

THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
on GREEN PURCHASING
in BANGKOK

October 7, 2005

Symposium Report

Sponsor

Japan Fund for Global Environment of the Environmental
Restoration and Conservation Agency

Co-Sponsor

Asian Productivity Organization (APO)

Organizers

International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN)
Thailand Environment Institute (TEI)
Federation of Thai Industries (FTI)
Thailand Research Fund (TRF)



Table of Contents:

<u>1. Overall summary</u>	2
<u>2. Summary of the presentations</u>	3
<u>2.1. Morning session: opening and key note speech</u>	3
<u>2.1.1. Opening by Mr. Santi Bangor (10.00 – 10.15)</u>	3
<u>2.1.2. Keynote speech by Professor Ryoichi Yamamoto (10.15 – 10.40)</u>	3
<u>2.2. Morning session: “Green Purchasing in Global Perspective”</u>	4
<u>2.2.1. First presentation: IGPN experience</u>	4
<u>2.2.2. Second presentation: Swedish experience</u>	5
<u>2.2.3. Third presentation: Japanese experience</u>	7
<u>2.2.4. Fourth presentation: British experience</u>	8
<u>2.3. Afternoon session: company reports (13.30 – 15.15)</u>	9
<u>2.3.1. Panasonic</u>	9
<u>2.3.2. Siam Cement Group</u>	11
<u>2.3.3. Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd.</u>	12
<u>2.4. Afternoon session: Thailand Green Purchasing Network (15.15 – 15.45)</u>	14
<u>2.5. Afternoon session: Final discussion and closing (15.45 – 16.15)</u>	14

1. Overall summary

The International Symposium on Green Purchasing in Bangkok was organized on Friday 07 October 2005, at Phoenix 2 Room, Hall 6, IMPACT Exhibition Center, Bangkok, Thailand. Over 100 participants attended the one-day event organized jointly by The International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN), the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI), and the Thailand Research Fund (TRF). The symposium was sponsored by the Japan Fund for Global Environment of the Environmental Restoration and Conservation Agency and co-sponsored by the Asian Productivity Organization (APO).

In general, there was a good level of interaction among the participants and the organizers throughout the presentations and the subsequent Questions and Answers sessions. Such interaction is a good indicator of the interest of all parties in the event.

In spite of minor overtimes during some of the presentations, the symposium generally followed the schedule initially planned.

2. Summary of the presentations

2.1. Morning session: opening and key note speech

2.1.1. Opening by Mr. Santi Bangor (10.00 – 10.15)

The opening speech was delivered by Mr. Santi Bangor, Deputy Secretary General, National Economic and Social Development Board, Thailand. Mr. Santi Bangor stated his satisfaction to be able to attend the symposium, and thanked the different organizers of the event. He reminded that the International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN) had recently been launched in year 2005, and that the present symposium was organized in the framework of the International Fair on Eco Products. Mr. Santi Bangor insisted on the economic and environmental importance of the Green Purchasing concept, which is a strategic means to achieving greening of supply chains in Thailand. Mr. Santi Bangor further highlighted the central role that the Government must play in this regards.

Before concluding, Mr. Santi Bangor reminded to the participants the program of the day, including notably a review of Japan, United Kingdom, and Sweden experience, and assessing the status of progress of Green Purchasing in Thailand. Mr. Santi Bangor finally wished the best luck to all the participants, and thanked them again for attending the event.

2.1.2. Keynote speech by Professor Ryoichi Yamamoto (10.15 – 10.40)

The following keynote speech was made by Professor Ryoichi Yamamoto, University of Tokyo/Chair of IGPN. Professor Yamamoto started by thanking all the participants for their presence. He briefly reminded the key definition concepts related to Green Purchasing, and the development status of this approach in different regions of the world. In order to highlight the importance of this approach, Professor Yamamoto gave several examples of the adverse impacts that human activity has on the environment. Professor Yamamoto illustrated these examples with a series of photos on natural disasters, and poverty. The world has been subject to dramatic increases of temperatures over the recent years, and the time has now come to take appropriate actions. Acknowledging this situation, countries have implemented different types of approaches. For example, in Japan, the solutions proposed have essentially been focused on the development of new technologies; the European Union has focused its efforts on framework formulation and principle-oriented type of approaches; in other countries, like Canada, business-oriented approaches has been privileged.

