

# Industry-Led Sustainability Initiative

## Changes To Multi-Stakeholder Organisation

*18 January 2016, Amsterdam*

### Interested parties invited to join

The Roundtable for Product Social Metrics, started three years ago, is now moving forward as a multi-stakeholder organisation. With this step, the Roundtable is opening its doors to new participants, inviting interested companies, industry associations, NGOs and researchers to join the collaboration. The main goals are to refine the concept of product social impact assessment and further its adoption in industry.

### Roundtable milestones so far

In an earlier phase, the Roundtable for Product Social Metrics developed the Handbook for Product Social Impact Assessment. A practical tool for sustainability professionals, the handbook describes an innovative method for assessing a product's social impacts throughout its life cycle. Fokko Wientjes, Vice President of Corporate Sustainability at DSM, says: "A majority of consumers expect companies to address health, fair wages and safe working conditions as part of their products, services and operations. [...] Harmonised and credible metrics for product social impacts are key to demonstrating the positive social impact created in society."

João Fontes of PRé Sustainability, Roundtable spokesperson, adds: "As supply chains and product life cycles increasingly span the world, businesses need a practical, systematic way to make decisions." The handbook is a starting point for any business wanting to differentiate itself and create value through social impact assessment. When the handbook was launched in 2014, it was the first social impact assessment method at a product level that was developed cross-industry.

The collaboration continued in 2015, when the Roundtable participants – Akzo Nobel, BASF, BMW Group, DSM, L'Oréal, Mahindra Sanyo, Philips, Steelcase, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and Vattenfall, led by sustainability consulting firm PRé Sustainability – refined the method, conducted new pilots across regions and developed tools to facilitate the application of the method in day-to-day business contexts. In addition, synergies with databases providers were identified and the handbook was adjusted to align with the WBCSD Chemical Sector methodology. Of the latter, Peter Saling, Director of Sustainability Methods at BASF, says: "This collaboration has very high value, as WBCSD is an important trendsetter. We should harmonize methods as much as possible."

### Toolkit to support Product Social Impact Assessment now available

The revised Handbook for Product Social Impact Assessment and an application toolkit are available for free download at the Roundtable website. Together, these tools allow sustainability professionals in all industries to "start assessing social impacts of products and services today," according to João Fontes.

Dennis McGavis, Goodyear's Global VP of EHS & Sustainability, agrees on the practical value of product social impact assessment. "As a company," says Dennis, "we'd likely use it to strengthen our supply chain requirements. And as an industry, we'd likely use it for materials or chemicals that are key to our supply chain and present a risk to the entire industry if not managed well."

### The next phase: an independent, multi-stakeholder organisation

The Roundtable for Product Social Metrics now invites companies and other parties interested in assessing the social impact of products and services to become members. The Roundtable will continue as an independent non-profit organisation with a board of directors and a majority of industry members. Its ambition is to gain critical mass with a larger, more diverse group of members to create a widely used de-facto standard for product social impact assessment, with solid principles balancing scientific rigour with pragmatic solutions. One goal is to initiate sector-specific working groups to build on the handbook and tools developed so far. The Roundtable will remain transparent and continue to encourage pre-competitive collaboration to develop shared solutions for product social impact assessment.

More information about becoming a member can be obtained via the Roundtable website contact form.

## NOTE FOR THE EDITOR

### About the Roundtable for Product Social Metrics

The Roundtable for Product Social Metrics is a group of companies from different industries, led by PRé Sustainability. The member companies are:

- AkzoNobel Carmen Alvarado • BASF Peter Saling • BMW Group Marzia Traverso, Peter Tarne
- DSM Jacobine Das Gupta, Dave Morris • L'Oréal Charles Duclaux • Mahindra Sanyo Ambalika Gupta
- Philips Nicola Kimm, Caroline Santamaria • Steelcase Sébastien Zinck, Raphael Stermann, Edouard Carteron
- The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company Dave Woodyard, Lynn Bell • Vattenfall Sara Nilsson

[www.product-social-impact-assessment.com](http://www.product-social-impact-assessment.com)

### About PRé Sustainability

PRé puts the metrics behind sustainability to create business value. PRé integrates sustainability into product development procedures in order to fit its customer's strategic business goals — and create a better world.

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