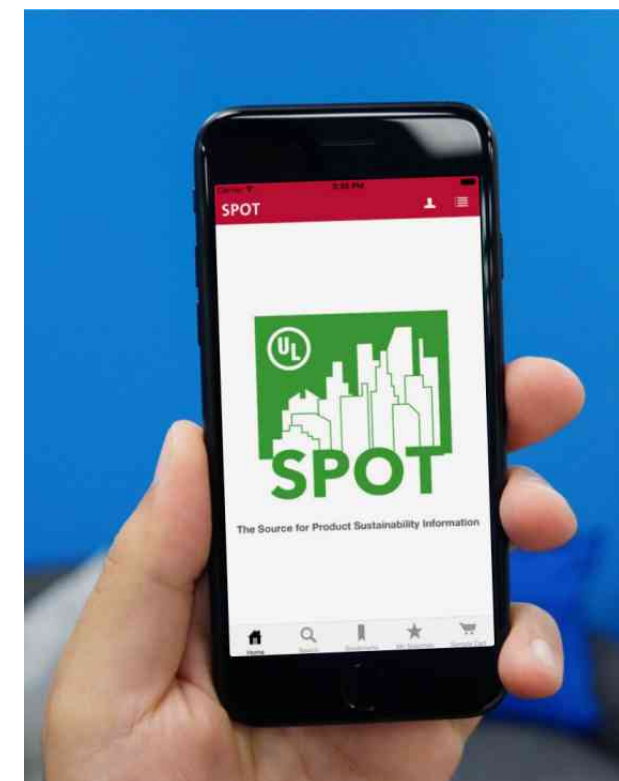
## NORTH AMERICA

# Spot the wizard

When UL Environment acquired the building product database Green Wizard this year, it created a platform to address two challenges for informing the building industry, suggests Carlos Correia, president of UL Supply Chain and Sustainability: “the time required to find necessary product data in multiple locations, and to help ensure that the information they find is accurate and can be trusted.”

The resulting web-based SPOT tool, introduced in October 2016, is a first, says UL, providing unprecedented visibility of green product information which is bolted directly onto building project plans, enhancing information modelling workflow. It also has mobile interfaces for both Android and Apple's IOS. Launched with 40,000 products, the data is curated and managed by UL, which has a history of more than 120 years, giving users confidence that the data is from reliable, credible sources.

The ability to search across brands and sort by certification or credit systems such as LEED or country-specific Green Star, makes SPOT a handy tool - it is also remarkably quick. Take SPOT for a walk at [ul.com/spot](http://ul.com/spot)





## NORTH AMERICA

# Green Angels

The City of the Angels has cut the cost of applying for Green Seal certification by 50 percent under its Green4Green programme, and will also gift 25 percent of the first monitoring fee. The Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board has also offered promotional help to certified hotels as part of the city's broader sustainability plan and Green Lodging Program.

By becoming Green Seal-certified, hotels can offer a healthier and greener experience to the millions who stay in the city's hotels every year. Additionally, hotels that get certified will also be helping the city meet its 2020 goals for reduced energy and water use.

"Sustainability is smart business for our hospitality industry – it saves energy costs, and helps guests from all over the world understand that we're serious about doing our part to protect the planet," says Mayor Eric Garcetti. "Los Angeles already leads the country in committing to a sustainable future, and Green4Green will make that clear to millions of visitors. We are offering hotels a terrific deal to go green, and look forward to being their partners in environmental stewardship."

Green Seal operates a stringent environmental hotel standard. By submitting to a thorough review and on-site audit, hotels help protect human health and the environment by reducing waste, conserving water and energy, and instituting green management policies that include environmental purchasing and hazardous substance handling. "When hotels participate in the L.A. Green Lodging Program they support the city's broader Sustainable City plan as well as their community," says Gary Petersen, Director of the Green Seal California office.

"We know travellers are increasingly interested in eco-friendly lodging options and think Green Seal is a tremendous resource for our millions of visitors planning their visit to Los Angeles," says Ernest Wooden Jr, president and CEO of Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board. "By becoming Green Seal-certified, L.A. hotels have an excellent communication vehicle for reaching eco-conscious travellers."

Partners in the program include the City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board, the Better Buildings Challenge, and Green Seal.

The largest hotel in Downtown Los Angeles, the high profile JW Marriott, has recently been certified by Green Seal, says the ecolabel's West Coast office director, Gary Petersen. "The JW Marriott sits in the high profile L.A. LIVE entertainment complex within walking distance of the Staples Centre and the L.A. Convention Centre. Their efforts to reduce waste, conserve resources, and promote sustainable practices will have a tremendous positive effect on the health of their guests and staff, as well as the neighbourhood."

The hotel uses non-toxic, biodegradable housekeeping products; non-toxic paints with minimal VOCs; energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and fixtures; and water-efficient, drought-resistant landscaping. It has a recycling and composting programme, and over 5,000 tons of cardboard, paper, scrap metals, plastics, glass and food waste has been recycled, says general manager Javier Cano.

Leftover banquet and catering food is donated to Food Finders, a non-profit organisation that rescues perishable food and delivers it to local shelters, soup kitchens and food distribution centres. The hotel also donates leftover bath soap and bottled shower amenities to Clean the World, an organization that recycles and distributes cleansing products to impoverished people worldwide. Additionally, the hotel offers a wide range of alternative transportation opportunities, including bicycle support, discounted parking for low-emitting and fuel-efficient vehicles, carpools and vanpools, and an employee rideshare program.

"We are constantly looking for ways to lessen our impact on the environment, and hope to inspire our guests and others to do the same," says Javier Cano. "Sustainability is a real, everyday practice, and our ongoing efforts to conserve water, reduce energy and recycle not only enhance our guests' experience, but also show our commitment to positively impacting our community and the world we live in."

The nearby City of Santa Monica has also received certification as a Green Seal Office Partner for its environmental office operations.

When it comes to LA, perhaps Joni Mitchell was a little premature after all.





## GERMANY

# Blue Angel comes to Earth

The Blue Angel and the Berlin SOS children's village are campaigning to give children a chance to grow up in a world worth living in. Maria Krautzberger, President of the German Federal Environment Agency, and the actor Oliver Mommsen have visited the SOS children's village in the Berlin district of Moabit. They brought a one-year supply of drawing paper, arts and crafts papers, exercise books, spiral-bound notepads and handkerchiefs, but also toilet and kitchen paper rolls all carrying the Blue Angel ecolabel.

"I have been an SOS sponsor for quite some time," says Oliver Mommsen, "and since 2014, I have also been an environmental envoy for the Blue Angel. Children need our protection and our help. Only when children can conquer the world without fear, but with a good sense of basic trust and with plenty of curiosity, can we say we did everything right. But this will only be possible if we finally learn to protect and to take care of our earth and our environment."



