

Sustainable Manufacturing Practices to Enhance Competitiveness & EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) -Way Forward

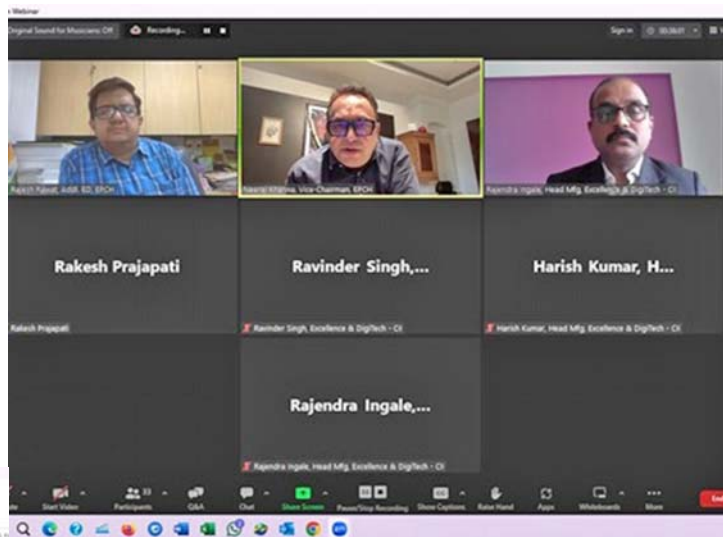
The European Union has introduced a new regulation, the EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR), aimed at addressing the problem of deforestation and degradation associated with cattle, soy, palm oil, cocoa, coffee, rubber, and timber and wood products. EUDR will come into effect on 30th December 2024 and aims to encourage the creation of a "deforestation-free" market in Europe and globally. EPCH already has a robust Indian Timber Legality Assessment & Verification Scheme (VRIKSH), and the Council is now going one step further by incorporating the necessary compliance of geo-location pertaining to deforestation-free/ degradation-free land into the standards of its existing scheme VRIKSH, thus providing a viable solution to wooden handicrafts exporters.

Against this background, EPCH is organising informative and interactive seminars in various stations, in collaboration with CII. In an effort to ensure sustainable manufacturing practices and enhance the competitiveness of its member exporters, EPCH has collaborated with the CII Centre of Excellence for Competitiveness for SMEs. The sessions are benefiting stakeholders in many ways, including providing hands-on experience in adopting world-class manufacturing practices, focusing on cultural change towards improvement, enhanced productivity, reducing the cost of manufacturing, enhancing product quality, energy efficiency, and the way forward for EUDR compliance. The speakers addressed the queries received from the members and concluded their interaction on a positive note. The month of June 2024 seminar reports follow:

Webinar; 1st June 2024

A webinar on 'Sustainable Manufacturing Practices to Enhance Competitiveness' was organised by EPCH in collaboration with CII - Centre of Excellence for Competitiveness for SMEs. The session aimed to provide innovative approaches, optimise processes, and introduce advanced technologies to enable organisations to unlock their full potential, drive efficiency, and achieve remarkable results in manufacturing.

Dr. Neeraj Khanna, Vice Chairman of EPCH; Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Additional Executive Director of EPCH; and Mr. Rajendra Ingale,



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Awareness Seminar at Jodhpur, Rajasthan; 7th June 2024



The seminar saw the presence of Mr. Hansraj Baheti, Member, CoA, EPCH; Mr. Nirmal Bhandari, Member, CoA, EPCH; Mr. Naresh Bothra, President, Jodhpur Handicrafts Exporters Federation (JHEF); Mr. Radheshyam Ranga, prominent member exporter, EPCH; Mr. Sachin Raj Jain, EUDR expert; Mr. Sonu Bansal, Associate Counsellor, CII - Centre of Excellence for Competitiveness for SMEs; and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Additional Executive Director, EPCH

EPCH organised a seminar on 'Sustainable Manufacturing Practices to Enhance Competitiveness' and 'EU Regulation Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) – Way Forward', in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, with an objective to impart knowledge to improve productivity, capacity enhancement, quality improvement, cost reduction, timely delivery, energy efficiency and sustainable business growth. It also aimed to sensitise exporters on the new EU Regulation (EUDR) and its compliance.