Professor Yamamoto then provided the participants with further information related to Japan's experience on eco-efficiency. He thus briefly presented the milestones of eco-design and eco-products development in Japan, and the

regulatory framework set-up to support this development. These efforts have resulted in the creation of the Green Purchasing Network in 1996 in Japan. Following the Sendai Declaration in 2004, it was endeavored to expand Japan's positive experience to other countries. The International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN) was thus established in year 2005.

IGPN aims at being a truly global network through notably three types of actions. These actions are (i) the promotion of eco-labels; (ii) the organization of products exhibitions; and (iii) the implementation of other Environmental Management System (EMS) activities. Professor Yamamoto briefly presented the present status of each of these types of actions.

Professor Yamamoto concluded with warm thanks to the persons present. He looked forward to positive interaction among all participants.

Following the speech of Professor Ryoichi Yamamoto, a brief ceremony was held for presentations of tokens to the first speakers.

2.2. Morning session: "Green Purchasing in Global Perspective"

A panel of four presenters participated in this session. The session was chaired by Mr. Sirithan Pairoj-Boriboon of the Thailand Network on Eco-Efficiency and Cleaner Production.

2.2.1. First presentation: IGPN experience

The first presenter during this session was Mr. Hiroyuki Sato, Secretary General of IGPN. Mr. Sato's presentation was an overview of global activities related to green purchasing. Mr. Sato started by reminding the basic definition concepts of green purchasing, and the strategic importance and economic potential associated with the creation of green markets: The European Union spends about one trillion euro per year in public purchasing, while the United States spend about nine hundred billion dollars per year in this field. Mr. Sato subsequently presented past initiatives, including projects and studies aimed at identifying the environmental relief and economic potential of green purchasing in Europe and Japan. The results of these studies supported the creation of the IGPN in year 2005.

Mr. Sato elaborated on the missions, structure, and activities of the IGPN, of which, the present symposium. The planned next activities include the organization of an international conference in September 2006, in Barcelona, Spain, as well as the organization of workshops and conferences, the preparation and development of guidelines, databases, and tools, and research and training in year 2007.

Prior to the creation of the IGPN, several countries and regions had already undertaken the implementation of activities related to green purchasing. In

Japan, these activities had been carried out under the aegis of the Green Purchasing Network (GPN), the Green Purchasing Law, and the Eco Mark Program. This latter program has resulted in the certification of over 5,000 products since 1989). The European Union has prepared in Interpretative Communication to clarify the Law of 2001 on the integration of environmental issues in public procurements. In year 2004, the EU has published New Public Procurement Directives, and a Handbook, which set an improved general legal framework for public procurement. A Green Procurement Database has been developed, and about 19% of administrations now include environmental issues for over 50% of their purchases.

In the US, past actions notably include the Energy Star Program (since 1992), the Farm Bill Program, aimed at encouraging purchase of bio-based products, and the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Program. Taiwan has been very successful in developing a legal framework putting strict obligations on government offices. Korea has focused its efforts on limiting the barriers that labels and certifications could create for trade. In China, the Government Procurement Law enacted in 2003 is contributing to the greater share of green products in local authorities and Government's purchases.

Mr. Sato concluded his presentation by highlighting some key lessons learned from the past development of green purchasing worldwide. These lessons show that significant progress has been achieved as regards the development of green purchasing, however, some conditions are still to be met and/or improved. These key conditions include the development and/or reinforcement of legal frameworks, the involvement of businesses both as buyers and suppliers of green products, and sufficient provision, and sharing of relevant information.

Following the presentation made by Mr. Sato, the Chair invited the participants to a Questions and Answers (Q&A) session. However, no question was raised by the participants as regards this presentation. The Chair nevertheless wish to highlight the crucial role that the Government must play in Green Purchasing and green products markets development.

2.2.2. Second presentation: Swedish experience

The following presentation was carried out by Mr. Peter Nohrstedt, from the Swedish Environmental Management Council (SEMC). This presentation aimed at sharing the experience of Sweden related to Green Purchasing. Mr. Peter Nohrstedt started by briefly introducing his organization.