"It is important that we scrutinize what we buy," says Maria Krautzberger, "because it is the buying behaviour of each and every one of us that has an impact on our environment. We can make a great difference if we look for environmentally friendly and energy-efficient products while doing our daily shopping. These products must, however, also be affordable - so, I suggest we consider a reduced VAT rate for environmentally friendly products. Thus, a particularly energy-efficient refrigerator would have a VAT rate of 7 percent instead of 19 percent. This would make these products more affordable and more attractive and that would be to the benefit of both environment and household budget."

The "angels" were welcomed by village manager Agnes Siemer and by families who spend their leisure time there to receive support. "We try time and again to raise our children's and our families' awareness for issues regarding environmental and climate protection," she says. "Sometimes this is not easy because the challenges they face in their daily lives are difficult. If we set a good example, all the better."



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In addition to the 2004-opened children's village in Waldstraße, a day-care centre providing 90 places and an affiliated family centre are planned for 2017 - an Embassy for Children, an educational centre and meeting place in the heart of the Berlin district. "This is going to be an open house," explains Agnes Siemer. "We hope we will also be able to raise greater awareness about the issues of environmental and climate protection."

Maria Krautzberger agrees. "Environmental protection is a collective responsibility and I think it is important that our kids and young people learn sustainable consumption as early as possible. We want to use the Blue Angel ecolabel to offer consumers reliable guidance and information to help them make informed purchase decisions." Meantime there's plenty of ecolabel products to literally draw upon, thanks to the angels' visit.



## AUSTRALIA

### GECA on the GO

Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) CEO Kate Harris and Chair Gordon Renouf have been especially busy with addresses to the Sustainable Development Goals Australia (SDGA) conference held at the end of November.

GECA Marketing manager Paula Clasby reports that SDGA was a broad ranging multi-stakeholder conference to stimulate action on the 17 biggest social, environmental and economic challenges.

Australia was ranked twentieth in the global SDG Index and the SDGA conference had the ambition of pushing the country up into the top 10. The nation's Banksia sustainability awards were also presented on 30 November at the conference. <http://banksiafdn.com/2016-winners/>

A 3-hour video on the conference is available [here](https://app.wipster.io/Review/A2BMDQaphWvGj6fVaDqGJN90wYUsIDzaE2RAjvmejdUmpkdZOw).

<https://app.wipster.io/Review/A2BMDQaphWvGj6fVaDqGJN90wYUsIDzaE2RAjvmejdUmpkdZOw>

GECA's Shaila Divakarla also spoke on green procurement at the Sustainable Built Environment conference.



### APEC Green Supply Chain adds GECA link

GECA has been officially endorsed by the APEC Ministers of Trade as being the Australian representative for the APEC Green Supply Chain Network. APEC is the organisation for Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

The network was launched in 2015 to facilitate environmentally-friendly, economically viable purchasing, production activity and distribution, and consumption of goods and services through developing green supply chain networks in APEC economies.

GECA is one of the newest officially endorsed members of the network and will be working to promote certified products throughout the APEC region and to support developing South-East Asian countries in improving sustainable consumption and production practices.

“GECA is proud to be a part of the APEC Green Supply Chain Network,” says Kate Harris, CEO of GECA. “This is a great opportunity for Australia to have a bigger impact on sustainable purchasing in the Asia-Pacific region.”

“We are excited at the potential to develop a pilot centre of sustainable materials, products and services for promotion of sustainable procurement in Australia and beyond. We hope to work with the Australian Government to realise this vision and to bring our fellow APEC Green Supply Chain Network members to Australia in the near future, to expand the opportunities and benefits for Australia and all our Asia Pacific neighbours.”

GECA is the only Australian member of GEN. It develops standards against which products can be independently audited by GECA's JAS-ANZ accredited conformity assessment bodies.



Kate Harris





## DENMARK

### When the ships are down

Have you ever thought about what happens, from a life-cycle point-of-view, when a ship ends its final voyage? Denmark has joined Belgium, Congo, France and Norway in ratifying a Hong Kong convention promoting environmentally sound ship recycling. (The European Union had already adopted the convention in part through the Ship Recycling Regulation.)

Approximately 1,000 scrap merchant vessels are broken up annually for valuable materials such as steel. The majority are sent to Asia and are broken up, under unregulated conditions, in countries such as India and Bangladesh, which often do not have the same focus on the environment and working conditions as found in Europe.

In 2015, 768 ships were sold for recycling globally, with 469 (69 percent) broken up on beaches in Bangladesh, India or Pakistan.

On average, 10 Danish-operated ships are sent for scrap annually, with the majority sent to shipyards in India, China or Turkey.

The Hong Kong Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships was adopted by the International Maritime Organisation in 2009. It aims to ensure that ships being recycled do not pose an unnecessary risk to human health and safety or the environment.

Ships to be recycled must carry an inventory of hazardous materials. An appendix to the convention provides a list of materials which cannot be installed or used. Ships from states that are party to the convention must conduct an initial survey to verify the inventory of hazardous materials; renewal surveys during the ship's life; and a final survey before recycling. Ship recycling yards must provide a plan to specify how each individual ship will be recycled.

The convention will enter into force two years after its ratification by 15 states, which represent 40 percent of world merchant shipping by gross tonnage. It will bind signatories to have ships broken up at facilities which comply with its terms.



Esben Lunde Larsen

The Danish Minister for Environment and Food, Esben Lunde Larsen, explained Denmark's motives. "Scrap ships must not pollute Third World beaches. Ships are often hazardous waste and they must be broken up under appropriate conditions so that they do not pose a danger to human health and safety or the environment. Seeing the shipyards in Asia at which many scrap ships are broken up has made a strong impression on me. Therefore, adapting Danish regulations so that we can accede to the Hong Kong Convention has been an important priority, and it will help

set global standards to ensure ships are broken up safely. This will send a strong signal to other countries, and the more countries that accede to the Convention, the quicker we can get it to enter into force."

The Danish Ship Owners' Association has welcomed the decision and hopes that more countries will follow Denmark's example so that the convention will enter into force. Until then, the association is encouraging its members to comply with the convention's requirements voluntarily.

The Danish Metalworkers' Union and the Central Organisation of Industrial Employees have also welcomed the decision.



## DENMARK

# Copenhagen expands green effect

Pursuing its ambition to become the world's first carbon neutral city, Denmark's densely populated capital, Copenhagen, has exceeded its goal for reduction of CO2 emissions. The aims were set when the city hosted the Conference of Parties (COP) on Climate Change in 2009. Targeting a 20 percent reduction on 2005 levels by 2015, it has gone on to reduce levels by 38 percent.

In 2012, the 2009 plan was superseded by the Copenhagen CPH 2025 Climate Plan which added new initiatives needed to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality. The CPH 2025 Plan highlights the important role of green procurement, stating that "the city will, by virtue of its large procurement volume, actively seek to move the market in a climate friendly direction".

