

Twelve industry companies develop novel methodology for Product Social Impact Assessment

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Handbook for Product Social Impact Assessment available now

A group of companies united in the Roundtable for Product Social Metrics announces the publication of the Handbook for Product Social Impact Assessment, a practical tool for sustainability professionals. The handbook describes an innovative methodology for assessing a product's social impacts throughout its life cycle, and is the result of a unique collaborative effort of a group of multi-industry market leaders.

Social Impact: the next frontier in sustainability

"Stakeholders increasingly demand transparency about the social impacts of products," says João Fontes of PRé Sustainability, spokesperson for the Roundtable. As supply chains and product life cycles span the world, businesses need a practical, reliable way to systematically analyse risks and identify improvement opportunities. *"Research on consumer preferences, like The [Nielsen Global Survey on Corporate Social Responsibility](#), shows that half of the world's consumers are prepared to pay a premium if products have an ecological or social benefit,"* says Jacobine Das Gupta, Corporate Sustainability Manager for DSM.

As large, multinational organisations, the Roundtable participants – Ahold, Akzo Nobel, BASF, BMW Group, DSM, L'Oréal, Marks & Spencer, Philips, RB, Steelcase, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and a chemical company, led by sustainability consulting firm PRé Sustainability – understand the need for a social impact assessment method that is capable of screening a product's entire supply chain across continents and throughout its life cycle.

The first practical, objective methodology for Product Social Impact Assessment

Until today, no practical, cross-industry accepted product social impact assessment method existed. Other social impact assessment guidelines look at the corporate level and do not provide the concrete tools and measurable results necessary for better decision-making at a product level. The Roundtable's innovative social impact assessment method fills this gap, giving businesses the power to assess a product's entire life cycle, scan their supply chains for risks and improvement opportunities and improve sustainable product development, reporting and communication.

Pilots conducted by the Roundtable participants have shown the method to be comprehensible, reliable, and applicable in a day-to-day business context. *"This method is a first step towards measurable social sustainability at a product level, and the Roundtable will continue to refine it in Phase III,"* says Dave Woodyard, Global Manager of Environmental Sustainability for The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. The handbook is a starting point for any business wanting to differentiate and create value through social impact assessment.

Companies can start analysing the social impacts of their products

The Handbook for Product Social Impact Assessment is available for free download now, allowing sustainability professionals in all industries to "get started on product social impact assessments today." More information is available at the Roundtable website.

Phase III - The next step towards shared language for product social sustainability

The Roundtable will now focus on Phase III of the project: finding solutions for cross-cutting implementation issues, exchanging experiences with other practitioners and experts, and continuing to improve the methodology. The Roundtable participants invite interested industry companies to join the group and collaborate in Phase III.

NOTE FOR THE EDITOR

About the Roundtable for Product Social Metrics

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

- Ahold Andrea Bolhuis • AkzoNobel Carmen Alvarado, Ana Martha Countiño • BASF Peter Saling, Richard van Gelder
- BMW Group Marzia Traverso • DSM Jacobine Das Gupta, Henk Bosch, Dave Morris • L'Oréal Charles Duclaux
- Marks & Spencer Hazel Culley • Philips Markus Laubscher, Marcel Jacobs • RB Dave Challis • Steelcase Sébastien Zinck
- The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company Dave Woodyard, Lynn Bell, René van der Merwe

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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