

2003 GLOBAL ECOLABELLING NETWORK (GEN)
ANNUAL REPORT: FULL TEXT OF SECTIONS 2 AND 3*

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*An abridged version of the entire Annual Report is available in both electronic and printed copy formats. This complementary document provides a more comprehensive presentation of 2003 strategies, initiatives, activities and accomplishments. At the end of Section 3, 2004 Work Priorities are also identified.

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2. 2003 Operations and Activities

This section highlights GEN operations and activities, and provides an annual financial statement.

2.1 Board of Directors Activities

In accordance with the GEN Bylaws, the Board of Directors manages efforts and initiatives in various business and work plan areas. The Board formally met three times in 2003, in May in Ottawa and twice in October (immediately before and after the 2003 Conference and Annual General Meeting) in Prague, to formulate and review strategies, work plans, initiatives and budgets. A working group of the Board also met for a special "Future Role of GEN Strategic Planning Session" immediately following the regular Board Meeting in May. As well, electronic means were used throughout the year to consult and conduct routine GEN business.

Based on decisions taken at the Board Meetings and the 2002 and 2003 Annual General Meetings (AGMs), major Board responsibilities and activities included:

- ? granting provisional acceptance of membership applications from the Clean & Green Foundation, Inc. of the Philippines and the Singapore Environment Council in advance of the 2003 AGM, and considering the eligibility of another potential GEN member organization in late 2003;
- ? convening the 2003 AGM and assisting in the planning, organizing and staging of a corresponding conference and exposition, including the approval of sponsorship funding to enable certain member representatives and others to participate;
- ? making recommendations and directing revisions to the 2003 and draft 2004 work plans and budgets;
- ? recommending and securing membership approval for retaining the annual membership fee level at the level originally set in 1997, while also retaining the same fee level for "GEN associate" status;
- ? directing the preparation and approval of the 2002 annual financial report, assessing the merits and consequences of ceasing to automatically have external annual financial audits performed in 2003 and beyond, and securing membership approval at the 2003 AGM to forego future external financial audits unless deemed necessary by the Board (based upon extraordinary circumstances);
- ? authorizing and overseeing the efforts of a working group to further consider and refine themes and issues and prepare a discussion paper on "The Future of GEN" prior to the 2003 AGM [Section 2.3.1];
- ? directing the preparation of, and contributing to an outline and proposal for the advancement of an "international coordinated ecolabelling system", for presentation and consideration at the 2003 AGM [Section 2.3.1];
- ? subsequent to the 2003 AGM, establishing a Board "working group" to proceed with the design and development of a GEN international coordinated ecolabelling system -- "GENICES" [Section 2.3.1];
- ? considering and approving partial funding support for a TAP "enhanced co-operation and mutual recognition/common criteria development" project involving several GEN members [Section 2.3.2];
- ? considering invitations and/or identifying opportunities, and selecting and directing appropriate representatives to participate in international information-sharing and awareness-raising fora, meetings and events on behalf of GEN [Sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.5];
- ? directing the preparation of, contributing to, and approving a "GEN, Ecolabelling and Trade" Paper for posting on the GEN Web site and dissemination to interested parties [Section 2.3.4];
- ? directing the preparation of a list of ecolabelled products available around the world (within a select number of product categories) and its provision to various international development banks and other organizations (e.g. the United Nations) [Section 2.3.6];
- ? on behalf of the membership, considering and conveying continuing support for "chemical substances data base development initiatives" being undertaken by Japan Environment Association (JEA) officials (on behalf of GEN) and Nordic/EU officials [Section 2.3.7];
- ? making recommendations and directing revisions to the draft 2004 - 2008 GEN Strategic Plan for finalization and implementation in 2004;
- ? directing the preparation and submission of a draft "GEN Promotions Plan" in early 2004; and
- ? managing and supervising other GEN activities within the frameworks of the annual work plans and budgets approved at the 2002 AGM and 2003 AGM.

2.2 Administrative Activities

The General Affairs Office (GAO) and Secretariat perform the following tasks on an on-going basis:

- ? handle and respond to internal and external requests, and communicate with and forward information of interest to members and others (*Table 2*);
- ? lead and/or collaborate in the planning, preparation for and staging of the AGM;
- ? provide secretariat services to the Chair (and other directors serving on the GEN Board);
- ? maintain and enhance a GEN filing system;
- ? invoice and collect annual membership and associate fees;
- ? maintain and update the GEN web site and various information documents;
- ? establish, maintain and update contact lists;
- ? co-ordinate selected GEN projects/programs (e.g. the Technical Assistance Program);
- ? provide support to GEN representatives participating in international events and initiatives;
- ? conduct research projects/surveys and prepare information reports; and
- ? perform other related activities as directed/requested.

Significant operational and administrative activities undertaken in 2003 included:

- ? drafting the text for the *2002 Annual Report*, co-ordinating its external editing, and distributing the *2001* and *2002 Annual Reports* to internal and external stakeholders and interested parties;
- ? undertaking and reporting on a review of the Technical Assistance Program, and providing recommendations for enhancements and revisions;
- ? preparing or providing input to position papers on "GEN, Ecolabelling and Trade", "GEN and ISO 14024" and "The Future of GEN";
- ? preparing a paper on "GEN Members' Self-assessed Compliance with ISO 14024";
- ? collaborating with Czech Ministry of Environment and Agency for Environmentally Friendly Products officials in the planning, organizing, staging, and reporting upon the 2003 AGM, international conference and exposition staged in Prague in October 2003 [*Section 2.4*];
- ? compiling a list of ecolabelled products (in selected product categories) available around the world;
- ? providing some coordination and direct input to two Technical Assistance Program projects [*Section 2.3.2*];
- ? enhancing and expanding a "Members Only" section on the GEN Web site that includes a "bulletin board feature" to facilitate simple and efficient information transfer and exchange of views and ideas between members;
- ? installing Internet links to product category criteria lists/documents posted on the members' web sites;
- ? preparing and posting several *GENews* (i.e. the GEN's newsletter) issues on the GEN Web site;
- ? initiating revisions and updates to the "GEN Guide to Ecolabelling";
- ? enhancing formal relations with, and participating in various initiatives of the ISEAL Alliance [*Section 2.3.5*]; and
- ? monitoring and notifying GEN members of international developments and events relevant to the advancement of ecolabelling.

A full summary of activities undertaken in accordance with the 2003 Work Plan is provided in *Section 3.2*.