These plans recognised that in order to become carbon neutral, climate and environmental targets had to be introduced into more areas of public procurement by 2025:

- Reducing energy consumption in city administration buildings by 40%, compared to 2010 levels
- All vehicles used by the city council to run on electricity, hydrogen, or biofuels
- Reducing energy consumption for street lighting by half, compared to 2010 levels
- Installing 60,000 square meters of photovoltaic panels on new or existing municipal buildings
- Serving 90% organic food in public sector canteens or food services (by end 2015)



Alongside these actions, the City set itself targets to reduce the environmental impacts of its operations, which included using ecolabelled products where possible and factoring new methods into the tendering process.

A GPP partnership that began between Copenhagen, Aarhus and Odense has now expanded to 13 municipalities. It aims to

develop joint, mandatory procurement objectives that have major positive impacts on the environment, both locally and globally. It strives to renew these objectives on an annual basis in order to make continuous progress.

Denmark has a total public procurement spend of 5.5 billion euro annually.





RUSSIA

# Double anniversary

The Ecological Union is celebrating 25 years since its foundation, and 15 years since launching the “Vitality Leaf” certification programme. Marking the occasion, a meeting discussed the marketing aspects of ecolabelled products, and governmental support as a necessary condition for green market growth, especially in the European and Russian experience.

Debates on eco-product promotion involved more than 80 specialists from well-known producers, consulting firms, environmental organisations and research institutes. The aim was to figure out whether ecolabelling really helps business and its sales, and understand why companies fail to make the most of ecolabelling's potential.

According to representatives of Profine Rus, Tarkett and Avon, ecolabelling is a world trend. Demand for eco goods in the B2C sector can be hampered by low customer awareness. The cost of some ecolabelled goods is sometimes higher, forming a barrier to making an environmental choice. A similar situation is observed in the B2B sector where there is interest among international customers and exporters.

The main problem mentioned by participants was the inability of companies to use their marketing resources in the most effective way. Experts from the Green Building Council Russia, Tekhnontikol, Pilkington Glass and SPLAT pointed out the lack of a systematic approach, environmental regulation and education, and marketers' passiveness.

An optimistic message came from the head of the standardisation department of RUSNANO, talking about the creation of a committee on green technologies in the Federal Agency on Technical Regulating and Metrology (Rosstandart), which means that the government plans to develop voluntary national standards for eco-produce.



*Semen Gordyshevskiy, Bjorn-Erik Lonn, Yulia Gracveha.*

All participants noted the necessity of joint efforts to promote sustainability ideas and eco-consumption to allow the development of professional environmental marketing, government regulation and educational programmes crucial for popularising eco-goods. Semen Gordyshevskiy, Chair of the Ecological Union summarised by stating: “Environmentally friendly products mean the well-being of the nation in the first place”.

GEN chair Bjorn-Erik Lonn visited in support of the event.



## Year of ecology announced

2017 has been announced as the year of ecology in Russia. However, the Russian government has already adopted new federal laws dealing with waste management, green technologies and green public procurement (GPP), says the Ecological Union.

In 2016 green procurement goals were included in plans of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Moscow. The Ecological Union participated along with public authorities, environmental organisations, and business and science representatives, presenting its expertise in developing GPP criteria.

The meeting resulted in the decision to launch pilot projects on “greening” public procurement in Russia, starting with its capital. The first step would be the formation of a list of product groups for which procurement criteria would include environmental aspects. These product groups were to involve goods with a stable and competitive market, such as building and electronic goods. Then environmental criteria were to be developed, based on measurable and objective requirements. This is where ecolabels came in.

Ecolabel criteria, complying with ISO 14024 and ISO 17065, can be taken as a basis for forming GPP criteria, as has already been done in the EU. Obtaining an ecolabel will automatically make the product deemed to comply for GPP. This compensates for the the contracting authority's lack of relevant competence needed to evaluate compliance.

Another important task would be developing GPP guidelines for the contracting authorities. According to surveys, contractors in Russia see the lack of knowledge of environmental criteria and their practical application as the main obstacle for GPP, as well as absence of government support. To improve the situation, a series of GPP training events for contracting specialists is to be organized.

The project will be supported by a group in the Public Environmental Council of the Department which will include experts in law, economics, ecolabelling and new technologies.