The Swedish Environmental Management Council (SEMC) is owned jointly by the Swedish Government and the private sector. The Council generally aims at helping and supporting private and public organizations to implement and carry out a systematic and progressive environmental work towards sustainable development.

The Swedish Environmental Management Council administrates three tools: the EMAS (European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) and the EPD (Environmental Products Declarations) for improving and communication about the environmental performance of organizations and products/services and the EKU (Ecologically Sustainable Procurement) for product-related guidance about ecologically conscious procurement. The Website of the SEMC contains specific web pages for each of the three tools referred to above.

There is no compulsory legal framework in Sweden for green procurement at present although this framework is under development. Pilot initiatives, such as the obligation placed upon Government agencies to buy “environmentally preferable” cars, have been undertaken, but much remains to be done. Although 58% of tender documents related to public purchasing include environmental criteria, at present these environmental criteria are well specified in only 44% of these documents.

Mr. Peter Nohrstedt then highlighted the lessons learned from Sweden’s past experience in the field of green purchasing. The key lessons can be summarized as follows:

- It is crucial to involve all stakeholders in the activities conducted
- The tools cannot be chosen a priori, and depend on the target organization(s)
- The tools must be financed centrally, i.e. they must be free of charge for the users
- The users (including politicians and decision-makers) need appropriate support and education to be able to use the tools

The last part of Mr. Peter Nohrstedt’s presentation specifically focused on the EKU tool defined above. Mr. Peter Nohrstedt successively presented:

- The definition of the EKU: the EKU is a practical tool to guide purchasers in requiring relevant and established environmental information to be used in public and other professional procurements.
- The objectives and targets of the EKU: the EKU aims at giving the market an “easy to use” instrument for purchasing organizations, both public and private, who have an ambition to make environmental considerations when purchasing. The objective with the further development of the instrument is to help purchasers to identify “green” products without having negative effects on other important aspects of the purchase.
- The homepage of the EKU: this homepage is <http://www.eku.nu/eng/> . Most of the information provided is however in Swedish language.
- The way the SEMC works with the EKU: the decision committee represents the “owners” of the Council. The Council endeavors to provide guidelines to transform the market for public procurement. However, the decision making process within the organization still needs to be improved, notably for selection of priority products and issues.

A brief Q&A session was also held after this second presentation. Three points were raised. The first question related to a lack of clarity as regards the difference between the ECU and the EPD. Mr. Nohrstedt thus explained that the EPD (and the EMAS) consist in the provision of information proving that target environmental requirements are met. The ECU focuses more on providing guidelines for the definition of the requirements to be met, and thus for the preparation and implementation of green purchasing tenders.

The second question raised by the participants concerned the guidelines for requirements formulated in the framework of the ECU. The participants asked why this instrument does not directly place an obligation to meet specific requirements. As explained by Mr. Nohrstedt, the placing of such compulsory requirements would conflict with EU regulations.

Lastly, the participants referred to the remark made by Mr. Nohrstedt during his presentation that the LCA approach was not feasible in the framework of the ECU. Mr. Nohrstedt clarified that the aspects of LCA which are relevant are applied. However, during the purchase process it is often difficult to actually meet all the LCA requirements. Therefore, some aspects of the LCA are not applied.

2.2.3. Third presentation: Japanese experience

The following presentation was made by Mr. Hideki Onizaki, Ministry of Environment, Japan. Mr. Onizaki's presentation was focused on describing Japan's experience in promoting Green Procurement. The central element of this promotion is the Green Purchasing Law, which came into effect in year 2001. As its name indicates, this law aims at facilitating the purchase of goods and services that contribute to reducing environmental loads with the view to establish an environment-friendly and sustainable society. Mr. Onizaki then presented the mechanism of the Green Purchasing Law. This law is based on two basic principles being (i) to allow the active participation of Local Governments, Ministries, and Agencies; and (ii) to provide appropriate information on environment-friendly goods and services.

The following part of the presentation considered potential guidelines for the development of a policy framework related to the promotion of green purchasing. The first mentioned aspect referred to the underlying philosophy which must drive such policy, i.e. notably the willingness to reduce environmental impacts throughout the lifecycle, and over the long-term. The second mentioned aspect specified conditions to be met by the evaluation criteria used when assessing the performance of the products in the framework of these policies. These criteria must be clear, revisable, and allow to remove the concerned items from the list of target products once these items have met the requirements stated by the law.