Table 2:
**REQUESTS HANDLED BY THE SECRETARIAT
AND GENERAL AFFAIRS OFFICES**

Requests From:	Handled in 2003	Handled in 2002	Handled in 2001
Members	157 ¹	92	25
Associates: (Consumer's Choice Council and the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling Alliance)	28	*	*
Potential Members (7) And Potential Associates (2)	27 ² 3	25 12	32 (combined)
Academic Sources	21 ³	12	15
Industry Sources (associations & individual companies)	8 ⁴	14	14
Media Sources	12 ⁵	5	6
National, Regional and Municipal Government Sources	22 ⁶	16	8
Multinational [Governmental] Organizations	8 ⁷	*	*
Other Sources (non-governmental organizations, individuals, others)	32 ⁸	21	27
Parties Interested in Linking Web Sites	2	*	*
Parties Seeking a Copy of the GEN Guide to Ecolabelling	7	12	23

Information Received and Disseminated to GEN Members (and Others)	2003	2002	2001
General	221	*	*
Announcements of External Relevant Conferences and Events	106	32	23

* Statistics not recorded in 2001 and 2002.

2.3 Major Initiatives Undertaken

The success of the GEN depends to a large extent on the involvement and efforts of its Chair, Directors and the members and associates. In 2003, major initiatives undertaken on behalf of the GEN, included:

¹ Major areas included Annual General Meeting planning and co-ordination (including participation sponsorship), Technical Assistance Program requirements and processes, identification of external contacts, trade and environment issues and strategies, Type III labelling, and various other topics and issues.

² Governmental and non-governmental organizations situated in Estonia, Hong Kong, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

³ Graduate students studying in Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy (2), and Spain.

⁴ ISO TC207 officials, a Swedish company official interested in marketing a bed in North America, and a Trinidad and Tobago standards official.

⁵ Media organizations headquartered in Colombia, the Czech Republic and the United States (2).

⁶ Officials or consultants on behalf of the governments of Australia, Austria, British Columbia [Canada], California [USA], Columbia, Estonia, Iran, Netherlands, Peoples Republic of China, Romania, Russia, and South Africa [municipal level].

⁷ European Union Trade Directorate, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and World Trade Organization Secretariat officials.

⁸ Including representatives of the Clean and Green Foundation, Inc. of the Philippines [prior to that organization being granted GEN membership], the Consumer Unity Trust Society of India, the EMACE (Environment & science, Manpower & skills, Adult & parenthood, Children & womens' rights, Education & culture) Foundation of Sri Lanka, two American consulting firms (on behalf of undisclosed industrial clients), and others.

2.3.1 Future Role of GEN and Conceptualization of GENICES

The GEN was initially conceived and established as a forum for information exchange and cooperation among organizations operating ecolabelling programs. However, it has been and continues to be evolving into much more than just such a forum, driven by various factors, including:

- ? trade and business are increasingly more global in nature and focus;
- ? “environment” is finding its way onto the agenda of the business and manufacturing communities and governments at all levels;
- ? ecolabelling is spreading into all regions of the world;
- ? the potential for ecolabelling to cause unnecessary barriers to trade is being discussed and analyzed in a number of intergovernmental bodies, most notably the World Trade Organization (WTO); and
- ? the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has developed standards for environmental labelling including ISO 14024 for Type I ecolabelling programs.

In response to these drivers, and over the past few years, GEN officials have:

- ? developed a mutual recognition approach specific to ecolabelling, based on the four step process of:
 - (i) information exchange, (ii) development of mutual confidence, (iii) agreement on mutual recognition of testing and auditing, and (iv) mutual recognition of certification on a product specific basis.
- ? developed mutual recognition agreements on bilateral and/or regional bases;
- ? developed common core environmental performance criteria for certain products;
- ? begun exploring the development of harmonized criteria;
- ? been actively represented at ISO meetings, adopted ISO 14024 as a code of good practice, and conducted self assessment against ISO 14024 principles [*Section 2.3.3*];
- ? made presentations on ecolabelling to a range of international inter-governmental bodies [*Sections 2.3.4 and 2.3.5*]; and
- ? provided technical assistance to countries seeking to develop ecolabelling programs.

Given these developments, a Board-appointed Working Group convened a special May 2003 working session to formulate a proposal for consideration and adoption of a formal evolution strategy involving the development and implementation of a GEN international coordinated ecolabelling system ("GENICES").

The concept of greater and more formalized international coordination and cooperation had been introduced and broadly discussed at the 2001 and 2002 GEN Annual General Meetings (AGMs). As a next step, the Working Group undertook to further explore the related issues and prepare a proposal paper and presentation for the 2003 AGM with recommendations on the merits and how to proceed. The resulting proposal featured the following key strategic points:

- ? the evolution of GEN should build upon the already agreed upon four step mutual recognition process;
- ? GEN member organizations should be able to join or leave GENICES at any time, with participation on a voluntary basis but subject to formal conditions;
- ? the GEN should not be involved in actually ecolabelling products (certifying compliance of products to criteria and licensing companies), but could provide the central authority for others to conduct ecolabelling work;
- ? GEN officials should continue with current duties, while a separate GENICES operation, under the general governance of the Board of Directors, might be needed to:
 - (i) design and implement program accreditation;
 - (ii) serve as the forum for dispute resolution; and
 - (iii) facilitate or even develop common core criteria and harmonized criteria; and
- ? while initial financing of this expanded GEN role would likely need to be sought and secured, a sustainable business model will be required to ensure long term stability of the required functions.

At the 2003 AGM, the GEN Board members presented their proposal for membership acceptance. During a preceding special GEN Conference session, they had tabled their proposal paper and led corresponding break-out discussion groups of the major issues and recommendations contained in the proposal. General views presented in the paper and echoed during the Conference and AGM discussions, included:

- ? the concept of an international coordinated ecolabelling system overseen by the GEN and delivered at the national or regional level by competent bodies is an appropriate next step in the development and advancement of ecolabelling worldwide; and
- ? such a scheme could:
 - (i) allow new programs to get quickly started with criteria already created in many product categories and with potential income from products that are internationally traded and certified elsewhere;
 - (ii) be of interest to large multinationals in terms of facilitating, simplifying and making more cost-effective the whole ecolabelling process, and potentially enable any inclined companies to more easily and quickly enter and compete in select export markets;
 - (iii) share the costs of criteria development and review where harmonization or development of common criteria is set as a common objective and task;
 - (iv) raise the significance of GEN and its value to both members and external parties, and
 - (v) deal effectively and practically with any concerns about trade barriers.

As a culmination to the presentations and discussions held during the 2003 AGM and Conference, the following AGM resolution was made and adopted:

Within the context of the principles of simplicity, relevance, credibility, inclusiveness and flexibility, and while continuing the important work related to the development of common core criteria, to include in the GEN work program the development of GENICES (GEN International Coordinated Ecolabelling System), beginning with an accreditation system and a logo approach.

2.3.2 Multilateral Enhanced Co-operation and Common Criteria Development

In late 2001, officials of four Asian member organizations -- the Environment and Development Foundation (EDF) of Taiwan/ROC, the Japan Environment Association (JEA), the Korea Environmental Labelling Association (KELA), and the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) -- sought and secured GEN funding assistance and support for a multilateral, multi-year project.

