

Ink-jet Cartridge Recycling “Satogaeri¹ Project”

Implementing Partners

Brother Sales Ltd.

Canon Inc.

Hewlett-Packard Japan, Ltd.

Lexmark International K.K.

Seiko Epson Corporation

[and affiliated company: DELL Japan]

Background

An ‘Ink-jet Cartridge Satogaeri Project’ has been jointly initiated and promoted by six major printer manufacturers (Brother Sales Ltd., Canon Inc., DELL Japan, Hewlett-Packard Japan, Ltd, Lexmark International K.K., and Seiko Epson Corporation) to offer a comprehensive ink-jet cartridge recycling system. By using the existing network of the Japan Post Group, the project aims to offer an important step in helping customers make more environmentally-friendly choices in their daily lives and ultimately contribute to a recycling-oriented society.

Overview of the activities

Ink-jet cartridge collection boxes have been installed in more than 3,600 post offices and around 1,700 places within 125 affiliated local governments since April 2008. Customers are rewarded for recycling any cartridges manufactured by one of the six participating brands. All collected ink-jet cartridges are separated according to the six different manufacturers, who then take responsibility for recycling the cartridges. By helping to keep valuable products and materials out of the garbage, customers are also supporting the environment and sustainable business practices.

Evidence of the project’s commitment to the environment can also be seen in the following:

1) Community development and capacity building

A Mizube branch was established for sorting the collected ink-jet cartridges; it employs physically challenged individuals to undertake the sorting process. This supports the community while also providing job opportunities and building the employees’ capacities.

¹ While ‘*Satoyama*’ denotes mountains, woodlands, and grasslands (*yama*) surrounding villages (*sato*), ‘*Satogaeri*’ denotes return (*gaeri*) to the villages (*sato*), which implies this project recycles ink-jet cartridges back into the environment in a sustainable manner.

2) Environmental contribution through UNEP

The project has contributed, amongst others, to UNEP's core environmental activities in the fields of climate change, hazardous wastes, environmental emergency response, environmental information, assessment and research, fresh water, technology transfer and support to developing countries.

3) Contribution for development of IPSI activities

The project partners would also like to work in cooperation with other IPSI members. The project may provide financial support to IPSI collaborative activities especially those related to rebuilding satoyama and satoumi after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

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