So far, the progress of the Green Purchasing approach in Japan has been generally satisfying. The Government's Green Purchasing system has allowed to progressively substitute more and more environment-friendly goods to less environment-friendly ones; for example an increasing share of ball point pens now include recyclable plastic.

Japan's legal framework for green purchasing, in particular the Green Purchasing Law, includes specific provisions linked to the satisfaction of Kyoto Protocol targets. This legal framework has allowed to significantly increase the amounts of CO2 emissions prevented between year 2000 (before the Green Purchasing Law was enacted) and year 2003 (i.e. two years after the law had been put in place).

The last part of the presentation made by Mr. Onizaki aimed at giving an outlook of the future of Green Purchasing in Japan. Concrete results have been achieved both in the Governmental sector and the private sector, but much remains to be done. Very valuable information is already available on the net, notably in the Ministry of the Environment's website, and the GPN website. Availability of this information must be maintained and strengthened in the future.

By 2010, it is expected to have systematically implemented green purchasing in all local governments, and in 50% of public companies, and 30% of private companies.

During the Q&A session, some clarifications were requested on the last bullet point of slide No.9 of the presentation of Mr. Onizaki which states that "when items included in the designated procurement items list become readily available in the market place, the item shall be omitted from the listing". Mr. Onizaki explained that here "readily available" meant that the concerned procurement items meet the legal requirements. Therefore, under these conditions, there is no point to keep them in the target list.

2.2.4. Fourth presentation: British experience

The last presentation of the morning session was carried out by Mrs. Eleni Pasdeki-Clewer, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom. Mrs. Pasdeki-Clewer started with the outlines of her presentation and gave a rapid introduction to the United Kingdom (UK) and its Government organization. She reminded that UK is the world's fourth largest economy, and that this economy is based primarily on services. The Government and its affiliated agencies already practice green procurement to a large extent.

She informed the participants that the strategy of UK as regards green purchasing is part of UK Government sustainable development strategy and involves all the Government. In this context, all related agencies must publish an environmental procurement strategy by the end of year 2005.

A Sustainable Procurement Task Force has thus been established with five work streams. This Task Force aims at ensuring and monitoring progress related to the progress of green purchasing development in UK and allow comparisons with other countries in the world. From that latter perspective the Sustainable Procurement Task Force uses questionnaires and in-depth analyses.

Mrs. Pasdeki-Clewer insisted that active involvement of suppliers is crucial as is accountability to know who gets the benefits among the different departments of Government agencies. In line with the previous presentation made by Mr. Peter Nohrstedt, Mrs. Pasdeki-Clewer also highlighted the strategic role that capacity building activities must play. She recommended the establishment of a flexible framework for sustainable procurement, in order to take account of the needs and progress of the different countries, and within these, of the different Government agencies.

Mrs. Pasdeki-Clewer ended her presentation by highlighting the value of UK experience and wished for cooperation with all parties, including notably the IGPN.

One issue was raised during the Q&A session as regards the potential barrier related to the fact that budgets are often managed by different actors, who optimize these budgets without real coordination. Mrs. Pasdeki-Clewer agreed that this aspect was relevant but stated that it had not yet been addressed by her organization.

The Chair closed the session by thanking all the speakers for their very good presentations, and by inviting them to a brief ceremony during which they received tokens from the organizers. The Symposium was then paused for the lunch, with about 15 minutes delay on the program's schedule.

2.3. Afternoon session: company reports (13.30 – 15.15)

The participants reconvened at 13.30, consistent with the agenda of the symposium. During the afternoon session, presentations by three companies (Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., Siam Cement PLC, and Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd.) were successively carried out. This company reports session was chaired by Assistant Professor Doctor Thumrongrat Mungcharoen, Kasetsart University, Thailand.

2.3.1. Panasonic

The first company report was presented by Mr. Akira Nakamura, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd, for Panasonic group. The presentation by Mr. Nakamura was structured around four main points, namely (i) a presentation of the profile of the Panasonic company, (ii) the activities of the company related to Green Procurement and Green Purchasing, (iii) the supply of Green

Products by the Company, and (iv) the activities of the company related to products recycling.