The project design called for collaboration, negotiation and establishment of a mutual recognition framework and cooperative process through which sets of common ecolabelling criteria could be formulated. The ultimate project goal was to be the finalization and adoption of common criteria and encouragement of other GEN members to also adopt and/or reference the common criteria in their respective ecolabelling criteria documents.

"Phase I" focused upon development, testing and refinement of the mutual recognition framework, and development and adoption of common core criteria for paints and toner cartridges. TEI officials took the lead role during this project phase. While considerable work was undertaken in 2002 (and reported upon in the 2002 GEN Annual Report), the criteria development work was not finalized until March 2003. Subsequently, all four participants took measures to adopt the criteria, and have also explored ways of implementing mutual recognition and cooperation arrangements with respect to verification and product testing against the common core criteria.

With the completion of "Phase I", a proposal was prepared and submitted in June 2003 for a "Phase II" work program under the coordination of KELA officials, but involving the same four GEN members along with observers from several other GEN member organizations. The GEN Board approved the project and funding assistance in July 2003.

"Phase II" work has focused on development of common core criteria for televisions, video players and multifunctional office equipment. In the remainder of 2003, project researchers investigated the environmental impacts of the products throughout their lifecycles, and identified the key elements of criteria and the range of threshold values and requirements, leading to preparation and presentation of first drafts of the criteria documents for review and revision. At a first project meeting staged in November 2003, review comments and recommendations on revisions were presented and discussed by the project participants.

Based on the opinions and comments raised and shared, researchers initiated further development work, addressed outstanding technical issues, and gave consideration to appropriate compliance verification methods.

Revised criteria, with supporting documentation, were to be circulated to the project partners in early 2004 and negotiated during a second project meeting planned to be held in March 2004. A final report, including the three sets of common core criteria and a project partners' mutual recognition agreement plan for the products, is to be completed by July 2004 and presented at the 2004 AGM .

A useful and thoughtful project feature has been that progress and preliminary study reports and the draft common core criteria documents have been posted on the GEN Web site (in a "members only" section) to keep GEN officials aware of developments and facilitate their input and comments.

2.3.3 Position on ISO 14024 and Participation in ISO

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) began development work on "*ISO 14024: Environmental labels and declarations - Type I environmental labelling - Principles and procedures*" in the late 1990's. Throughout the ISO standard development process, GEN officials have actively participated and provided useful and substantial input, with the GEN recognized and welcomed formally as an "'A" External Liaison Organization'. At the same time, numerous individual GEN member officials have served as technical experts and key participants on their respective national ISO delegations.

ISO 14024 has been developed with the purpose of being pertinent to existing and planned ecolabelling systems. Given the strong correlation between the focus of the Standard and the "practice of ecolabelling", the GEN and its members, besides providing practical and insightful input to the ISO standard development process, have tried to make good use of the document since its publication. In this regard, GEN officials have deemed it appropriate and useful to recognize the Principles contained in the Standard as a "code of good practice" to guide ecolabelling program designers, developers, managers and operators. In fact, a major condition of GEN membership is that a representative of an ecolabelling organization must affirm that his/her organization:

"...conforms to the GEN conditions of membership set forth in the GEN By-Laws..., and is striving to comply with the guiding principles outlined in International Organization for Standardization (ISO) voluntary standard ISO 14024...".

A "Self-Assessment of Conformity with ISO 14024" exercise, which was voluntarily undertaken by GEN member organizations in 2002, identified quite strong cumulative conformity with the ISO Guiding Principles (and Procedures).

While GEN officials see considerable value in the guidance provided by the ISO 14024 Principles, they also place great value on the GEN's own "Conditions of Membership", and the "Code of Good Practice" contained in the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement. Broadly speaking, ecolabelling practitioners are striving to design, manage and operate systems and programs in ways that are recognized as legitimate, credible, practical, and appropriate by stakeholders and other observers.

In preparation for ISO officials' scheduled review of the Standard in the Summer of 2003, GEN officials discussed and considered the value and appropriateness of undertaking revisions to the Standard. Having completed the "Self-Assessment of Conformity" exercise, GEN members and officials deemed the current version quite acceptable and appropriate for the guidance purposes that it is intended. For this reason, GEN officials produced a position paper on this matter and posted it on the GEN Web site. Individual GEN member officials were also encouraged to advise their respective ISO representative officials against and discourage work being initiated on any revisions to the Standard.

Dr. Ning Yu, as the GEN representative at the pertinent ISO Meetings in Indonesia between June 30th and July 5th 2003, conveyed the GEN position to ISO officials and other delegates. Subsequently, a major meeting outcome was a decision taken by ISO officials not to initiate a revision exercise. The

GEN's input, as well as input from other delegations, had led to this decision being taken. (As usual, Dr. Yu also provided her annual information sharing/awareness raising presentation on the work of GEN and its members for the benefit of other ISO participants.)

2.3.4 "GEN, Ecolabelling and Trade" Paper

As directed at the 2002 AGM, in early 2003 the Chair drafted a paper on GEN initiatives that address international trade concern issues. The three-fold purposes of this paper were to:

- ? communicate to others the background and purpose of the GEN;
- ? help GEN members better understand the context of, and issues related to, the trade debate, and
- ? communicate to others what the GEN and its members have been collectively doing in those areas that are connected to the trade issues.

Besides providing information to satisfy the three purposes, the Paper presents the following conclusions:

- ? If inappropriately practiced, any type of environmental labelling could have the potential to create unnecessary barriers to trade.
- ? To date, no concrete concerns have been addressed at specific Type I ecolabelling programs. Concerns have tended to be more general and aimed at environmental labelling at large without clarification of the type of label being criticized.
- ? A range of WTO agreements address standards and standardizing bodies, but were negotiated without specific knowledge of or concern about ecolabelling.
- ? There remains a lack of clarification and agreement on the degree to which WTO agreements apply to Type I ecolabelling programs.
- ? ISO 14024 does contain many of the requirements under the relevant WTO agreements and is referenced by GEN members as a code of good conduct.
- ? Ecolabelling is growing around the world, in both developed and developing countries. The environmental attributes of products have the potential to create trade opportunities, particularly for goods aimed at developed country markets, regardless of point of origin.
and
- ? There is a need to find sustainable solutions instead of being preoccupied with the more negative threats and difficulties. This will allow the debate to take a turn for the better, and the energy now spent on arguing about potential problems re-focused to evaluate and pursue opportunities.

With feedback and further input from other GEN officials, the Paper was finalized and posted on the GEN Web site in the Spring of 2003. At the same time, the Paper was circulated to interested parties participating in the WTO exercise, and provided electronically to GEN member representatives for further distribution as appropriate.