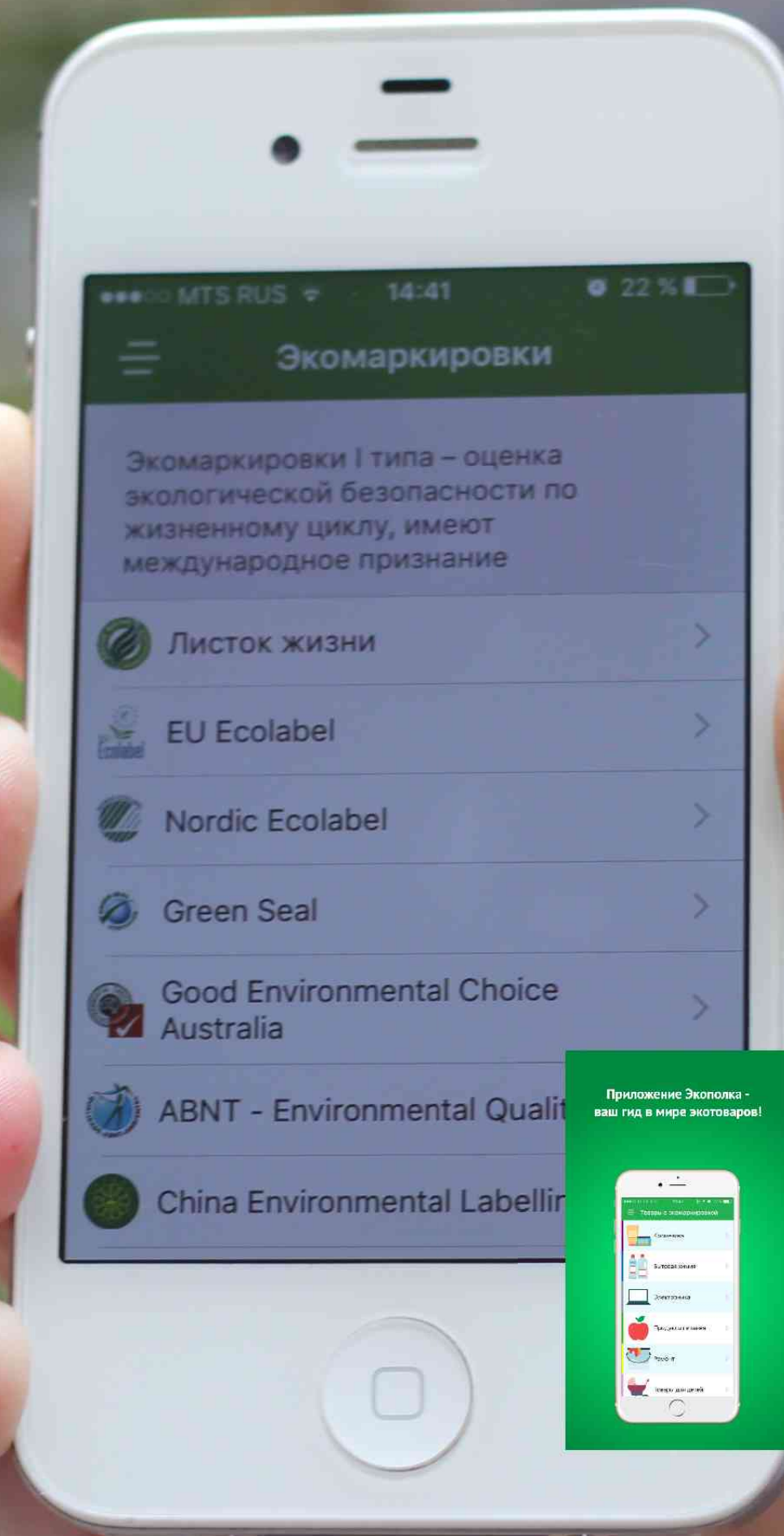
## RUSSIA

# An ecolabel guide in your smartphone

This year Russia introduced a new mobile application ECOPOLKA which helps consumers choose environmentally friendly goods. Environmental performance of goods is best verified by an ecolabel confirmed by an independent, internationally-recognised organization. The directory in the app includes all the reliable labels which can be found on goods sold in Russia including many GEN members' certifications. Each ecolabel description includes an image, short review of the relevant criteria and a link to the certification body's website. The directory also guides consumers to stores where the products can be bought.

The application's database is still being filled with offline and online points of sale, with the help of producers and retailers. Active users can also add products and stores which are not in the app yet.

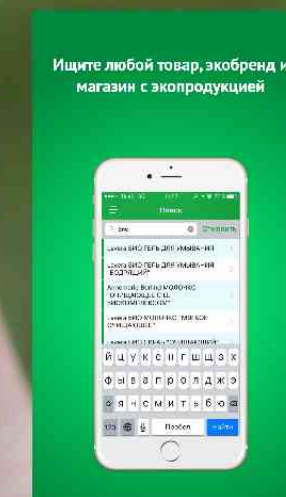
After the project's presentation it gained positive reviews and support from large companies active in the eco-products market. Leroy Merlin, a DIY materials retailer, says "An ecolabel is considered worldwide as a transparent and effective regulating mechanism in the market of eco-produce. It is very important for these mechanisms to be developed in Russia, which is only possible when they are recognized by the final consumer. This is why ECOPOLKA project has every chance to become an instrument for educating consumers and communicating with them".



SAMSUNG has expressed gratitude to the developers of the application for the environmental education of consumers and the support of certified eco-friendly electronic goods, saying: "Thanks to ECOPOLKA, buyers can now easily make the right environmentally friendly choice and find the product on the integrated map or in online stores, as well as find out the meaning of the ecolabel and the specific advantages of the certified products. That is very simple!"

Introduced to lively interest at the GEN AGM, the app is already being discussed around the world, says Ecological Union director Yulia Gracheva, who hopes it will appear in other countries in the near future.

The project has been realised by the Ecological Union, operator of the Type 1 ecolabel system "Vitality Leaf", with the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers and active eco-goods market participants.





UK

# Waste not

**“We cannot recycle our way out of waste,”** says Tom Szaky, founder and CEO of UK developer TerraCycle.

Improving economic incentives behind waste collection models and a “silent revolution” in how consumers interact with products will be essential in tackling “monumental environmental crises”, all of which can be linked back to waste, he says.

According to Szaky, consumers are purchasing around ten times more stuff compared to 100 years ago, the majority of which is “voluntary consumerism” designed to “put a smile” on our faces. He claims that big business will only “mirror” consumer habits and will introduce more durable and used goods only if society demands it.

He is calling on consumers to change shopping habits to purchase durable products in closed-loop systems. He has noted that only around 5 percent of global packaging is currently recycled, with around 25% ending up in the oceans and the remaining 70% burned or buried. He has also suggested that every environmental issue “boiled down” to waste and consumerism - with deforestation largely driven by creating more grazing land for cattle so we can consume more beef.

Szaky also claims that waste collection and closed-loop models for hard-to-recycle products - which TerraCycle specialises in - were struggling to take-off in developing markets due to a lack of financial incentives and an “understandable” preference to tackle issues such as education instead.



Tom Szaky

“Consumerism is the underlying issue of every single environmental issue of earth,” says Szaky. “We need to buy more consciously and agree that everything we buy will be waste. If you agree with that, then try to move to durable goods. You may have to spend a little more upfront, but you’ll save in the long-term and the environment will thank you in the process.

In January 2016, waste companies and local authorities in the UK were urged to communicate more clearly with consumers after it was revealed that the amount of contaminated recycling sent to landfill had almost doubled in three years.

(Abridged from Edie News / Matt Mace)



CHINA TAIPEI

# NT\$200,000 in Green Point lottery

In November the Environmental Protection Administration began promoting their Green Point campaign. Points can be accumulated by taking the metro or purchasing specified green products when consumers register on-line. Every 100 points can be redeemed for a one dollar value for products and services including green hotels and travel. A lucky draw will reward with 10,000 green points, and 120 prizes valued at over \$200,000 are on offer until the end of the year.

The figures are also stacking up for green buying by Government agencies - their total green procurement in 2015 exceeded 97 percent of purchasing, with a value of NT\$ 7.26 billion. Private green procurement ran to NT\$ 18.3 billion, which the EPA says represents an 80.5 percent

increase on 2014. An awards ceremony opened by EPA Deputy Director-General Zhan was accompanied by children who are involved in a programme with the Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra, which receives a government donation.

The Government Procurement Act in 2002 prioritised procurement of environmentally certified products. Over 4900 products have the Green Mark, and they can be discovered on line and located through a green shop smartphone app, with some 464 products actually available for on-line purchase through [www.buygreentw.net](http://www.buygreentw.net).

EPA statistics show the revenue of environmentally friendly products from sales at green shops reached NT\$37.1 billion in 2015.





## NEW ZEALAND

# GEN member certification assures building industry

Environmental Choice NZ has highlighted the integrity of steel building componentry made by its licensees New Zealand Steel and Pacific Steel. Announcing certification of some of the company's flat and long steel products, ECNZ says they exceed the requirements of the standard.

The news will be welcomed, as the confidence of the construction industry has been shaken this year by the discovery of bogus overseas certification of some imported brands of steel mesh used in important infrastructure projects.

According to Francesca Lipscombe, ECNZ General Manager, companies put their products forward for an ecolabel to both demonstrate their environmental commitment and to lift their credentials relative to competitors. Integrity, according to Ms Lipscombe is a big part of this.