The mother company (Panasonic) is a foundation created in 1918. As of year 2005, it employs about 340,000 people throughout the world, for a turnover of 8,700 billion yen, and a profit of 300 billion yen. The turnover is shared between sales made in Japan (about 53% of the total) and the sales made in other countries of the world (the remaining 47%). The affiliate Thai branch of the company is composed 20 sub companies, generating a turnover of 45 billion baht, spread between sales in Japan (45%) and overseas sales (55%). The affiliate Thai branch employs about 16,000 people as of year 2005.

The main activity of the company is the manufacturing and sale of various home electrical and electronic appliances used for leisure or household work. The vision of the company is to contribute to Human's affluent life by realizing the ubiquitous network society, while coexisting with the global environment. This vision has led the company to adhere to the principles of green procurement and green purchasing. The company therefore endeavors to obtain environment-friendly devices and materials to manufacture products that respect the environment, and uses environment-friendly products (such as cars, trucks, etc.) in support to its business.

Mr. Nakamura presented several projects undertaken by the company with the view to comply with this vision and these objectives. The company has for example been able to stop using lead-contained solder in 2003, and should be able to stop the utilization of certain chemical and hazardous substances in electrical equipment by October 2005 (consistent with the requirements of the EC RoHS Directive). As regards green procurement and green purchasing, the company has been increasing its fleet of low-pollution cars since year 2003, and the number of "clean" trucks used by the company has been exceeding the number of "traditional" trucks it uses, as soon as year 2004.

Combined with the creation and utilization of "black box technologies", these practices allow the company to develop and supply green products, and the actual progress of the company in this regard has been since 2003 superior to the targets. The company thereby expects to be able to have 90% of its products complying with the objectives of green products before year 2010. These green products are characterized by enhanced environmental performance, reduced energy consumption, and higher efficiency.

In addition to the development of green products, and to address all levels of the supply chain, the company has also developed its expertise in the field of recycling to be able to comply with the regulations of the various countries where it exports its products. The company has thus established the Panasonic Eco-Technology Center (METEC) which in addition to recycling operations carries out research and development on recycling technology, organizes environmental conferences, and implements events aimed at ensuring transparency (for example, visits of the Center for the public).

Mr. Akira Nakamura concluded by inviting the participants in the symposium to visit the website of the company, and re-stated the strong attachment of the company to contributing to sustainable development.

Due to time limitation, no Q&A session was held at the end of this first afternoon presentation. The Chair of the session therefore proposed to the participants to ask these questions later in the afternoon.

2.3.2. Siam Cement Group

The second presentation of the afternoon was made by Mr. Kitjar Ruangthai, MD., Safety and Environment Executive Consultant, the Siam Cement PLC. Mr. Ruangthai started by presenting the scope of activities of his company. He subsequently presented the philosophy of the group which places social responsibility at the heart of the company's principles, strategies and activities. The company has therefore adopted the "3Rs" program characterized by the principles of (i) reducing resources use; (ii) re-using and recycling to the maximum feasible extent; and (iii) replenishing, i.e. rehabilitating ecosystems (for example, forests for paper production).

On the basis of these principles, Mr. Ruangthai presented his company as a leading company in Thailand for clean business. Green procurement is thus a natural concern of this company. Mr. Ruangthai referred to the schema presented earlier by Mr. Hiroyuki Sato for defining green procurement. He wished to highlight the importance of the safety issue as an integral part of this schema.

Mr. Ruangthai further described the approach and procedures implemented by the Siam Cement Group in order to comply with green purchasing objectives. There are basically six steps corresponding to three phases that the Siam Cement Group follows for implementation of Green Purchasing. These phases and steps are:

- Phase 1: the building of the system. Under this phase, three steps are carried out being (i) the identification of the Green Policy and Green Guidelines; (ii) the identification and prioritization of target products; and (iii) the application of the green purchasing mechanism. This phase has already been implemented by the Siam Cement Group in Thailand.