2.3.5 Participation in International Forums, Meetings and Events

Throughout 2003, GEN officials were invited to and participated in a number of important international forums, meetings and events, including:

- ? **Eleventh Session of the United Nations Committee on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)**

On behalf of the GEN, and in follow-up to her attendance at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Dr. Ning Yu attended the first week of this Event staged in New York at the end of April/beginning of May. There were over 1200 delegates from approximately forty to fifty countries participating, with both government representatives and other stakeholders making presentations.

The intent was to prepare and approve a work plan, including strategies and activities, relating to implementation of WSSD outcomes. An Implementation Plan/Discussion Paper was being prepared and two-year action-oriented implementation cycles, relating to these high priority issues, were being formulated for adoption.

Besides attending the formal organizational meetings, Dr. Yu also attended "side events", staged mostly by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), at which she distributed a "GEN Backgrounder" document to interested parties. In reporting on the Event to other GEN officials, she concluded that it was a useful event for a GEN representative to attend, from an information gathering/sharing and awareness-raising perspective.

In order to continue to participate in the various UNCSO implementation cycles in the future, GEN officials will apply in early 2004 for continuing consultative status through the United Nation's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

? **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Consultation Session**

In response to an invitation forwarded by OECD officials, a decision was taken to send Mrs. Engel Hansen, as a GEN representative, to the Meetings to be held in Paris in June. The GEN Board members viewed this series of meetings as an opportunity to increase awareness of the GEN and its members among OECD delegations, and an appropriate venue for the dissemination of the "GEN, Ecolabelling and Trade" Paper [Section 2.3.4]. Unfortunately, a labour strike in France prevented Mrs. Engel Hansen from travelling to and participating in the Event. Nevertheless, through other channels, certain OECD delegations were made aware of the GEN Paper and invited to request a copy.

? **NGO Forum In Advance of WTO-TBT Meeting**

This "Learning Event", which was staged in Geneva on October 21-22 and involved primarily Geneva-based WTO delegates and various national governments' trade officials, included a workshop on labelling. With the GEN Chair having been invited to participate through the provision of a presentation, and the "GEN, Ecolabelling and Trade" paper finalized, the GEN Chair's participation was approved and supported by the GEN Board. Unfortunately, due to a minor medical incident, the GEN Chair was unable to attend. However, the Chair arranged for Mr. Chad Dobson of the Consumers Choice Council -- CCC (a GEN associate organization) to give the GEN presentation.

According to the session background document, the meeting aimed at providing Members with a better understanding of the preparation, adoption and application of labelling requirements in the context of the implementation of the TBT Agreement. In this regard, feedback from the Event identified that the GEN Paper and presentation were appreciated and well received.

Regrettably, it was not clear at the conclusion of the meeting whether or how the exercise would be repeated in future.

? **Advisory Group to the World Bank (and Other Multilateral Development Banks and United Nations) on Environmentally Responsible Procurement Strategies, Instruments and Practices**

Since 2001, World Bank officials have annually hosted a one-day meeting on Environmentally Responsible Procurement (ERP). Participants in the meetings have included representatives from the multilateral development banks (i.e. the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and others), United Nations organizations, and a variety of non-governmental organizations including the GEN. The GEN has served as a co-sponsor for several of these meetings. Generally, these meetings have had the following objectives:

- ? share organizations' experiences to date on ERP and receive feedback on strategies under development;
- ? continue to identify new ERP partners in developing and developed countries;
- ? encourage ownership of ERP by institutions' procurement departments; and
- ? develop and implement plans of action for follow up to the meetings and as input to next meetings.

The GEN Chair participated in the 2001 and 2002 Meetings, providing awareness raising and promotional presentations on GEN and the role that it and its members could serve in assisting international institutions to implement ERP. Other GEN officials also participated in these meetings.

In late 2002, World Bank officials announced their intention to seek out and procure "certified green products", and consequently, to search for and request credible and appropriate lists of such products

(and corresponding criteria) that their procurement officials could reference. This was recognized and acknowledged as an opportunity for the GEN and its members to have direct input to the process. Consequently, GEN officials committed to compile, prepare and submit a list of ecolabelled products available around the world that fit under several selected product categories.

In 2003, GEN officials sought and compiled data from GEN members and attempted to obtain complementary data from other established ecolabelling/environmental performance certification/labelling programs. From the information received, a preliminary list was prepared [Section 2.3.6] that addressed products certified and ecolabelled by nine programs/schemes in eight product category areas. At a July 29th Meeting in Washington, the GEN Chair tabled the Preliminary List, requested feedback on it, and spoke more broadly on the subject of using ecolabelling product lists and criteria in green purchasing initiatives.

In reporting on the Washington Meeting at the 2003 AGM, the Chair identified that the meeting was successful. He stressed that the meeting attendees had been asked to provide feedback on the utility of such a listing, and if positive, the GEN could examine how such a list might be electronically developed, maintained and made available on the GEN web site. As well, he suggested that the other attendees might be willing to pay for such a listing to be expanded, upgraded and maintained.

While no significant feedback was received in the latter part of 2003, further considerations and work on the List was initiated [Section 2.3.6].

? **Fifth Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun**

In response to an invitation received in July 2003, the GEN Chair arranged to attend part of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Conference in mid-September. At the Event, the Chair was expected to table and present the "GEN, Ecolabelling and Trade" paper [Section 2.3.4] and participate in an "environment and trade" panel discussion. Unfortunately, with the "collapse" of the central aspects of the Event, the environmental labelling consideration activities didn't proceed as planned. Nevertheless, the GEN Chair was able to distribute the Paper and discuss it less formally with select delegates.

In the lead-up to this Event, expectations for positive outcomes had been raised due to the tone and content of a WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) Report that had been prepared and circulated in advance to WTO Members. In that report, several interesting and progressive positions and issues were articulated that the planned GEN intervention would have addressed. Among the key points raised in the CTE Report were:

- ? Most CTE Members agreed that voluntary, participatory, market-based and transparent environmental labelling schemes were potentially *efficient economic instruments* in order to inform consumers about environmentally friendly products. Moreover, they tended, generally, to be less trade restrictive than other instruments.
- ? For developing countries, the recognition of the *equivalency* of their own certification systems was an area of particular concern; it was important to concentrate on assisting developing countries to design schemes that supported environmental objectives within their own domestic context.
- ? All agreed that *transparency* was of utmost importance with respect to environmental labelling schemes.
- ? Familiar differences of views remain on the WTO compatibility of measures based on non product-related processes and production methods (npr PPMs).
- ? Some Members conveyed a need to reach some form of *common understanding, interpretation or guidance* with respect to labelling requirements for environmental purposes; it was desirable to clarify through agreement rather than through dispute settlement – without undermining existing WTO provisions.
- ? It was proposed that the CTE could come to a common understanding on the types of labelling schemes discussed and the meaning of the various terms used (environmental labelling, eco-labelling, labelling for environmental purposes), identify specific trade concerns relevant to environmental labelling, and make recommendations for necessary action.
- ? Another proposal suggested that the CTE focus its discussions in a pragmatic way on one particular type of eco-label where common views might be easier to achieve: *voluntary labels based on the life-cycle approach*. Further, it was suggested that the CTE might agree on the

principle that the use of voluntary eco-labelling schemes based on a life-cycle approach was legitimate within the rights and obligations of the WTO Agreements.