"Not only has the manufacturing of New Zealand Steel and Pacific Steel's flat and long steel products met our robust environmental criteria, they have exceeded the requirements under 'fit for purpose' another albeit smaller category of our specification. The Environmental Choice audit, by being so all-encompassing, delivers assurance about the overall integrity of a company. This differentiates our licensees from those in the marketplace who neither have the appetite nor the access to such a robust audit process.

"Integrity around environmental and performance claims is becoming an issue as imported product, such as steel componentry, with little known or variable credentials confuses the marketplace," says Ms Lipscombe.

Ms Lipscombe highlighted that Environmental Choice was positioned as the 'go to' ecolabel for New Zealand companies and their product line-ups looking to achieve critical differentiation in an increasingly crowded marketplace.

Chris Kay, Marketing Manager, NZ Steel confirmed that both differentiation and demonstrating integrity were factors behind pursuing an Environmental Choice licence.

"Last minute product substitution is an industry wide problem that has the potential to completely undermine the anticipated performance attributes of steel products used in structural applications and for roofing/cladding. The Environmental Choice audit, however, includes a significant focus on being fit for purpose. This was part of the overall appeal as it underlined our overall integrity."

The fit for purpose criteria used within the audit specification included identifying the applicable standards, specifications and or consumer/customer requirements; demonstrating how compliance is monitored and maintained (including quality control and

assurance procedures); and maintaining records of customer feedback and complaints.

"I don't believe any of the imported steel coming into New Zealand can match New Zealand steel in providing customers with this level of audited integrity and confidence," said Mr Kay.

New Zealand Steel is the country's sole steel manufacturer and is unique in its use of ironsand to produce around 600,000 tonnes of

steel per annum. Pacific Steel rolling mill and wire mill businesses became a sister business to New Zealand Steel in mid 2014.

The products are eligible for points under the NZ Green Building Council's Green Star rating tool, which recognises the ECNZ eco-label.

[www.nzsteel.co.nz](http://www.nzsteel.co.nz) and  
[www.pacificsteel.co.nz](http://www.pacificsteel.co.nz)



## NEW ZEALAND

# Chinese ecolabel checks New Zealand

At the end of November, a five-person delegation from the China Environmental Certification Centre (CEC) was hosted by Environmental Choice New Zealand, in what General Manager Francesca Lipscombe says is a strong endorsement for the local ecolabel.

“CEC were impressed by what they'd heard about our systems and processes and wanted to take a closer look. It was a great

opportunity for us to develop our relationship with CEC further and find ways we can support each other in the promotion of sustainable production and consumption - which is one of the key UN Sustainable Development Goals. Given the growing importance of New Zealand's trade with China, sharing our knowledge in this area is a very valuable development.”



*Pictured from left are Francesca Lipscombe, Qi Ran, Chen Yiqun, Zhou Caihua, Zhou Nengfu, Wayne Grieve (Croxley Recycling)*



*Nigel Clarke, Richard Tong, Chen Yiqun, Zhou Caihua, Qi Ran, Francesca Lipscombe.*

The VIPs spent two days in Auckland discussing opportunities for co-operation between the two ecolabels. “That would include mutual recognition of labels and the development of common core criteria for ecolabel standards,” says Francesca Lipscombe. The visitors were accompanied by a representative of the New Zealand Ministry for the Environment, and also met the chair of the NZ Ecolabelling Trust, Richard Tong.

Visiting were the Deputy Director of the Environmental Development Centre (EDC) of Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) Zhou Nengfu; Director of Standard Review and Registration Department of Environmental Certification Centre of MEP Yan Yuping; CEC Deputy General Manager Chen Yiqun; CEC

Deputy Director of Climate Change Department Zhou Caihua; and CEC R&D Department International Cooperation Assistant Qi Ran.

The trip took in site visits to ECNZ licensees Cottonsoft and Croxley, including a tour of Croxley's recycling operation in New Lynn, as well as a workshop on specification development with environmental consultancy Tonkin & Taylor.

[www.environmentalchoice.org.nz](http://www.environmentalchoice.org.nz)



Cert. TM



## EUROPE

### EU forced to reduce plastic bags

A staggering 100 billion plastic bags are used in the EU every year. Once in the environment, they can last for over 100 years. In the sea, the bags have a devastating effect on marine life that gets entangled in plastic debris or ingests it in the form of microplastics.

To tackle the problem the EU passed a law in 2015 to help member states drastically cut lightweight plastic bag consumption.

Governments had until the end of November 2016 to enact measures and inform the European Commission. The EU Plastic Bags directive obliged states to put a price on the bags, and/or introduce national reduction targets. Another option was adoption of national reduction targets, ensuring that by the end of 2019 no more than 90 of bags are used annually per person. By the end of 2025 that number should be down to no more than 40 bags.

EU Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu Vella said: "In the EU we currently consume up to 200 bags per person, every year. Only about 7 % are recycled. Billions end up as litter across Europe, especially on our beaches and in the sea. We need to save resources and move to a circular economy. Now it's up to the member states to do their part. Some have already shown that simple measures can lead to big changes."

In many EU countries plastic bags are no longer available at grocery stores for free. Denmark, Finland and Luxembourg have already achieved results. In Ireland, since the introduction of the levy in 2002, the annual consumption of single-use plastic bags has decreased from 328 per person to just 18. The UK and the Netherlands have also brought in bag use charges.

Some countries have opted for mandatory charges, others for voluntary agreements with the retail sector, such as Germany. France and Italy, however, have decided to ban plastic bags, apart from those that are biodegradable and compostable.

The European Commission is developing a common methodology for calculating how many lightweight bags are used per year and member states must report annual figures to the Commission as of 27 May 2018.



### Europe extends ecolabel criteria

The European Commission has adopted a new set of ecolabel criteria for furniture, footwear and computers that also covers product safety and social aspects. "The EU Ecolabel promotes Europe's transition to a circular economy, supporting both sustainable production and consumption," says Commissioner for Environment Karmenu Vella. "Consumers can make conscious choices without compromising on quality. Similarly, the Ecolabel rewards manufacturers who choose to design products that are durable and repairable, promoting innovation and saving resources."

For computer products, energy efficiency and device upgradability will need to be considered during design and manufacturing, along with ease of dismantling, recovering and recycling resources from devices.

Furniture will need to be more durable and easier to repair, and manufacturers are required to conduct a more comprehensive life cycle assessment, paying attention to hazardous compounds and residues which could contribute to indoor air pollution.

Attention is also given to improving Corporate Social Responsibility with regard to labour conditions. The criteria revision is valid for six years following its adoption.



Karmenu Vella





EUROPE

# Europe Ink

Governments are demanding that during the recycling of printed products there must be a higher level of de-inking.

Ink World Magazine reports that this could be really challenging for printers and ink manufacturers. Paper is the most recycled material, at 70 percent, and at least “90 percent of newspapers in Europe are printed on recycled paper”. According to the European Recovered Paper Council (ERPC), 90 percent of corrugated boxes are made of recycled fibre and over half of fibres used in newspaper and board are sourced from recovered paper.

