



## Proceedings of the Webinar

on

## “Indigenous Solutions to Formaldehyde Emissions from the Composite Wood Products”

NCCF/SBCS/Webinar

<b>Date:</b>	December 12, 2020
<b>Time:</b>	1100 to 1300 hours
<b>Location:</b>	Conducted remotely via Teams-meeting
<b>Chairman of TWG:</b>	Mr. A. K. Goyal
<b>Convener:</b>	Ms. Neeti Verma
<b>Scheme Coordinator:</b>	Mr Harsh Yadav
<b>Annexures:</b>	Annexe I

### **Background:**

The webinar on “Indigenous Solutions to Formaldehyde Emissions from the Composite Wood Products” was held on December 12, 2020 from 1100 hours to 1300 hours. The webinar was chaired by Mr. A. K. Goyal, convened by Ms. Neeti Verma and hosted by Mr. A.K. Srivastava.

Invitation for the webinar was circulated *via* email to all the stakeholders and esteemed panellists.

**List of participants is attached as *Annexe I***

### **Agenda Items:**

<b>Item 1:</b> Time: 1100 to 1115 hours	Opening remarks by Mr A K Goyal
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Ms. Neeti started the webinar by welcoming all the participants and requested Mr. A. K. Goyal, chairperson SDG and TWG, to open the session. Mr. A. K. Goyal briefed the audience about the harmful effects of formaldehyde on the indoor air quality released by the composite wood products and related deaths which take place per year as per the WHO data of 2012. He highlighted that with the rising awareness and consciousness amongst the stakeholders, some countries led by Japan, America and Europe have developed standards to cap the formaldehyde emissions.

However, in India, we do not have any regulatory or voluntary standards for the same so far. Hence, the Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) taken the lead in this regard and has come forward to announce the indigenous certification standards scheme called “Safeboards Standards Development Scheme”. He elaborated upon the stakeholders which include manufacturers of composite wood products, handicrafts and furniture, traders and dealers of composite woods, government agencies, consultants, architects and institutes. He further briefed on the various development stages of the Safeboards Standards, the progress made so far and reaching the final stage by March, 2021. He welcomed and introduced all the panellists and thereafter requested the first panellist, Mr. B. H. Patel to deliver his talk on the subject of ‘effects of formaldehyde emissions from composite wood products on human health’.

<b>Item 2:</b> Time: 1115 to 1125 hours	Effects of formaldehyde emissions from composite wood products on human health: Mr B.H. Patel
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Mr. B.H. Patel addressed the subject as a cause of concern which is to be regulated and standardised so that direct effects on human health can be minimised. He mentioned that the composite wood is composed of wood fibres, plastic and bonding agents *i.e.* urea and phenol, which is stronger, heavier and alike solid wood and it is the shortage of solid wood that has led to increased demand of composite woods. He also spoke in detail about the formaldehyde effects on human health *i.e.* skin irritation, respiratory problems, and its carcinogenic nature and the effects on environment *i.e.* ozone layer depletion. He reiterated the prospects of expanding Indian economy and disproportionate use of composite woods as a cause of concern, so there is an alarming need for such capping limits on emissions.

Mr. A.K. Srivastava introduced esteemed guests from Indian Green Buildings Program-CII.

Ms. Neeti made a PowerPoint presentation covering all the topics of panel discussion with a brief on the flow of the presentation.

Mr. A.K. Srivastava was then requested to introduce NCCF and its associations and briefly described the status of other sustainability standards developed/being developed by the NCCF.

<b>Item 3:</b> Time: 1125 to 1135 hours	India’s take on handling the problem: Formaldehyde emissions from composite wood products: Ms. Neeti Verma
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The panellist, Mr Naresh Tiwari who was to provide detailed insight on the said topic could not be present in the webinar due to some emergency. Hence, Ms. Neeti presented the topic and informed the audience about the India’s stature as ever since the reclassification of formaldehyde by the ‘International Agency for Research on Cancer’ as carcinogenic to humans, an enormous concern triggered globally but the lack of awareness in India on the formaldehyde emissions from UF bonded panels is still worrisome. She also presented that even though the utility of furniture cannot be ruled out but one of the most neglected aspects in India is the awareness to keep the level of formaldehyde emissions released from the furniture to acceptable limits in the offices or home interiors or other places, more particularly the formaldehyde emissions from the wood panels used in the fabrication of furniture like plywood, blockboard, particleboard and medium density fibre boards. India does not have any mandatory regulations to control formaldehyde emissions, however, globally various countries have existing regulations for the same.