- ? A reference was made to a Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee's Decision on the "Principles for the Development of International Standards". This Decision identified the following basic principles: transparency, inclusiveness or openness (that all stakeholders be involved in the development of the standard), impartiality and consensus, effectiveness and relevance, coherence, and, wherever possible, responsiveness to the needs and interests of developing countries.
- ? The European Union Member proposed that the CTE hold, before the end of 2004 and in addition to its usual schedule of meetings to be agreed, three "dedicated sessions" to engage in a positive dialogue on governmental and non-governmental voluntary eco-labelling schemes, notably those based on life-cycle analysis (LCA).

While disappointing that the WTO Cancun Event didn't proceed more positively and substantially, a view emerged that there had been some progress made based on the lead-up discussion and input documentation, and a general hope that efforts and positive momentum will get "back on track" in 2004.

? **ISEAL Alliance Initiatives and Events**

For several years, GEN officials have communicated and interacted with International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Alliance officials. The ISEAL Alliance is a collaboration of leading international standards setting, accreditation and labelling organizations that are concerned with social and environmental criteria in product and renewable resource management certification. While there is no overlap in membership between the GEN and the ISEAL Alliance, goals and objectives are somewhat complementary. Also, many operational strategies, processes and procedures used by members of both organizations are comparable.

In 2000, 2001, and 2002, representatives of each organization were invited and participated in formal meetings and events staged by the other organization. This enabled bilateral information exchange and awareness raising, and discussion of possible steps to formalize and enhance relations. A significant development at the ISEAL Alliance's 2002 AGM was that the GEN's participation status was revised from an "observer" to the first approved "associate member". At the 2002 GEN Event and AGM, the ISEAL Alliance was approved as one of the GEN's first "associates".

While GEN officials didn't participate directly in ISEAL Alliance meetings and workshops staged in 2003 due to scheduling conflicts and budget restrictions, GEN officials stayed informed of meeting outcomes and initiatives underway, and provided some input and comments to the ISEAL Alliance exercises. Of considerable interest to GEN officials are initiatives underway relating to the development and adoption of a "Code of Good Practice for Standards-Setting" and the establishment and application of common accreditation systems and processes. Outcomes and processes implemented in both of these areas could prove interesting and potentially quite useful for GEN officials and members in undertaking comparable GEN exercises as part of the GENICES initiative [*Section 2.3.1*].

[For more information on the ISEAL Alliance, its members, and its initiatives, please visit the following web site: www.isealalliance.org.]

2.3.6 International Ecolabelled Products List

A project was initiated in 2003 with the intent of producing a document that could be circulated at the next Advisory Group to the World Bank (and Other Multilateral Development Banks and United Nations) Meetings [*Section 2.3.5*]. While not all GEN members contributed to the preliminary list, it was acknowledged that updating and supplementing of the list would be an ongoing process and that all members would hopefully consider future contribution.

It was also hoped that if external support and funding could be secured, then the list could be posted and maintained on the GEN Web site and/or converted into a data base system. Another notion raised for consideration was to create input links from the GEN Web site to the GEN members' individual Web sites.

At the 2003 AGM, the Chair informed his colleagues that the GEN's List of Internationally Ecolabelled Products had been tabled at the last "Advisory Group" meeting, with a request for feedback from the other participants. His sense was that the other participants appreciated GEN's preparation and provision of this first draft, and would probably welcome a more comprehensive and current list (or access to a comparable data base) in the future.

In this regard, Mr. Taguchi and Ms Mizuno of the Japan Environment Association (JEA) presented a proposal to expand and maintain the List in a ".pdf" format, and possibly to post such a list on the GEN Web site for reference and downloading. This proposal was welcomed and accepted, with the suggestion that several Interagency Organizations (e.g. the World Bank and others) might be willing to provide partial financing for the further development, enhancement and maintenance of a listing or data base system. The JEA officials volunteered to take the lead on the next phase of the project.

2.3.7 Common Information Lists and Shared Data Bases

A decision was made at the 2001 AGM to establish a working group to consider and recommend the types of common lists and databases that could be established and made available to members and external audiences. It also was suggested that the lists and databases could focus upon performance requirements, exclusion lists, and property-based chemical lists.

At the same time, JEA officials had initiated work upon a "chemical substances data base" with some "seed funding" from the Japanese government, but for the use and benefit of the GEN and its members. This data base was being developed to co-ordinate with international ecolabelling criteria on handling of different chemical substances. Potentially, the data base system could be designed so GEN members could both access and input data directly. The central purpose for the database was intended to be the provision of the following for a large variety of chemical substances:

- ? specific criteria requirements contained in ecolabelling programs' relevant product category criteria;
- ? summary information on physical properties;
- ? summary information on toxicity; and
- ? summary information on classification and labelling.

At the 2002 AGM, it was agreed that GEN members and officials would encourage the JEA-led initiative to proceed, and would provide input as and when requested. During 2003, considerable work was undertaken by Japanese officials to prepare a pilot-version of the data base with data on chemicals and criteria relating to detergents, office equipment, paints and textiles.

At the 2003 AGM, the JEA officials presented the nature and status of the draft GEN Chemical Substances Database system in development. After the presentation, the following resolution was proposed and adopted:

JEA officials are to put the draft version of the chemical substances database on the GEN Web site for review and consideration by members this year. Members to provide any supplemental information for inclusion before January 2004. Members will consider future work and funding requirements at the 2004 AGM.

Also at the 2003 AGM, a Nordic official provided an update presentation on a joint effort by EU and Nordic officials to synthesize existing parallel chemical databases into a single shared database system. While the GEN had not been invited to formally participate in or input to this exercise, GEN members expressed appreciation for being kept informed of developments and acknowledged that the resulting database system could be a valuable tool for many, if not all, the GEN member organizations.

2.4 Annual General Meeting, Conference and Exposition

The GEN Annual General Meeting (AGM) and its related events and activities, are recognized by members and invitees as some of the best venues for the exchange of views and advice on addressing challenges and opportunities related to ecolabelling.

The formal meeting facilitates exchanges among members, while supplemental (and less formal) meetings generally occur on a bilateral and multilateral basis. The chance to "compare notes" with other ecolabelling practitioners, and notably the opportunity to find out "why" rather than just "how" certain members have undertaken specific activities, has proven useful and informative over the years.