Two other steps are complementary to step 1 as described below:

- Step 2: Once the green purchasing mechanism is running well enough, the process can be automated. This phase has not yet been reached by the Siam Cement group in Thailand.
- Step 3: this phase corresponds to additional cooperation with the supplier. Although it is considered that this stage has not yet been fully achieved, phase 1 already requires a certain level of cooperation with these suppliers.

To illustrate the points referred to above, Mr. Ruangthai presented a case study on the products selected by the company in the framework of its Green Purchasing Policy. Through this policy, the company currently spends out about 500,000 baht for Green Purchasing each month.

Notwithstanding these positive results, Mr. Ruangthai stated that the implementation of Green Purchasing remains uneasy due to several factors. These include in particular the high initial costs incurred when implementing these policies in the company, and the often-weak regulatory framework that allows less-caring competitors to keep their level of profit. In spite of these difficulties he insisted that the Siam Cement Group believed in the long-term benefits and would thus continue with this policy.

A Q&A session was held at the end of the presentation.

The participants first wished to know whether there had been any direct support provided to suppliers in order to help them meet the requirements of Green Purchasing. Mr. Ruangthai indicated that a project had already been conducted, in cooperation with the Thailand Environment Institute for the Greening of Supply Chains in Thailand. In the framework of this pilot-project, 6 items have been dealt with.

The participants also referred to the specific difficulty to comply with the Green Label requirements and therefore requested advice from Siam Cement Group and other companies present at the symposium. Mr. Ruangthai, and his colleagues from Panasonic, Fuji Xerox, as well as experts from the Thailand Environment Institute indicated that suppliers did not need to specifically comply with the requirements of the Green Label to be able to supply their products to other companies. Should these latter requirements be too difficult to meet, it was recommended to them to try to meet the requirements of alternative labels, which could provide them with a satisfying score, i.e. a bit less than the maximum, in Siam Cement Group and other companies' ranking systems.

2.3.3. Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd.

The last company report was presented by Mrs. Yukari Sakamoto, on behalf of Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd. In line with the company reports previously presented, this presentation aimed at introducing the participants with the environmental management and green purchasing policy and activities of the Fuji Xerox Company. Mrs. Yukari Sakamoto started by giving the highlights of her presentation. She followed with a brief introduction on her company's profile.

The company aims at fulfilling three key principles as follows:

- To be strong: this refers to economic aspects
- To be kind: this refers to social aspects
- To be interesting: this refers to human aspects

The environmental management policy of the company is guided by the willingness to address specific environmental issues of which, climate change, resource depletion, and chemicals reduction. The Group has therefore successfully “pushed” all its production sites to achieve the ISO 14000 certification.

The efforts related to Green Purchasing within the company started in 1996. The company thereby won a Green Purchasing Prize in 1999. At present Green Purchasing represents 95% of the total purchases of the Group, including the main company and its domestic affiliates.

Mrs. Sakamoto gave an overview of the activities of the Group related to Green Purchasing and enhanced environmental performance. The Group notably carries out surveys on Green Purchasing, energy saving actions, encourages re-use, implements compliance with the EC RoHS directive, and develops green procurement standards. For each of these activities, objectives are set, and progresses are monitored regularly. Closed-loop approaches are privileged, to consider several stages of supply chains and products “utilization chains”. One objective of the Group is to be able to reduce the volume of residual waste to zero.

In the last part of her presentation, Mrs. Sakamoto gave more concrete examples of green purchasing and environmental activities carried out by her Group in Thailand. She mentioned about the Integrated Recycling System applied by the Group in Chon Buri, the compliance with RoHS directive applied to printers, the actions carried out toward resource replenishment and recycling for copy paper (in this latter case, a third party is often involved to ensure that the forest is well-managed), the implementation of sustainable paper supply systems, etc.

Mrs. Yukari Sakamoto concluded her presentation re-stating the strong attachment of her company to environmental issues as a means to contribute to a sustainable society.

Following Mrs. Sakamoto’s presentation, a question was raised as regards the application of green purchasing by the company for paper procurement. Mrs. Sakamoto indicated for the time being that these principles are applied essentially in Japan. However, by year 2006, the company intends to apply these principles to all its suppliers in the Asia-Pacific region.