Present on the occasion were, Mr. Hansraj Baheti, Member, CoA, EPCH; Mr. Nirmal Bhandari, Member, CoA, EPCH; Mr. Naresh Bothra, President, Jodhpur Handicrafts Exporters Federation (JHEF); Mr. Radheshyam Ranga, prominent member exporter, EPCH; Mr. Sachin Raj Jain, EUDR expert; Mr. Sonu Bansal, Associate Counsellor, CII - Centre of Excellence for Competitiveness for SMEs; and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Additional Executive Director, EPCH, along with over 60 exporters from Jodhpur.

Mr. Nirmal Bhandari, Member, CoA, EPCH, said that the Council has initiated handholding programs on design, packaging, enhancing productivity, and improving efficiency for member exporters. He encouraged everyone to take such opportunity to enhance their competitiveness. He further added that this workshop is also aimed at sensitising handicrafts exporters about the new EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR). Mr. Hansraj Baheti, CoA member, EPCH, said that EPCH's collaboration with CII's Centre of Excellence for Competitiveness for SMEs will help member exporters to enhance their internal

competitiveness. The CII - EPCH joint initiative will focus on supporting members in key areas of manufacturing excellence and energy efficiency. This initiative will help improve productivity, capacity, quality, cost, delivery, energy efficiency, and sustainability for business growth.

Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Additional Executive Director, EPCH, informed in detail about the European Union's new regulation adding that EPCH already has a robust Indian Timber Legality Assessment & Verification Scheme (VRIKSH), and the Council is now going one step further by incorporating the necessary compliance of geo-location pertaining to deforestation-free/ degradation-free land into the standards of its existing scheme VRIKSH, thus providing a viable solution to wooden handicrafts exporters.

Mr. Rajendra Ingale, Head of Manufacturing, Excellence & DigiTech at CII - Centre of Excellence for Competitiveness for SMEs, Confederation of Indian Industry, made an elaborate presentation on 'Gap Identification and Assessment' during their exploratory visit to factories in Moradabad and suggested a roadmap to help members in sustainable manufacturing practices to enhance competitiveness.

Mr. Sachin Raj Jain, an expert on EUDR, gave a detailed presentation on EUDR, explaining its requirements for compliance and providing a viable solution for geo-tagging and due diligence statements with risk mitigation in traceability of wooden handicrafts items. ■

Awareness Seminar at Jaipur, Rajasthan; 8th June 2024



This saw the presence of Shri Girish Agarwal, Member, CoA, EPCH; Shri Jaswant Meel, Member, CoA, EPCH; Shri Ravi Utmani, Secretary, FORHEX; Shri Vinod Bothra, prominent member exporter, EPCH; Shri Sachin Raj Jain, EUDR expert; and Shri. Rajesh Rawat, Addl. Executive Director, EPCH

In continuation to the seminar in Jodhpur, a similar seminar was held in Jaipur on 8th June 2024. This saw the presence of Mr. Girish Agarwal, Member of CoA, EPCH; Mr. Jaswant Meel, Member of CoA, EPCH; Mr. Ravi Utmani, Secretary of FORHEX; Mr. Vinod Bothra, prominent member exporter, EPCH; Mr. Sachin Raj Jain, EUDR expert; and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Addl. Executive Director, EPCH, along with over 75 exporters from Jaipur.

Mr. Girish Agarwal shared the purpose of the seminar and EPCH's incorporation of necessary compliance of geo-location pertaining to deforestation-free/degradation-free land into the standards of its Indian Timber Legality Assessment & Verification Scheme, VRIKSH. Mr. Jaswant Meel emphasised the importance of the session in discussing EUDR. He assured that EPCH, through the VRIKSH scheme, will provide a viable solution to exporters, reaffirming EPCH's commitment to educating member exporters on the way forward. Mr. Sachin Raj Jain made a presentation on EUDR, explaining its requirements and providing viable solutions



for geo-tagging and due diligence statements with risk mitigation in the traceability of wooden handicrafts items. Mr. Rajesh Rawat shared that EPCH is addressing the challenges faced by the handicrafts industry and has always taken proactive measures for the benefit of its members, helping the industry become more sustainable and responsible towards the environment and trade. The session benefited stakeholders by providing viable solutions and guidance for EUDR compliance. The speakers also addressed queries from the members. ■

Awareness Seminar at Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh; 12th June 2024