The problem is that other users of paper want more access to the recycled product, but the quality is not high enough in sufficient quantities, and that increases the pressure on the paper and print industries to improve the efficiency of the deinking process, says the magazine. In addition, “brand owners and retail chains and their print suppliers are demanding evidence of uncontaminated paper recycle”.

This has resulted in ecolabels such as EU Ecolabel, and Germany’s Blue Angel, demanding recycled print products with a high level of de-inking before they will be certified, and government departments are asking for print suppliers to have ecolabel certification.

Companies are preparing for a tightening of the rules. Axel Fisher, Public Relations Manager at the International Association of the Deinking Industry (INGEDE), Munich, says: “Already one school books publisher in Germany has decided to opt for improved deinking of the recycled paper it uses in school text books because it is anticipating the German education ministry could soon demand ecolabelling of school text books.” The French agency EcoFolio is offering financial incentives to increase the volume and rate of deinking.

The lack of quality of recycled paper is said to be due to paper mills not adopting new “de-inking technologies”, say print sector and ink suppliers, but the mills say that ink producers should be doing more to “adapt their inks to de-inking processes”.

Problem inks reportedly include some types of waterborne inks and flexo, UV and digital inks and in particular inkjet inks and some liquid toners.



## FINLAND

# First country to fly the flag for nature

Finland, a member of the Nordic ecolabel community, is to honour the environment with an inaugural flag day of Nature Day on 26 August 2017. The Ministry of the Interior has ordered for the first time that national flags must be flown in this 100 year celebration of the country's independence.

"According to our survey, nine out of ten Finns want to celebrate Finnish nature as part of Finland's centennial jubilee in 2017. This is an excellent reason for introducing a new flag day," said Pekka Timonen, General Secretary of the Finland 100 Years organisation.

Finnish Nature Day has been expanded into four Nature Days, supported by around 50 organisations. The aim is to have Finnish flags flown on as many poles as possible, from nature trails right down to food decorations. The flag theme will also feature on social media posts. The ultimate goal is to make Finnish Nature Day, on the last Saturday of August, an established flag day.



Choral concerts will be held in national parks, with a goal of one in each of the 40 parks - choirs have already signed up for almost all of them. Dinner Under the Sky, an urban event organised in recent years in a number of Finnish cities, will expand into the wilderness, in the form of picnics or dinners held under the sky in a natural setting. People are also encouraged to join Nature Days by arranging their own events.



Photos: Benjamin Suomela/Norden.org

In 2017, there will be four themed Nature Days:

**4 February:** Enjoying winter

**20 May:** Going wild about spring

**17 June:** Enjoying a romantic summer night

**26 August:** Celebrating Finnish nature



## HONG KONG

# Up 60%

An increase of 60 percent in projects entered for the Hong Kong Green Awards has been matched by the achievement of new standards in environmental performance, says Hong Kong Green Council CEO and GEN Board member Linda Ho. “We are pleased to see so many Hong Kong enterprises have reached a high performance standard in green management. More and more corporations have shown they are willing to fulfil their social responsibilities to contribute to the environment.”

The event took place on 9 December and is the largest annual event on the region's ecolabel calendar. The award winners came from a variety of government, public and private sectors. The five Corporate Green Governance Awards were received by Hong Kong Housing Authority; China Resources (Holdings) Co.; D&G Technology Holding Company; Airport Authority Hong Kong; New Concepts Foundation Limited; and China Resources Power Holdings Company which won the Grand Award.



The first of its kind, the Corporate Green Governance Award recognises companies that have performed exceptionally well at integrating environmental considerations and monitoring their corporate governance policy and operations. The award-winning organisations also demonstrated prestigious performance in corporate vision, management systems, environmental monitoring and reporting, stakeholder engagement and corporate leadership. They not only highlight their environmental concerns, but lead the way in integrating environmental considerations within their operational processes.

Initiated by Green Council in 2010, the Hong Kong Green Awards aim to recognise companies that excel in environmental procurement and green management, thereby promoting the image of Hong Kong as a world-class green city.





## UKRAINE

# Green Mind 2016

Concurrent with the GEN AGM on October, the Ukraine ecolabel hosted the annual Green Mind forum.

International and European experts attended a press conference at the opening and talked about the benefits of the sustainable development model used by successful economies in the world. They addressed questions of energy efficiency, effective use of resources and pollution prevention, noting that over the past 20 years the EU Council and



the European Commission have issued more than 200 directives, decrees and regulations relating to environmental issues. Here are some of their comments.

### Christine Dorosko

*EC General Directorate for Environmental Protection*



According to the latest Eurobarometer study, 3.26% of European manufacturers offer eco-products and services that have passed organic or environmental certification. 77% of consumers are willing to pay more for eco-products, provided that they are sure that they are really environmentally safe, with proper certification and labelling.

The global market for 'low carbon' and 'environmental' goods and services is estimated at EUR4.2 trillion with an EU share of 21%. This market has been growing at an annual rate averaging 4%, even during the economic recession, contributing to making the green economy one of the sectors with the strongest job growth potential. There is an increasing competition between companies to gain market share in this market. However, in relative terms green products still represent a marginal part of the EU consumer good market.

Public procurement accounts for a large proportion of European consumption (nearly 20% of EU GDP). It can therefore play a key role in the circular economy, and the Commission will encourage this role through its actions on Green Public Procurement (GPP), where criteria are developed at EU level and then used by public authorities on a voluntary basis.

### Dr. Ulf Jaeckel

*Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Sustainable Consumption, Environmental Product Policy Division*



Practical tools inherent in a sustainable development model are the programs aimed at informing consumers about the benefits of sustainable consumption, sustainable (green) public procurement, sustainable construction, sustainable tourism, sustainable lifestyles and education, etc. In Germany, in February 2016, in order to implement these tools a national programme on sustainable consumption was launched. From this programme, sustainable consumption should grow from a niche market to a leading position.

One of the most important practical tools for sustainable consumption is ecolabelling. The German Blue Angel program is the oldest certification system in the world with 120 environmental standards for product and service groups, used as criteria for the implementation of eco-certification and public procurement. Today more than 13,000 kinds of products produced by 1,050 member companies are environmentally certified. The driving force behind the development of environmental certification and labelling in Germany is growing demand by sustainable (green) public procurement and in the private sector.

### Gennady Chyzhykov

*The Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry*



There is insufficient understanding by the business community of the benefits of green transformation, lack of professional information, lack of opportunities and lack of real incentive instruments for such changes, as well as inadequate legislative controls.

Realizing the need to drive the Ukrainian enterprises to green methods of economic activity, one of the strategic directions of the Strategy of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI) 2020 is the development of services aimed at promoting "green" resource-efficient, low-carbon modernization of our economy and industry.

The Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a think tank, a source of information and consulting support for business environment that actively helps green modernization processes at all levels. The UCCI also cooperates with international organizations and programmes such as the GIZ programme (by the German government) "Promoting green modernization of the Ukrainian economy".