2.4.1 2003 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Dates:	October 23-24, 2003
Location:	Hotel Pyramida, Prague, Czech Republic
Host Organizations:	Czech Ministry of Environment and the GEN
Participants:	32: the Chair; twenty-four representatives of eighteen member organizations; Secretariat and GAO representatives; two Czech ecolabelling program staff members; observers from the Japan and New Zealand Ministries of the Environment and the Nordic Council.

Besides the conducting of routine business, there were significant meeting announcements, decisions and outcomes, including:

- ? Election of a new GEN Chair and two new Directors to replace Board members whose terms were completed this year [refer to *Section 1.3* for a list of the GEN Board Members];
- ? Approval of two new GEN member organizations -- Green Choice Philippines and the Singapore Green Labeling Scheme;
- ? A resolution to incorporate GENICES (GEN International Coordinated Ecolabelling System) development in the 2004 GEN work program, beginning with consideration of an accreditation system and a logo approach [*Section 2.3.1*];
- ? Direction for the uploading of a draft chemical substances database onto the GEN web site for review, consideration and input to by GEN members, with the intent for GEN members to consider future work and funding requirements at the 2004 AGM [*Section 2.3.7*];
- ? Direction for Secretariat officials to develop, administer and report results to members on an internal "fee collection structures, strategies and processes" survey;
- ? Direction for the Board to work on and formalize a "GEN Promotion Plan" for integration into the 2004 Work Plan;
- ? Direction for Secretariat officials to revise and update parts of the "GEN Guide to Ecolabelling" for posting on the GEN Web site to facilitate referencing and downloading by members and other interested parties;
- ? Selection and approval for Dr. Ning Yu [the new GEN Chair] to continue to represent the GEN in ISO matters and participate in relevant events, and direction for the Board to continue to identify and select appropriate GEN representatives to participate in other international fora addressing ecolabelling and other issues of strong interest to the GEN membership;
- ? Direction to the Board for an "International Ecolabelled Products List" or a link page to members' ecolabelled products lists, to be prepared and posted on the GEN web site [*Section 2.3.6*];
- ? A proposal that GEN member organizations' officials should contact their national governments and make the case for positive links to be drawn between ecolabelling and sustainable consumption during the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) post-Marakesh process;
- ? In association with the previous proposal, direction for GEN officials to prepare and send a letter requesting formal status and participation in the UNEP exercise;
- ? A decision that annual membership, associate and participant fee levels and structures are to remain the same in 2004 as they have been;
- ? Direction for the GEN Treasurer to conduct an "in-house" audit of the 2003 Financial Statements and present his report at the 2004 AGM, along with authorization for the Board to appoint an external GEN financial auditor in 2004 only if deemed necessary; and
- ? Acceptance of a proposal for the 2004 GEN Event (i.e. AGM, conference/workshop and other related events) to be hosted by the Japan Environment Association and staged in Japan in October 2004.

2.4.2 2003 International Conference and Exposition

Dates:	October 20-21, 2003
Location:	Hotel Pyramida, Prague, Czech Republic
Host Organizations:	Czech Ministry of Environment, Czech Agency for Environmentally Friendly Products, and the GEN
Participants:	Approximately 70, including: 29 GEN member representatives and officials, 9 foreign invitees, 4 Czech program licensees/participants, 4 other Czech industry officials, 8 Czech government officials, 2 academic officials, 4 Czech program delivery officials, and others. Also, 8 Czech program participants exhibited their products and materials in the exhibition area.

The Conference involved both Czech and international presenters, and focused upon strategies, initiatives and activities in the complementary fields of green procurement/purchasing and ecolabelling. The intent was to enable participants (GEN member representatives and others) to gain greater awareness and understanding of efforts being made by others, notably in the Czech Republic, but also throughout the world. For the GEN officials, all of the sessions were of considerable interest and value. The major Conference themes were:

- ? The Czech Ecolabelling System and Green Purchasing in the Czech Republic;
- ? Other Green Purchasing Strategies and Activities Around the World;
- ? Assessing the Benefits of Buying/Using Green;
- ? Ecolabelling Successes and Challenges Around the World [refer to "Table 3: Summary Findings"];
- ? "Challenge Message" from the Czech Minister of the Environment; and
- ? Continuing Evolution of GEN - Options for the Future.

Table 3: Summary Findings*

SUCCESS AREAS

New criteria development processes and documents
Increasing numbers of participants
Expanding volumes and categories of ecolabelled products and services
Mutual recognition and/or common criteria development arrangements implemented or underway
Links to and/or inclusion in green procurement initiatives
Effective promotion initiatives undertaken
High levels of ecolabel recognition
Government endorsement
Improving income / revenues situation

CHALLENGE AREAS

Additional funding and personnel would enable greater efforts and achievements
Desire for greater co-operation with other organizations - GEN and others
Desire for increased market presence and acceptance
Desire for greater government support - endorsement and funding
Desire for greater demand for ecolabelled products and/or criteria
Desire for greater public awareness of the ecolabel

* In advance of the 2003 GEN Conference, member representatives were invited and requested to identify up to five success areas and five challenge areas related to the delivery and advancement of their respective programs. Fifteen responses were provided to the GEN Secretariat on behalf of eighteen GEN member organizations. The "success areas" and "challenge areas" presented in this table are those that were identified by multiple respondents.

In association with the Conference, an exposition area was set up in the vicinity of the conference hall and meeting rooms. Besides involving Conference participants' informational materials for reference and distribution, three Czech ecolabelling program participants presented their respective ecolabelled products in separate displays and five other program participants had their products displayed in a common display area.

Consistent with reactions to the 2002 Conference and Exposition held in Taiwan, general reactions were high levels of satisfaction and gratitude for the opportunity to participate. The strong relevance of the conference topics led to various co-operative initiatives being suggested and discussed that could involve GEN members and non-GEN organizations.

After the Event, the Conference proceedings and other items of interest were put on compact diskettes and forwarded to all GEN members, participants and associates, Conference speakers, and officials of all Czech Government ministries.

2.5 2003 Financial Statement

Table 4 provides a summary financial statement [draft and un-audited] for the GEN as of the end of 2003. A more comprehensive and formal 2003 audited financial statement is to be prepared and considered for acceptance by the GEN membership at the 2004 GEN AGM in Japan.