Ms. Neeti then introduced the Safeboards certification standards to cap formaldehyde emissions from composite wood products and elaborated on the benefits of the same. She put forth the detailed objectives of the Standards as to make composite-wood products compliant with emission standards categories of import-oriented countries; to ease the export of such products in global market; to improve the deteriorating quality of health of public in India; to make it a handy tool for stakeholders to fulfill their demand of low-emitting composite wood products and the Standards will also provide an edge to manufacturers for getting their products certified internationally. She mentioned that implementation of sustainable management and production practices promoting export of Safeboards' certified products will facilitate "Make in India Programme" and the element of certification standards will also complement various set goals of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) 2030.

Ms. Neeti requested Mr. Bansal to throw some light on the developmental stages of 'Safeboards Standards'.

<b>Item 4:</b> Time: 1135 to 1145 hours	Development Stages of Safeboards Standards: Mr A K Bansal
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Mr. Bansal thanked Ms. Neeti and presented a brief of the stages which included stakeholders' mapping as the first stage of development of the Safeboards Standards followed by constitution of Standards Development Group, constitution of Technical Working Group, preparation of draft Standards and once these Standards are ready, these will be put on public domain for consultations and conduct of sensitization workshops.

Mr. A.K. Bansal requested the participants to actively comment on the draft for its wide acceptance and highlighted that the purpose of these Standards is to improve the human health and environment. Upcoming activities in the series were also illustrated by him, *i.e.* public consultation, pilot testing and finalization of Standards are expected to be completed by March end 2021 with stakeholders' cooperation.

Ms. Neeti thanked Mr. A.K. Bansal

<b>Item 5:</b> Time: 1145 to 1155 hours	Indigenous solutions to formaldehyde emissions from the composite wood products: Ms Neeti Verma
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Ms. Neeti presented use of Safeboards certification in green buildings and elaborated on the components of the draft of the Safeboards Standards regarding management systems, quality control, outsourcing, emission limits, product labelling, and surveillance requirements.

Thereafter, Ms. Neeti requested Mr. Goyal to open the forum for panel discussion.

<b>Item 6:</b> Time: 1155 to 1250hours	Discussions
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Mr. Goyal thanked Ms. Neeti and welcomed all other dignitaries.

DPIIT- has issued a notification on toys quality control to boost production and sale of toys, where Mr. Srivastava pointed that in due course, toy industry will be a potential market for Safeboards Standards and will promote certified wood.

Then, Mr. Srivastava requested Mr. J.K. Bihani- President, Haryana Plywood Manufacturers Association to share his views.

Mr. J.K. Bihani mentioned that it is important to have our own Standards to come at par with other countries, and he informed that with approval of Centre and Haryana Government they have come up with Quality Marking Centre at Yamuna Nagar, and separate budget has been allocated for formaldehyde testing laboratory in collaboration with NABL. He shared his concerns about implementation of these Standards and the technical training of the stakeholders. He told that his Plywood Association is also creating awareness on these Standards.

Mr. Srivastava thanked Mr. Bihani and duly noted his views. Mr. Bansal welcomed the coming up of Quality Marking Centre at Yamuna Nagar and commented that whatever be the budget constraints with IPIRTI, it will continue working with the same zeal for the good of the industry.

Mr. Srivastava invited Mr. Rajesh Rawat- Joint Director, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts for his remarks.

He gave a brief idea of the handicraft sector and wood export and clusters of India. He stressed on the need to have these Standards accepted internationally as well and not just by the Indian market owing to huge export market potential of wood and handicrafts. He said we must engage buyers and buying communities to make it acceptable as handicraft sector is buyer driven.

Mr. Srivastava requested Dr. J Kishwan- Chief advisor NCCF, to say a few words and give his suggestions on the business potential of these Standards.

Mr. Kishwan congratulated the Haryana Government that it has come up with the plans to establish a laboratory, and said it will be of great help for the potential clients.

For awareness and business development, he said Ms. Neeti has been conducting series of webinars to sensitize potential clients and public at large which can be put to use for this as well and he assured of good business prospects once these Standards are launched.

Mr. Avani Varma acknowledged the whole hearted participation and contribution of industry and congratulated eminent participants and NCCF for coming up with such comprehensive Standards which will be available in near future for everyone to apply.