## UKRAINE

### **Svetlana Berzina**

Co-organizer *GREEN MIND*  
Ukrainian NGO "Living Planet"



There comes a time in the process of European integration of each country when the issue of foreign policy is transformed into a number of specific and complicated problems of internal policy. For Ukraine, this moment has come, along with challenges such as the implementation of hundreds of European regulations in the public sector, politics and economy.

The absolute priority is the modernization of the Ukrainian economy, overcoming the technological backwardness, the attraction of foreign investments and new technologies, creating new jobs, improving the competitiveness of domestic producers, and access to global markets, especially the EU market.

The European choice of Ukraine opens up new prospects for cooperation with the developed countries of the continent, offers opportunities for economic development, strengthening Ukraine's position in the global system of international relations. This is the best way to realise national interests.

Today there is a trend in the world, where successful business chooses a model of sustainable development, because this concept answers the manufacturers' question: how to do more and better with fewer expenses. This can be achieved by increasing net benefits from economic activity by saving energy and resources, reducing the degradation and pollution of the environment throughout the life cycle, while improving quality of life.

On the other hand, a tangible incentive is the growing desire of consumers to choose more high-quality and environmentally friendly products and services.

The Ukrainian consumers have learned to read carefully the packaging, and prefer products safer for health and the environment in many cases. These are the conclusions of an independent consumer survey, conducted in 2015 with the support of the UN Development Program in Ukraine. In general, the survey results indicate low awareness of Ukrainian consumers about the importance of labels pointing at the safety and environmental benefits of products (from 10% to 15%) compared to, for example, German consumers (over 90%).

At the same time the Ukrainian poll results show a significant potential for customers to choose eco-products. Some 82% of respondents were willing to consciously choose products with improved environmental performance and are willing to pay more for them. Some 25% of the respondents were ready to buy such products regardless their price. Only 18% of respondents were not willing to pay more for environmentally certified products.

This indicates the need for a system to inform consumers about the values of labels in conjunction with the information on the safety and environmental benefits of the product, confirmed by the corresponding certificates.

Currently 68 domestic manufacturers have successfully certified their products and services according to ISO 14024 with the ecolabel "Green Crane." The leaders are companies of the food industry, construction, and manufacturers of detergents and cosmetics.

### **Bjorn-Erik Lonn**

*GEN chair and Nordic Swan ecolabel*



Ecolabelling plays an important role in the replacement of outdated models of consumption by more rational sustainable ones. The result of efforts by the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) is a consistent increase in market participants who change old habits and take responsibility, giving examples to others.

Our network brings together around 30 multi-criteria environmental certification and labelling systems, which operate in accordance with ISO 14024.

This year, non-governmental organizations took the initiative to conduct public monitoring of the legality of the business entities of ecological and organic labels in the Ukrainian market. The Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine (AMC) was informed about these violations. Now under consideration by the AMC are more than 40 cases.

The need for reliable information on the environmental characteristics of products is growing worldwide. Consumers are increasingly focused on ecolabelling and have less trust in the authorities, advertising and direct marketing.

The demand for eco-products encourages producers to switch to environmental standards, which in turn helps to reduce environmental pollution, prevent climate change and improve safety performance and product quality.

The network members interact with each other, which involves:

- the development of support programs
- • joint participation in the development / revision of baseline environmental standards for various categories of service or groups (for example, hotel, restaurant, trade services, etc.);
- • mutual international recognition of evaluation results between environmental certification and labelling bodies.



The Kiev AGM presented to GEN delegates the chance to observe a country with a strong national identity, customs, fashions and history, existing within a situation where conflict and daily deaths were being reported from military action on the south-eastern Crimean peninsula. The casual but continuous presence of army personnel in the capital's public places and makeshift obituary shrines made all this impossible to ignore.

GEN is, by its essence, a network. This requires interchange and understanding of differences within the family. There is no judgement, but a need for perspicacity, inclusion and mutual support. Thus, on a chilly, sunny autumn day, before we got down to business, the hosts showed GEN members some beautiful monuments and sparsely populated tourist attractions. We witnessed the devotion of orthodox worshippers, the dogged determination of workers, the elegance of this long established European culture, a drive for modern business infrastructure, and an uplifting commitment by our GEN hosts, Living Planet, to the future of ecolabelling.





## Board activities

Bjorn-Erik Lonn detailed the governance work which included finalising the revised bylaws, updating operational policies, activation and fine-tuning of the re-developed website, distillation of the long term strategic plan, a GENICES audit and a review of memoranda of understanding. Special effort was made in outreach during the year (see also the section on communication).

As part of its mission to engage with, and to be recognised as a member of the planet's leading environmental influencers, GEN board members have contributed to workshops, discussions and conferences internationally.



### Asian Productivity Organization (APO)

Osamu Uno from Ecomark, and the GEN Treasurer, has been engaging with the APO. GEN Communications advisor Michael Hooper also published a story in the APO magazine early in the year on media and the greening of productivity.



### ISEAL Alliance

The China Environmental Centre (CEC) has collaborated on project research, standards discussion and certification development as well as the UN's 10-year framework for sustainable and green public purchasing. The GEN chair participated in the annual conference in Washington DC in May.



### UN Environment Programme

GEN Chair Bjorn-Erik Lonn represented GEN on the UNEP multi-stakeholder advisory committee as co-lead with Thomas Lehmann from the German government international agency GIZ, contributing to the 10-year framework of programmes (10FYP) in the area of consumer information. GEN is also a partner of the 10YFP Sustainable Public Procurement Programme. GEN provided chapter leaders for exchanges involving the Americas, Africa and South-east Asia, with expertise on Type-1 ecolabelling. China's CEC was also active under the programme with pre-Christmas training on ecolabelling's role in green public procurement (GPP).



### GIZ

In September, several GEN representatives were invited to Thailand to the SE Asian Conference on GPP and Ecolabels. Chair Bjorn-Erik Lonn presented a keynote address, supported by Hiroyuki Kobayashi from Ecomark in Japan, Kate Harris from GECA in Australia, Francesca Lipscombe from Environmental Choice New Zealand, Xiaodan Zhang from CEC, and a representative from the Singapore Environment Council.

### Sino-German cooperation

China's CEC and Germany's GIZ have been working in partnership with the Blue Angel on a mutual recognition study which included meetings in November.



### ISO

The GEN Chair was appointed to convene a technical committee amending one of the main international standards under which GEN and its members operate - ISO 14014. Another relevant standard, ISO 14020, may also be revised.



### The Sustainability Consortium

China's CEC has carried out a feasibility study on localising the measurement and reporting of sustainability.



### IISD

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is based in Winnipeg, Canada, with an office in New York near the United Nations. China's CEC has signed a letter of intent with IISD regarding green public procurement in China, in regards to quantifying economic, social and environmental benefits.

