



## Letter to the Editor from ESDO Bangladesh

### Updates from Bangladesh on Lead Safety and Lead-Free Paint Action

Subject: Re: May 2026 LANv23n4 "Global Lead News" is online

Dear Editor,



Greetings from the Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO),  
Bangladesh.

*Environment and Social Development Organization*



Thank you for sharing the May 2026 issue of **LEAD Action News** and for continuing to provide an important platform for global updates, reflections, and learning on lead safety. We appreciate The LEAD Group's continued effort to highlight lead exposure prevention, lead paint elimination, and the wider public health importance of protecting children and vulnerable communities from toxic lead exposure.

We are pleased to share a brief update from Bangladesh on ESDO's recent work on lead safety, particularly following last year's **International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (ILPPW) 2025**. During ILPPW 2025, ESDO launched and shared findings from its investigative study, **"Colors of Concern: Assessing Lead in Paints and Progress Toward a Lead-Safe Bangladesh,"** which reviewed the effectiveness of Bangladesh's existing lead paint regulation and identified areas where further enforcement and market transition support are still needed. The press briefing brought together government officials, media, and industry representatives to discuss the way forward for a lead-safe Bangladesh.

ESDO has been working on lead paint elimination in Bangladesh since 2008, from awareness raising and scientific research to policy advocacy and regulatory engagement. Earlier studies conducted by ESDO with support from IPEN and other partners helped generate national evidence on lead in paint, while continued advocacy contributed to Bangladesh's progress in adopting a mandatory lead limit for household paint. In 2018, BSTI finalized the national standard limiting lead content in household paint to a maximum of **90 ppm**, which remains a key regulatory foundation for lead paint control in Bangladesh.

From 2026, ESDO continued implementing the project **"Strengthening Enforcement and Supporting Market Transition to Lead-Free Paint in Bangladesh"** in collaboration with **Instiglio**, with technical support linked to **LEEP**. The project focuses on two major areas: strengthening enforcement capacity through engagement with the **Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI)**, and supporting non-compliant paint manufacturers to transition toward lead-free production and compliance with the national **90 ppm** standard.

Under this initiative, ESDO is working to support both the regulatory side and the industry side of lead paint elimination. The BSTI-focused workstream aims to strengthen enforcement systems, assess operational challenges, identify institutional support needs, and develop a practical enforcement strengthening plan. The manufacturer-focused workstream aims to engage non-compliant manufacturers, understand their reformulation challenges, provide technical guidance, and support their transition toward safer production.

As part of the manufacturer engagement process, ESDO held a meeting with representatives of the



**Bangladesh Paint Manufacturers Association (BPMA)** where the discussion focused on practical challenges faced by manufacturers in maintaining the 90 ppm standard, particularly the higher cost of lead-free raw materials and reformulation. A second major event took place when ESDO and Instiglio held a formal coordination meeting with the newly appointed **Director General of BSTI** and relevant BSTI officials. The meeting focused on lead paint regulation and compliance in Bangladesh, including regulatory enforcement, market surveillance, laboratory testing capacity, inspection systems, and implementation of the mandatory 90 ppm standard. The discussion also explored opportunities for technical support, institutional cooperation, and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen lead paint control.

In addition to the lead paint enforcement and market transition work, ESDO is also actively contributing to the development of the **National Strategy and Multilayer Action Plan for a Lead-Free Bangladesh** through the national working group led by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. This process is an important step toward addressing lead exposure through a broader national framework, beyond paint alone, and aims to bring together relevant ministries, technical agencies, civil society, development partners, and public health stakeholders under a coordinated long-term strategy.

Together, these activities demonstrate Bangladesh's continued progress from awareness and evidence generation toward enforcement, industry engagement, and national strategic planning. ESDO believes that eliminating lead exposure requires coordinated action across government, industry, civil society, researchers, and international partners. While Bangladesh has made important regulatory progress, continued enforcement, laboratory strengthening, market surveillance, manufacturer support, and public awareness are essential to ensure that lead-safe standards are fully implemented in practice.

We also appreciate the use of AI-assisted writing in the May 2026 issue of **LEAD Action News**. AI tools can support communication by summarizing evidence and making technical information more accessible. However, for public health and policy-related content, expert review, source verification, and human judgment should remain essential to ensure accuracy, balance, and credibility.

We thank The LEAD Group for inviting updates and reflections from partner organizations and for continuing to strengthen global knowledge-sharing on lead safety. ESDO remains committed to working with national and international partners to advance a lead-free Bangladesh and protect children and communities from preventable lead exposure.

For more information, please check <https://esdo.org/lead-in-paint/>

Sincerely,

Siddika Sultana

Executive Director

Environment and Social Development Organization – ESDO

2 June 2026

Partner of .....



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