Mr. Neeraj Khanna, Vice Chairman, EPCH, along with Mr. Salman Azam, Member, CoA, EPCH; Mr. Naved Ur Rehman, Member, CoA, EPCH; Mr. Rohit Dhall, Central Secretary, Youth Enterprises Society; Mr. Irfan Ul Haq, President, Saharanpur Wood Carving Handicrafts Association; Mohd. Ausaf, Secretary, Saharanpur Wood Carving Handicrafts Association; Mr. Sanad Kothiwal, National Secretary, YES; Mr. Karan Duggal, Vice Chairman, YES; Mr. Ramji Suneja, Ex-Chairman, Indian Industry Association, Saharanpur; Mr. Ravinder Miglani, President, Chamber of Industry & Services; Mr. Sachin Jain, EUDR Expert; and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Addl. Executive Director, EPCH, addressed the gathering during the interactive seminar on "EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) - Way Forward" in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh

At the woodcrafts manufacturing hub Saharanpur, this seminar saw a discussion of EUDR compliances between experts and exporters. Mr. Neeraj Khanna, Vice Chairman, EPCH, along with Mr. Salman Azam, Member, CoA, EPCH; Mr. Naved Ur Rehman, Member, CoA, EPCH; Mr. Rohit Dhall, Central Secretary, Youth Enterprises Society; Mr. Irfan Ul Haq, President, Saharanpur Wood Carving Handicrafts Association; Mohd. Ausaf, Secretary, Saharanpur Wood Carving Handicrafts Association; Mr. Sanad Kothiwal, National Secretary, YES; Mr. Karan Duggal, Vice Chairman, YES; Mr. Ramji Suneja, Ex-Chairman, Indian Industry Association, Saharanpur; Mr. Ravinder Miglani, President, Chamber of Industry & Services; Mr. Sachin Jain, EUDR Expert; Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Addl. Executive Director, EPCH and over 100 exporters from Saharanpur were present.

Mr. Neeraj Khanna spoke briefly about the regulation and its compliance. Mr. Ramji Suneja requested the stakeholders of the Saharanpur wooden industry to unite as one team for the growth of the Saharanpur handicrafts sector, emphasising that cooperation would help advance their efforts in the export market.

Mr. Ausaf Guddu, in his inspiring address, thanked EPCH for organising such a seminar in the region, highlighting the importance of preparing the industry to face potential challenges that could hinder wooden handicrafts exports. He urged everyone to listen and act wisely to overcome these trade barriers.



Mohd. Ausaf, Secretary, Saharanpur Wood Carving Handicrafts Association and Mr. Sachin Jain, EUDR Expert, addressing the gathering



Mr. Naved Ur Rehman, Member, CoA, EPCH, stated that this session was crucial for discussing EUDR in an open forum, helping the trade to find organized and sustainable ways to move forward. He assured that with the support of EPCH and through the VRIKSH

scheme, exporters would have viable solutions for compliance. Mr. Irfan Ul Haq commended the Council for organising the workshop aimed at raising awareness about the new EU regulation and its implications for the woodenware industry. He noted that EPCH's existing Indian Timber Legality Assessment & Verification Scheme, VRIKSH, was robust, and the Council is now incorporating geo-location compliance for deforestation-free land into the scheme, providing a viable solution for exporters. pertaining to deforestation free/degradation free land into the standards of its existing scheme VRIKSH thus providing a viable solution to the wooden handicrafts exporters.

Mr. Sachin Raj Jain, an expert on EUDR, gave a detailed presentation explaining the requirements for compliance with the regulation and offered solutions for geo-tagging and due diligence with risk mitigation in the traceability of wooden handicraft items..Mr.Rajesh Rawat, Addl.Executive Director,EPCH, mentioned that EPCH is addressing the challenges faced by the handicrafts industry and has always taken proactive measures to benefit its members, helping the industry become more sustainable and responsible towards the environment and trade.

The session benefitted stakeholders in many ways, including providing solutions and hand holdingsupport.



Awareness Seminar at Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh; 21st June 2024

At Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, the seminar was graced by Mr. Mukesh Bansal, President, Glass Manufacturers & Exports Association; Mr. Rajendra Gupta, Vice President, GMEA; and Mr. Sonu Bansal, Associate Counsellor, CII- Centre of Excellence for Competitiveness for SME's, Confederation of Indian Industry. Over 40 exporters from Firozabad attended.

The session benefitted stakeholders by providing hands-on experience in adopting world-class manufacturing practices, focusing on cultural change towards improvement, enhanced productivity, reduced manufacturing costs, improved product quality, and increased energy efficiency.