### Asia Carbon Footprint Network

China's CEC has represented GEN as a founding member of the network (ACFN) and takes part in annual meetings. GEN members KEITI (Korea) and Hong Kong Green Council have also been involved in the 14-nation group.



## Membership

TÜV Rheinland, represented by Alexander Anreev, was confirmed to full membership following successful completion of a GENICES review.



Recent GEN member, India's certification body CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) was represented by Hiran Prashanth, pictured with Living Planet event organiser Galyna Buzan.



The International Academy of Ecology in Kazakhstan, represented by Musagaly Duambekov was accepted as an associate member.



Google Inc was accepted, on popular vote, as an affiliate member of GEN. The information technology company's sustainable operations program is responsible for green procurement policies at Google offices around the globe, where they encourage the use of Type 1 ecolabelled office and sanitary products. Consistent with GEN's broader agenda of bringing about sustainable consumption and production patterns through ecolabelling, Google believes Type 1 ecolabels are important to the sustainability movement, and is willing to support the network in its outreach.



“The availability of comprehensive product selections for Type I ecolabelled janitorial and office supplies in every country is inconsistent and often non-existent, so we leveraged the GEN website for our own green product requirements,” says Lauren Riggs, Sustainable Operations Team Lead, Real Estate and Workplace Services at Google.

GEN chair Bjorn-Erik Lonn welcomed the environmental commitment of Google. “Both our global organisations have a mission to make information universally accessible and useful. Collaboration is sensible and future-focussed as we face climate change and sustainability challenges.”

“The expanding membership demonstrates GEN's outreach into Asia and developing economies,” says Mr Lonn.







## Communications

At the request of the Board, a summary of communications was given by Michael Hooper of Spotlight Creative Media. Two goals had been distilled from the priorities directed following the last AGM:

- Communicate more actively with members
- Establish GEN as a credible worldwide brand

Michael reported on the actions that had subsequently been taken within the budget to pursue these goals:

- 1) A full PR plan was prepared and the Board instructed that some elements be initiated
- 2) The magazine-style main vehicle has reduced in frequency, but been augmented by bite-sized articles posted to the website at least monthly, allowing greater and more frequent use of member-originated material
- 3) Members have been assisted in registering and updating organisation details for the new website
- 4) More channels have been opened to media and influential organisations, especially making use of the new website and the internet in general.

Website performance has continued to increase after the relaunch, and in response to more frequently generated, strategically formatted content. Peak month visitations have increased by 24 percent and annual unique visitations have climbed. The developers reported satisfaction with the performance of the new website, and Michael provided detailed analysis for the Board and delegates.



Michael Hooper

Michael also chaired a workshop on the day after the AGM, starting with a Mission Not Impossible theme, and was joined by a high-powered panel of GEN marketeers: Sören Enholm (TCO Development), Kate Harris (GECA), Nancy Holm (Nordic Swan) and Khai Sin Chong (SEC Singapore).

Among their messages:

- limited resources suggest not engaging directly with social media
- at least one fulltime worker equivalent is needed for social media
- choose your webinar technical partners carefully
- Pinterest works for architects (maybe not otherwise)
- don't abandon the old tools - phone, having a coffee
- consider what you want people to do when they arrive at your website
- be visual on-line, have access to video facilities
- partner with companies that have big communications teams
- offer opinion pieces to local media
- use Linked-in but Twitter reaches politicians
- appearances at other seminars can be better value than hosting your own



l to r: Sören Enholm, Kate Harris, Michael Hooper (convenor), Nancy Holm, Khai Sin Chong



Yulia Gracheva announces Ecopolka in Kiev

The workshop concluded with a presentation by Yulia Gracheva (Vitality leaf, Russia) on ECOPOLKA, a smart phone application that uses GEN member data to verify the ecolabel on some 645 products (at that date). It is aimed at 18-34 year-olds who are trend followers, says Yulia, and embraces 72 different ecolabels. Partners in the project include the Nordic Council of Ministers, FSC and Samsung.



## Strategic plan

Board member Guy Ladvocat (ABNT Brazil) briefed delegates on the current status of the long-term strategic plan. Breakout groups explored the opportunities, actions and activities under the headline objectives of leading, serving and growing. Meeting Chair, Eva Eiderstrom, commented on the commonality of the results, stating “this is the first time we have gone this far in strategic discussion”.

Some ideas, such as a world ecolabelling day, conducting GEN webinars, and greater marketplace visibility, would depend on increased communications activity.

A members' survey expressed satisfaction (83%) with the current activities of the network. The survey answers to the question of what GEN should be doing in five years' time were: a greater media presence and more marketing collateral.



*Guy Ladvocat*

Dr Ulf Jaeckel, representing Germany's Ministry for the Environment, explained the policies and work areas in which his government is engaged for advancing sustainable consumption and production (SCP). This includes the promotion of “reliable ecolabels” and a “higher political recognition of Type 1 ecolabels”. He told the conference “we want to shift sustainable consumption from niche market to mainstream. It's not easy to reach the consumer in the moment of purchasing decision, the two or three seconds in front of the shelf.” Germany's national programme for sustainable consumption, adopted in February 2016, seeks to do just that, with the help of the world's oldest ecolabelling scheme, the Blue Angel, which now certifies 13,000 products and is known to 90 percent of Germans.



*Dr Ulf Jaeckel*

## Other presentations

Kanchanatetee Vasuvat delivered a presentation on behalf of Thomas Lehmann, Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) project director for GIZ Thailand. GIZ employs 17,000 staff worldwide. The Asian project is analysing procurement and sustainability to help build capacity, train stakeholder staff and support ecolabel development.



*Kanchanatetee Vasuvat*

Ongoing work by board member Chin-Yuan Chen is looking to quantify the effect of ecolabels, developing indicators that can be recognised and measured. He proposed measuring and keeping records of all GEN activities and the number of licensed products, which is currently published as an annual survey in the Annual Report. Mr Chen also suggested counting and improving the days required for the certification process, although this would vary depending on the standard and environment.

Quantifying the impact of ecolabels worldwide could be advanced by calculating savings and reductions in negative impacts, he observed. The affordability of the process was a key question, according to his presentation.



*Chin-Yuan Chen*



## Board elections

This was the first election of the Board of Directors held under the revised bylaws designed to ensure a smooth and continuing rotation of board members. They state that three of the directors would be elected for a term of one year and the Chair and three (3) Directors would be elected for a term of two (2) years. Thereafter, the term of office of all Directors will be two years.

This required incoming directors for this first year to comply and the following were elected:

Mr. Chin-Yuan Chen, 2 years

Dr. Hans-Hermann Eggers, 1 year

Ms. Linda Ho, 2 years

Mr. Guy Ladvocat, 1 year

Mr. Bjorn-Erik Lonn (Chair), 2 years

Ms. Xiaodan Zhang, 2 years

Ms. Eva Eiderstrom, 1 year

The next AGM will be 10-13 October 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden.



*Newest director Ms. Linda Ho*