

Workshop on Environmental standards, industrial policy and consumer protection

Date: 23rd - 24th February 2011

Venue: Conference Room, Teri University, New Delhi – 110070

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Introduction

Environmental standards are used as a tool for ensuring safe and clean ambient environment across the world. The basic premise on which these standards are based is the assumption that pollutants have a threshold limit, and any exposure below that limit would not cause any health damage. However, the context changes entirely when exposure to toxic compounds having potential carcinogenic effects in the ambient environment is addressed, for it is assumed that even a small exposure to such compounds has the associated health risk. In an industrial setting where workers are exposed to these toxicants this becomes even more important and relevant from the point of view of occupational exposure risk. Thus, standards can be worked out based on the acceptable risk to the workers exposed to toxic pollutants in their work environment, which may vary say from one in ten thousand to one in one million.

In a country like India, a comprehensive assessment and review of standards in the occupational environment needs to be carried out. There are large sectors in the economy- for instance mining or waste management- which are not regulated in terms of occupational exposure standards. The large proportion of activity that takes place in the informal industrial sectors further restricts the potential impact and implementability of exposure standards.

This becomes all the more relevant as in a globalised economy goods move beyond the borders of the manufacturing country into other countries with different regulations on exposure risk and consumer protection. There is a direct link between the use of toxicants and harmful

substances in the production cycle and not only the exposure risk of the worker, but also the consumption risk of the end-consumer of the product. One recent example is the controversy over toxic residues in western brand toys manufactured in China, found during product testing outside China.

With not only the standards on labour protection and product safety themselves, but also the implementation environments varying widely between the 'old' and the 'emerging' economies (most notably the BRIC group), the increasing movement of goods and people across borders forces us to think about a convergence of standards and their effective implementation. An objective assessment of the associated risks of production as well as consumption would help in reviewing existing standards and formulating policies which protect the environment and labourers' and consumers' right to health. An integrated view of standards throughout the life cycle of a product bears high potential for countries like India from the point of view of protection of the environment as well as public health.

The participants today are professors and researchers working in the areas of environmental standards, exposure risk and environmental impact assessment, consumer protection and product testing, and specifically research looking at the linkages between these issues, such as life cycle analysis and environmental management systems.

Workshop Structure

The workshop is structured around the three themes in two or three sectors chosen, according to the available expertise, for instance mining, agriculture, power plants, toxic waste, or pharma industry. The themes are inherently interdisciplinary and build around the strength and expertise of the participating institutions.

Expected Outcomes

This first activity to initiate research partnership will be a brainstorming session to generate new research project ideas in the area of "Environmental standards, industrial policy and consumer protection". The outcome of this activity will be short proposals, outlining potential joint research activity. It is anticipated that the project ideas will be generated through discussions among researchers in different fields working in interdisciplinary teams.

Workshop Program

Day-I

Wednesday, 23.02.2011

Day-I Wednesday, 23.02.2011	
Time	Program
09:30 – 10:00 hrs.	Registration
10:00 – 10:30 hrs.	<p><u>Welcome:</u></p> <p><i>Mrs. Amisha Jain, India Representative, University of Cologne</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Jan-Axel Voss, Environment Counsellor, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Rajiv Seth, Registrar, Teri University</i></p>
10:30 – 13:00 hrs.	<p>First Session: Presentations on ongoing research activities of participants Chair by: Dr. Rajiv Seth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Pune- <i>Dr. Shamita Kumar, Institute of Environment Education & Research</i> • University of Cologne - <i>Dr. Klaus Klein and Prof. Schneider</i> • TERI University, Delhi- <i>Dr. Suresh Jain, Environmental modeling and risk assessment</i> • Freie Universität Berlin- <i>Dr. Kirsten Jørgensen and Prof. Martin Jänicke, Environmental Policy Research Centre</i> • Civil Engineering Department, IIT Delhi- <i>Prof. Mukesh Khare</i> • Biochemical Engineering Department, IIT Delhi: <i>Prof. T R Sreekrishnan</i> • Delhi Jal Board- <i>Dr. Dinesh Upadhyay</i> • NEERI, CSIR- <i>Dr. Radha Goyal</i> • Delhi School of Economics – <i>Prof. R. B. Singh, Dept. of Geography</i> • Toxics Link – <i>Satish Sinha, Associate Director</i> <p><u>Preliminary themes</u> Theme 1: Environmental standards in comparative perspective Theme 2: Risk exposure assessment Theme 3: Consumer rights Theme 4: Cross-cutting issues</p>
13:00 – 14:00 hrs.	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00 hrs.	<p>Second Session: Discussions on presentations, formation of working groups</p> <p>Moderator : (Dr. Prateek Sharma)</p>

15:00 – 15:30 hrs.	Tea Break
15:30 – 17:00 hrs.	Theme-wise Working Groups Discussion of state of art of research, gaps and common research interests
17:00 hrs.	End of Day 1

Day-II Thursday, 24.02.2011	
Time	Program
10:00 – 10:15 hrs.	Opening – Mr. Ulrich Podewils, India Representative, Freie Universität Berlin
10:15 – 11:45 hrs.	Presentations by funding agencies regarding different funding programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFG • DAAD • European Union Commission Followed by question answer session
11:45 – 13:45 hrs.	Third Session: Working Groups Proposal Development
13:45 - 14:30 hrs.	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00 hrs.	Working Groups – Presentations on joint proposals Moderator- Prof. Martin Jänicke
16:00 – 16:30 hrs.	Tea Break
16:30 – 17:00 hrs.	Wrapping up & Closing of the workshop - Dr. Doris Hillger, Heidelberg Centre South Asia
19:00	Networking Dinner