2.4. Afternoon session: Thailand Green Purchasing Network (15.15 – 15.45)

The last presentation of the day was made by Ms. Sumon Sumetchoengprachya, Senior Research Associate, Business and Environment Program, Thailand Environment Institute. This presentation consisted in an overview of the Thailand Green Purchasing Network (TGPN).

After reminding the milestones, rationale, and background information related to the creation of the network, Ms. Sumon Sumetchoengprachya described the objectives and missions of this network. The TGPN aims to raise environmental awareness and enhance environmental management in Thailand. The network further aims to promote “Green Purchasing Policy” in Thailand in order to increase green market along with increasing of green supplies through the provision and the dissemination of information related to green products, green labels, criteria for green products, producers and distributors.

Five missions are therefore assigned to the TGPN. These missions include:

- The definition of concepts related to Green Purchasing and procurement, and green products
- The gathering of information and materials related to these concepts, and their dissemination to the public
- The provision of guidelines related to green purchasing best practices
- The raising of consumers’ awareness on green purchasing policy and green products
- The organization of an information exchange forum among members and other organizations

Ms. Sumon Sumetchoengprachya subsequently made a detailed presentation of the TGPN website.

2.5. Afternoon session: Final discussion and closing (15.45 – 16.15)

A final discussion was held in the form of a Q&A session with the participants at the end of the day. This discussion was chaired by Mr. Suthisak Kraisornsutasinee, Thammasart University, Thailand, and by Mr. Hiroyuki Sato, Secretary General of IGPN. The following points were discussed:

Question: Should organizations promoting green purchasing be public or private? Should they provide services free of charge or request payment for these services? Getting funds from the Government may result in a lack of autonomy of the organizations thereby supported?

Answer: The GPN started with funding from the Government and started by providing most services free of charge. The GPN first endeavored to prove to businesses the benefits they could get. After a small number of businesses had started to show their interest, the GPN started to charge its services but still at moderate prices. After two years of operation, the GPN started to charge its services at full rates. At present 70% of the members of the GPN are SMEs. The GPN has moreover been developing additional information and other services to generate supplementary incomes. The GPN has thereby been able to progressively acquire some financial independence from the support provided by the Government. This experience could inspire other organizations supporting the development of green purchasing and green procurement.

Question: What is PRTR? What is its impact on green purchasing?

Answer: the PRTR is an information disclosure system on emissions of chemicals. In Japan, under this type of system, companies need to register how much pollutants they release and/or transfer to other countries. Although not directly related to green purchasing, this approach can be positive for encouraging enhancement of environmental performances.

Question: Some participants wished to hear more from the European organizations present as regards their experience for initiating green purchasing at the country level

Answer: In Sweden, Green Purchasing started in the early 1990s, under the aegis of politicians and NGOs. In 1993, an investigation was led at national level on how to build unified tool. This highlights once again the crucial role to be played by official authorities.

In the United Kingdom, the concernment about Green Purchasing was an indirect result of the Rio Summit, which led national authorities to the drafting of strategies and guidelines for sustainable development and later on for green purchasing.

Question: The UK Delegate, Mrs. Eleni Pasdeki-Clewer, wished to learn more about the levels of checking performed in Japan and in Asia, as regards the information provided by suppliers in the framework of green purchasing systems

Answer: In Japan there is no real system to perform such checks. However the competition among suppliers may be a good way to obtain real information about a specific company. Mr. Hiroyuki Sato, Secretary General of IGPN further stated that the information presented in the database of GPN allows easy comparisons, which can help to identify potential "errors".

The Swedish Delegate, Mr. Peter Nohrstedt, mentioned that Sweden already has specific checking procedures, and has undertaken a study for improving these procedures. He invited the participants to consult the ECU website for further information.

Acknowledging the remarks from the UK and Swedish Delegates, Mr. Hiroyuki Sato insisted on the cultural differences. Japan thus continues to believe in the benefits of self-certification.

Question: Mrs. Eleni Pasdeki-Clewer, the UK Delegate, asked to the participants if they thought the IGPN would be able to replicate the performance of the Japanese GPN at international level

Answer: the participants stated their optimism in this regards.

No more comments being made by the participants and the organizers, it was decided to close the event. The organizers wished to thank all the participants for attending the symposium and looked forward to fostered and durable cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in the future.