Mr. Anil Johari was requested by Mr. Srivastava for suggesting ways to engage with DPIIT.

He said there were discussions in DPIIT to come up with formaldehyde emissions regulation, so he suggested to present the scheme now as 'deemed compliance' and engage with the Ministry of Commerce as well and identify where exports are majorly taking place. We can then present that we don't have regulation but voluntary certification scheme in place which covers those regulations on formaldehyde emissions, which the Ministry of Commerce can promote in discussion with foreign countries. Additionally, he said being a scheme owner, it's our responsibility to build capacity in the market in all aspects *i.e.* consultants' training of Safeboards Standards in future as pointed out by Mr Bihani.

He also reiterated on the need of financial assistance for MSME by funding for such certifications and setting up of labs in consultation with DC, MSME. He emphasised for NCCF to engage with DC, MSME, to take this forward.

Mr. B.S. Srinivasan-Vice President, Laghu Udyog Bharati, was invited to comment on Standards for toy industry. Mr. Srinivasan said we have to carefully work with toy industry for safety and quality standards as it is an unorganized sector and don't have capacity to understand the

requirements and associated regulations. He informed that the Government of India and Government of Karnataka are establishing new toy clusters and would definitely require the NCCF's help to regulate the upcoming plants of toys.

Mr. A.K. Srivastava said we shall take your suggestion forward!

Mr. C.N. Pandey from 'Century Ply' complemented the NCCF for developing the Standards based on holistic approach, and also simultaneously shared his concerns in terms of implementation of the Standards as plywood manufacturers are mostly in unorganized sector and mentioned about the BIS standards being followed for formaldehyde emissions in plywood sector. He said sustainability of raw material is also a concern for them.

Mr. A. K. Srivastava then requested Mr. Bansal to make his observations on BIS vs. 'Safeboards Standards', if there was any conflict of interest, to which Mr. Bansal replied that there shall not be any conflict as both are voluntary in nature and Safeboards Standards cover complete gamut of activities from production and supply chain whereas BIS takes in account generally the product quality.

Mr. B.H. Patel also nodded on no conflict between the two.

Mr. Avani Varma suggested to consider and fix physical parameters of the product also in the Standards to which Ms. Neeti replied that the Safeboards Standards are single attribute (capping formaldehyde emission limits) and in the initial stages of the Standards development, these requirements cannot be covered.

Mr. Johari clarified that formaldehyde regulation is under consideration in many foreign countries, secondly, there will be a regulation sooner or later in India too so we shall position these Standards and certification well before in the market, so that it is not called duplicate. Additionally, he said for foreign countries these 'Standards' have to satisfy two factors as pointed out by Mr. Rajesh Rawat *i.e.* (a) Regulatory requirements of the country without which you cannot enter that market, and (b) To get your Standards recognized by the Government, the only route is through commerce and on top of it these Standards must satisfy the buyer.

Mr A K Verma enquired about the source of glossary of terms and definition of composite wood to be included in these Standards, to which Ms. Neeti replied that ISO Guide 2 and ISO Guide 59 are used as a source for all the terms.

<b>Item 7:</b> Time: 1250 to 1253 hours	Closing remarks
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Mr. Srivastava thanked all the participants and panellists one by one for their contribution and sparing their valuable time.

Mr. A K Goyal, on behalf of NCCF and Safeboards team thanked everyone for their valuable time and suggestions!

The meeting closed at 1253 hours.

## Annexe I: List of Participants

Full Name
Mr A K Goyal
Mr B H PATEL
Mr J K Bihani
Mr Arun Bansal
Mr Rajesh Rawat
Mr A K Srivastava
Mr K S Rao
Mr A K Varma
Dr. C.N.Pandey
Dr O.K. Remadevi
Ms Neeti Verma
Mr Anil Jauhri
Mr Ritesh Goel
Dr Jagdish Kishwan
Mr B.S. Srinivasan
Mr Dhanshyam Patel
Mr Vinod Kumar Sharma
Mr Harish Magoo
Ms Shraddha Verma
Mr Nath
Mr C K Patel
Mr Mamathabs888
Mr Sumit Roy
Mr S Kumar
Merchant3
Merchant 1
Ms Rishika Sharma
Mr Pradeep Poddar
Mr Jagannath
Mr Varun Grover
Ms Pratibha Singh
Mr Richard Bright
Mr Nadeem Ahmed
Ms Karishma Khutela
Mr Balbinder Singh
Mr Harsh Goyal