



## Singapore Environment Council seals partnership with Japan

*Bilateral agreement enhances Green Label's reach in East Asia*

**Singapore, 28 October 2015** – The Singapore Environment Council (SEC) today signed a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) with the Japan Environment Association (JEA) to promote each other's eco-certification and green best practices.

The MRA was signed in Hong Kong at the opening of the four-day "Eco Expo Asia International Trade Fair", which showcases the latest innovations from environmental protection industries. The Fair is held on the sidelines of the Annual General Meeting of the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN), a non-profit association of third-party, environmental performance recognition, certification and labelling organisations founded in 1994 to improve, promote and develop the eco-labelling of products and services for which the two organisations are members.

"We view this collaboration as a vital building block towards developing sustainable solutions to the pressing environmental challenges. It presents great business opportunities for Singapore as well as everyone in the green value chain, from green manufacturers and contractors, to suppliers. Green certification will help sharpen the competitive edge of Singapore's manufacturing, printing and building industries among others, while giving consumers a wider choice of truly eco-friendly products," said Mr Edwin Seah, Executive Director of SEC who was present to sign the agreement.

The partnership comes on the back of growing global environmental awareness and strong demand for eco-friendly products. According to the State of Sustainability Initiatives Review 2014, the global market for eco labelled products has hit US\$31.6 billion in 2012.

The MRA with JEA will facilitate the application and verification process of the two eco-labelling schemes in each other's country. "Singapore and Japan will be celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations next year. Throughout these years, both countries have been important trade partners, with SEC's Singapore Green Labelling Scheme (SGLS) being one of the highly sought-after Type 1 Eco-Labelling in Japan. The signing of the Mutual Recognition Agreement with Japan's Eco Mark is expected to bring more opportunities for environmentally-friendly products to be distributed across the two countries, and will encourage the shift toward Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in South-East Asia. This is a goal both the SEC and Japan Environment Association are working towards," said Mr Osamu Uno, Secretary General, who represented JEA in signing the MRA.

"Over the past 20 years, SEC has given strength to the environmental movement in Singapore by working with the government and corporations in reaching out to the community through its education, outreach and eco-certification programmes. This MRA with JEA will strengthen not just the voice of the SEC and SGLS in Japan, but will enable us to forge a very strong and collaborative bond to enhance green advocacy," added Mr Seah.

SEC had signed an MOU with the China Environmental United Certification Center, another GEN member, in 2014, and is continuing its efforts in reaching out to more countries to build and strengthen relationships over the common interest of protecting the environment through eco-labelling.

With a suite of 50 product categories from paint & surface coatings to office furniture and flooring, the SGLS has over 3,000 unique products certified across more than 25 countries. The SGLS is a member of the GEN and is compliant to GEN's International Coordinated Ecolabelling System. All SGLS products receive recognition by other member countries of GEN such as China, Japan and Thailand, amongst others.

**\*\* END OF MEDIA RELEASE\*\***



#### **ABOUT THE SINGAPORE ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL**


Established in 1995, the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) is an independently managed, nonprofit and non-government organisation (NGO). We influence thinking on sustainability issues and coordinate environmental efforts in Singapore.


We are also an approved charity and offer tax exemption to donors. SEC continuously engages all sectors of the community by formulating and executing a range of holistic programmes, such as the Singapore Environmental Achievement Awards, Asian Environmental Journalism Awards, School Green Awards, Singapore Green Labelling Scheme, Project: Eco-Office, Project: Eco-Shop and Project: F&B. In addition, we build a pool of committed volunteers under our Earth Helpers programme.

The SEC has also incorporated a new Training & Education arm to provide the people, public and private sectors with the opportunity to develop awareness, knowledge, skills and tools in order to protect and improve our environment for a sustainable future.

Strong partnerships with corporations, government agencies and other NGOs are valued by us. These partnerships are vital for sustaining our programmes, leading to positive action and change. Over the years, SEC has given strength and direction to the environmental movement in Singapore.

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## ABOUT THE SINGAPORE GREEN LABELLING SCHEME

The Singapore Green Labelling Scheme (SGLS) is administered by the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) and is one of the region's largest and most established environmental certification labels. The SGLS was introduced in 1992 to drive environmental consciousness and responsibility by allowing consumers to choose products meeting eco-standards that are assessed to be "environmentally friendly". With a suite of 50 product categories from paint & surface coatings, office furniture & flooring, to household appliances and personal care products, SGLS has certified more than 3,000 unique products across 27 countries.

SEC's membership in the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) – which consist of 25 other member countries from various parts of the world – enables SGLS-endorsed products to be more recognised and accepted outside of Singapore by GEN member countries in Southeast Asia, North Asia, East Asia, North America and Europe. For more information on SGLS, please visit [www.sgls.sec.org.sg](http://www.sgls.sec.org.sg).

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## ABOUT THE JAPAN ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION

To solve today's environmental problems, many of which originate from daily life and ordinary business activities, people need to not only think and learn about the environment, but also to take the environment into consideration in their own lives in the form of practical actions. Since its foundation on 15 March 1977, the Japan Environment Association (JEA) has devoted its energies to the enhancement of public awareness and the assistance to people's environmental conservation activities. Cooperating with the Ministry of the Environment and various organisations involved in environmental conservation in Japan and other countries, the JEA has strived towards the formation of a sustainable society and environmentally-sound lifestyles. For more information on JEA, please visit <http://www.jeas.or.jp/english/>.

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## ABOUT THE ECO MARK PROGRAM

The Eco Mark program is a program implemented by the Japan Environment Association which was started in 1989. It is intended to facilitate the selection of commodities by consumers who wish to lead environmentally friendly lives by providing information on products from the viewpoints of the environment through attaching the "Eco Mark" to products (goods or services) that are judged to be of help to environmental conservation. For more information on the Eco Mark Program, please visit <http://www.ecomark.jp/english/>.

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