Table 4:
GEN 2003 Budget and Actual Status
(as of December 31st, 2003; all figures in US\$)

	Budget	Actual
Income		
Membership Fees	72,000	79,344
EAJ and JEA Contribution	24,000	24,000
Carryover from 2002	32,000	50,549
Other (e.g. revenues from sales of "GEN Guide to Ecolabelling", bank interest collected, etc.)	480	343
TOTAL	128,480	154,236
Expenses		
Personnel: Chair	10,980	10,980
Personnel: Secretariat	35,000	35,000
Personnel: GAO	18,000	18,000
Honoraria & Consultants	13,000	4,500 ¹
Travel	22,000	27,955 ¹
Annual GEN Conference/Workshop	10,000	11,906 ²
GENews (Web) and Annual Report	10,000	13,241 ³
Supplies	1,000	0
Audit and Legal Fees	6,500	7,288 ⁴
Miscellaneous - postage and bank charges, etc.	2,000	1,494
TOTAL	128,480	130,364
Carry-over to 2004		23,872

¹ The two actual expense levels reflect that Technical Assistance Program applications received and approved in 2003 involved less "Honoraria & Consultants" charges and more "Travel" costs.

² Includes an additional 2002 AGM expense approved and paid in early 2003.

³ Includes higher than originally budgeted expenses for distribution of the 2001 and 2002 Annual Reports, and some additional expenses related to the preparation and production of the "International Ecolabelled Products List".

⁴ Reflects an increase in annual audit fee charges and other relevant financial expenses that had not been anticipated and budgeted for originally.

3. Strategic Directions, Initiatives and Accomplishments

The adoption of a first five-year *GEN Strategic Plan* at the end of 2000 has provided significant guidance and direction to the GEN Directors, officials and members in planning and undertaking actions and initiatives in 2001, 2002 and again in 2003.

This section of the *Annual Report* presents:

- ? major strategic objectives which are focused upon in the Strategic Plan;
- ? strategic action areas, efforts and achievements in 2003; and
- ? priority action areas and initiatives planned for 2004.

3.1 The Strategic Plan

In 2000, the GEN membership approved and adopted a five-year strategic plan. The goal of the Plan was to "...establish a framework of direction and action within which GEN can evolve during the five year period from 2001 to 2005." The Plan also responded to needs and priorities that GEN members had identified, including:

- ? compilation and provision of information from around the world;
- ? extensive and timely information exchange among members and associates, and with other interested parties;
- ? co-operative initiatives among and between members, including pursuit of mutual recognition arrangements;
- ? technical assistance among and between members, in order to advance ecolabelling efforts and achievements; and
- ? international recognition and acceptance of ecolabelling.

In 2003, work was undertaken to critically review the current Strategic Plan and prepare a new Plan for the period of 2004 - 2008. The draft new Plan was prepared and reviewed by the Board in late 2003. Based upon feedback, this replacement Plan is to undergo minor revision in early 2004 and then be approved and adopted. It is noteworthy that the new Plan shall retain and incorporate many of the objectives and priority action areas outlined in the current Plan.

Table 5 summarizes the three major strategic objectives and related priority action areas of the *GEN Strategic Plan*.

Table 5
Summary of GEN Strategic Plan

Strategic Objectives	Specific Objectives	Strategic Action Areas
Capacity Building	<p>Existing ecolabelling programs evolve and become more effective and efficient</p> <p>Ecolabelling activities are expanded to new geographical areas and to an ever broadening scope of goods and services</p>	<p>Expand, enhance and manage the Technical Assistance Program (TAP)</p> <p>Prepare, publish, review and revise ecolabelling resource materials</p> <p>Establish/maintain an ecolabelling resource bank</p> <p>Invite potential members and associates to GEN meetings and events</p>
Internal Co-operation	<p>Comprehensive, effective and efficient information exchange mechanisms are in place and utilized by the membership.</p> <p>High levels of co-operation between ecolabelling entities are achieved as manifested by: (i) increased technical assistance efforts among members; (ii) joint drafting of criteria; and (iii) formal co-operation (e.g. mutual recognition) agreements</p>	<p>Develop, supplement, revise and enhance information exchange mechanisms</p> <p>Promote and facilitate/aid in enhanced co-operation between participants</p> <p>Facilitate joint development of new and revision of existing criteria</p>
External Promotion and Relations	<p>Governments, international organizations and industry recognize and use ecolabelling As a valuable environmental policy tool</p> <p>Ecolabelling of products becomes more recognized and accepted, on an international scale, as a marketing tool in improving competitiveness and continuous Environmental improvement</p>	<p>Maintain and enhance a GEN Web site with information on GEN initiatives, member programs and product criteria</p> <p>Produce, record and distribute <i>GENews</i> on a regular basis</p> <p>Plan and stage workshops and seminars on the benefits of ecolabelling</p> <p>Implement an international communications/promotion plan, and represent ecolabelling in international fora accordingly</p> <p>Promote ecolabelling as a policy and/or environmental management tool to public and private sector audiences, including industry</p>

3.2 2003 Strategic Action Areas, Efforts and Achievements

As proposed in the Strategic Plan, the Plan's strategic action areas were directly incorporated into the 2003 GEN Work Plan. This section reports progress and accomplishments against the three strategic objectives. Various activities and initiatives, which are listed in this section, are described in *Section 2* of this report.

3.2.1 Capacity Building

Efforts and achievements in this strategic objective area included:

- ? implementation of Technical Assistance Program (TAP) revisions and addition of a potential trainee/fellowship program option, based on a critical review and assessment of completed TAP projects and initiatives;
- ? sponsorship for seven GEN member organizations and four non-GEN organizations, under the TAP, to enable representatives to attend and participate in the 2003 GEN Event (i.e. Conference and Annual General Meeting) in Prague;
- ? organization and staging of the international GEN Conference;
- ? preliminary revision and updating of the "GEN Guide to Ecolabelling" documentation for posting on the GEN Web site (for reference and potential downloading); and
- ? handling of numerous internal and external information and assistance requests by the Chair and GAO and Secretariat officials [as identified in *Table 2*].

3.2.2 Internal Co-operation

Efforts and achievements in this strategic objective area included:

- ? preparation of a replacement, five-year Strategic Plan for the period of 2004 to 2008, for Board approval and implementation in 2004;
- ? maintenance and further enhancements to the GEN Web site, including the routine posting of significant GEN documents (e.g. annual reports, meeting notes, position papers, etc.);
- ? ongoing maintenance and updating of the "Product Category List of Ecolabelling Programs Worldwide", with links being established to GEN members' product category lists and criteria;
- ? encouragement and input to the advancement of multilateral mutual recognition agreements and the development of common core ecolabelling criteria among four Asian GEN members;
- ? production and circulation of a final report on the process implemented by four Asian members to develop common criteria for two product categories in 2002/2003;
- ? provision of TAP contribution funding for four Asian members to partially fund development of new common criteria sets in 2003/2004;
- ? production of a first draft of an "international list of select ecolabelled products", and formal provision of this list to interested organizations, including UNEP and international banks;
- ? commitment and initiation of steps in late 2003 to expand the "international list of select ecolabelled products" and potentially post it on the GEN Web site for general access purposes in 2004;
- ? continuation of work by JEA officials, on behalf of GEN, on a chemical substances database system for potential input to and adoption by all GEN members in 2004;
- ? preparation and provision of GEN member/associate/participant art work and "user instructions sheets" in electronic form for the use of GEN officials; and
- ? continuous reception, forwarding and/or posting on the GEN web site, of announcements and information of interest and value to the GEN participants by the Chair, other Directors, and GAO and Secretariat officials.

