



May 1, 2008

PROJECT INITIATION & NOTIFICATION: Revision of Green Seal’s Environmental Standards for Tissue Paper (GS-1) and Paper Towels and Paper Napkins (GS-9): *GS-1 Sanitary Paper Products*

The demand for sanitary paper products is increasing as seen by the increasing imports to the United States coupled with the increasing demands both domestically and overseas for certain products. It is estimated that the world tissue paper demand will grow 3.2%/yr from 2001 to 2010. The per capita demand is significantly highest in North America; however the growth prospects for tissue paper demand may be highest in China and other parts of Asia. Tissue consumption growth in the United States comes primarily through quality upgrades and population growth – and the latter of these two factors works against the usage rate.¹ Despite the fact that the growing popularity of TAD (through-air-drying) sheets allows for the use of less fiber and greater absorptive capabilities while allowing the use of fewer sheets per spill, per capita demand of consumer towels posted a 31% gain since 1995.²

This, in addition to the increasing costs (economic, environmental, and social) of fiber production and advancements in technology, create a real opportunity for high quality environmentally preferable sanitary paper products. Since GS-1 and GS-9 standards were last issued, 1992 and 1993 respectively, technological and scientific advancements have been made to identify and improve the environmental life cycle and performance of these products. These include, but are not limited to, the source of virgin fiber (if used), recycled content percentages, water and energy usage during production, transportation, air and water quality emissions from production, CO₂ emissions, waste, use of chlorine and other hazardous materials in various stages of production, performance, and packaging. A comprehensive, user-friendly standard which addresses issues and lifecycle impacts relevant to North America and other parts of the world is needed for all three paper products.

As a result Green Seal™ is proposing the creation of a new Sanitary Paper Product standard based on revising the existing Green Seal standards, GS-1 and GS-9, and combining them into one comprehensive standard which would enable the evaluation of the sanitary paper products lifecycle as seen with today’s technological advancements and environmental awareness.

The development of this new standard will be led by Green Seal staff, with input from experts and stakeholders throughout the process. Green Seal is a non-profit organization devoted to working towards environmental sustainability through environmental standard setting, product certification, and public education. The intent of Green Seal’s standards are to reduce, to the extent technically and economically feasible, the environmental impacts associated with services and the manufacture, use, and disposal of products. Green Seal follows the ISO 14020 and 14024 standards for ecolabelling programs. This includes a life cycle approach to develop multi-attribute standards that recognize environmental leadership in the marketplace. The process to develop these standards is a transparent, independent, stakeholder-involved process. The criteria are scientific-based, objective, and justifiable.

¹ Battista, Andrew, *Is US tissue usage starting to decline?* Tissue World, April – May 2007.
http://www.tissueworldmagazine.com/past/07apr_may/features4.html

² Ibid

Green Seal currently has existing environmental standards and successful certification programs for Tissue Paper (GS-1) and Paper Towels and Paper Napkins (GS-9). The new standard is expected to follow a similar format including a standard scope, a definition section, performance requirements, environmental requirements, packaging, and labeling requirements. However additional sections may be included such as manufacturing requirements and end of life management, depending on stakeholder input. Some of the detail within each of these sections of the standard will be identified during the scoping phase of the project. Please review this Project's Scoping and Stakeholder Invitation.

The scope is proposed to include facial and bathroom tissue as well as paper towel and paper napkin products. Other products that could possibly be included in the scope include, but are not limited to, toilet seat covers and placemats. Additional optional verification claims may also be included.

Contact Green Seal for information: standards@greenseal.org

The project is anticipated to have the following steps:

1. Scoping
2. Proposed Standard
3. Final Review of Standard
4. Issued Standard

Information on this project can be found at the project web site:

http://www.greenseal.org/certification/gsl_sanitary_paper_dev.cfm.