3.2.3 External Promotion and Relations

Efforts and achievements in this strategic objective area included:

- ? routine production and posting of GENews issues on the GEN Web site;
- ? design and production of the 2002 Annual Report document, as well as distribution of the 2001 and 2002 Annual reports to GEN members and other interested parties;
- ? preparation of a "Promotions Plan" in late 2003 for Board consideration and implementation in 2004;

- ? addition of two new GEN members in 2003 and communications with officials of five other organizations interested in achieving GEN membership in the future;
- ? continuation of informal liaison with non-GEN ecolabelling / environmental labelling programs;
- ? inclusion of appropriate organizations in the 2003 GEN Event as presenters/observers;
- ? continuation of dialogue with established and new contacts in order to encourage them to consider ecolabels and/or ecolabelling criteria in their policies;
- ? preparation of the GEN's international list of select ecolabelled products and position papers and their dissemination to interested parties at appropriate events and through electronic means;
- ? retention of "Liaison Organization" status and participation in ISO;
- ? retention of membership status and representation in the Consumers' Choice Council;
- ? continuing participation in the "Greening of the World Bank and other International Institutions" initiative;
- ? retention of "associate member" status in ISEAL Alliance with participation and liaison when and as appropriate; and
- ? participation by GEN representatives in other multinational forums in response to invitations.

3.3 2004 Priority Action Areas and Initiatives Planned

Consistent with the strategic objectives and priority action areas identified in the *GEN Strategic Plan*, and in follow-up to initiatives and activities undertaken in 2003, the *2004 GEN Work Plan* proposes the following major action areas and initiatives for 2004:

3.3.1 Capacity Building

Technical Assistance Program Documentation, Promotion and Funding Support:

- ? Update information on the Web site and relevant documentation
- ? Forward copies of revised documents to members for inclusion in Policy Binders
- ? Continue to encourage GEN and non-GEN organizations to apply
- ? Continue to reference the Program in presentations given at multinational forums, workshops, other events
- ? Seek additional funding from international funding agencies (if specific project proposals necessitate the seeking of third-party funding)

Individual Members' Ecolabelling Program Web Pages:

- ? Offer technical assistance to members without Web pages and/or without English versions of text on their Web pages

International Conference / Workshop for Members and Potential Members:

- ? Plan and stage a conference and/or workshop to coincide with the Annual Meeting
- ? Invite GEN members and other interested parties to participate in these events

Offer and Provide Technical Assistance:

- ? Receive and assess Technical Assistance Program (TAP) applications
- ? Approve and allocate GEN resources to worthy projects
- ? Provide sponsorship funding to enable participation in GEN events
- ? Participate in international events staged by others

Update and Replace the "Ecolabelling Guide":

- ? Complete drafting of replacement documentation
- ? Review and approve revised documents
- ? Post new documents on Web site for reference and downloading

3.3.2 Internal Co-operation

Strategic Plan Review and Revision:

- ? Re-draft 2004 - 2008 document based on feedback from Board and 2003 AGM decisions
- ? Review, direct further revisions and approve new Strategic Plan
- ? Circulate to GEN members and associates, and post on Web site

Enhanced Web Page Contents and Features:

- ? Contribute to, and routinely reference, the "Members only" section
- ? Maintain and further enhance Web site (with a potential change in host/service provider)
- ? Prepare, approve and post 2003 Prague Event notes and the 2003 Annual Report
- ? Maintain "Product Category List of Ecolabelling Programs Worldwide" and links to GEN members' product category lists

Mutual Recognition Agreements and Accreditation Amongst GEN Members:

- ? Continue to encourage and assist in facilitating bilateral and multilateral agreements
- ? Assess the feasibility and options for establishing an accreditation system for GEN member organizations and their ecolabelling programs/schemes

Co-operative Development of Common Core Criteria:

- ? Prepare and circulate a final report on the process implemented by Asian members to develop common criteria for three product categories and the results
- ? Encourage members to implement similar initiatives
- ? Consider adapting the process developed by the Asian members to formulate "GEN common criteria" for certain product categories

Common/Shared Lists and Data Bases:

- ? Update and expand upon the international list of select ecolabelled products initiated in 2003
- ? Contribute data for inclusion on GEN ecolabelled products list
- ? Consider converting the list into a data base system, and assess options and costs involved
- ? Make list / data base available to interested organizations, including UNEP, international banks, and other major procurers
- ? Post list / data base on GEN Web site
- ? Encourage and contribute to Nordic Ecolabelling -led project to produce common chemical properties, materials, and toxics reference lists / data bases
- ? Encourage and contribute to Japan Environment Association -led project to establish a GEN chemical substances data base
- ? Report on status of above initiatives at 2004 AGM
- ? Post work documents for consideration and reference on GEN Web site

3.3.3 External Promotion, Relations and Associates

Promotions Plan:

- ? Receive and review draft Plan from consultant
- ? Revise Plan based on review comments and suggestions
- ? Approve Plan and direct implementation
- ? Implement Plan

GENews:

- ? Prepare GENews issues and post on Web site
- ? Announce latest issue to members and external parties

GEN Annual Report:

- ? Continue to distribute 2002 Report to external audiences until 2003 Report is available
- ? Design, produce and distribute 2003 document

New GEN Members and Associates:

- ? Encourage ecolabelling programs around the world to become GEN members
- ? Continue to liaise with non-GEN ecolabelling / environmental labelling programs
- ? Invite non-GEN ecolabelling organizations to participate in select events and activities
- ? Identify and invite appropriate non-ecolabelling organizations to join GEN
- ? Approve and welcome “associates”, and assess/collect pertinent fees

Contacts with Important Institutions:

- ? Continue dialogue with established contacts in order to encourage them to consider ecolabels and/or ecolabelling criteria in their policies
- ? Circulate GEN list of select ecolabelled products to interested parties or direct to list/data base posted on the GEN Web site
- ? Initiate dialogue with other appropriate institutions in accordance with the Promotions Plan

Participation in Multinational Forums:

- ? Maintain “Liaison Organization” status and participate in ISO
- ? Retain membership and represent GEN in the Consumers’ Choice Council
- ? Retain “associate member” status in ISEAL Alliance and participate when and as appropriate
- ? Continue to participate in the “Greening of the World Bank and other International Institutions” initiative
- ? Send GEN representatives to participate in other multinational forums in response to appropriate invitations
- ? Continue to inform governments on merits and aspects of ecolabelling from a trade impacts perspective
- ? Get invited and participate in international events focused on labelling and trade issues