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# The Global Environmental Management Initiative (GEMI)



*A Case for Corporate Leadership:  
Two Decades of Environmental,  
Health and Safety (EHS) and  
Sustainability Progress*



## *In the Beginning*

In 1990, a group of corporate environmental leaders from The Business Roundtable recognized the need for corporate environmental leadership around the world. They had a vision that it was possible for a wide array of business sectors to: work together; learn from each other; share what they had learned; and, improve the environment and the ways their companies operated around the world while at the same time increasing the value of their businesses. Their vision led to the creation of the Global Environmental Management Initiative (GEMI).

In the early years of the environmental movement many in the NGO community were attempting to pursue regulatory agendas that would mandate codes of conduct for corporate environmental activities. At the same time, some in the business community perceived environmental issues as nothing more than a regulatory burden that added costs, which were always at the expense of business. In response to this, many companies created environmental departments to address internal and external challenges, but they still needed a forum to work with others in business to create the tools that would help those departments support their companies.

Within this atmosphere of global mistrust and skepticism, a group of CEOs from the Roundtable stepped up and asked their corporations' environmental leaders to create an organization that could "get ahead" of the critics so that companies could effectively work together to improve the global environment, and do so in an economically and socially responsible way. *The core of those leaders came from a corporate "who's who" list of companies and included: Dorothy Bowers, Merck & Company; George Carpenter, The Procter & Gamble Company; Tom Davis, AT&T; Charles Goodman, Southern Company; and, Bill Sugar, Anheuser-Busch Companies.*

Those early GEMI leaders knew that no group was better positioned and capable of outlining the most effective ways for business to address environmental, health and safety (EHS) issues than the companies themselves. It was also evident that if business did not step forward and address ways to ensure responsible environmental management, others—including NGOs—would step forward and fill the gap created, imposing external policies and effectively "telling" business how to operate.

That knowledge, recognition and commitment laid the foundation for the vision of the organization as it is today, *"To be globally recognized as a leader in providing strategies for business to achieve EHS excellence, economic success and corporate citizenship."* The mission of GEMI is: *"Business helping business improve EHS performance, shareholder value and corporate citizenship."*

GEMI was created as an organization that would not advocate or lobby on policy issues. Rather, GEMI was designed as a member driven, "sweat equity" organization that would identify tools that needed to be created, develop them with member leadership and then share those tools freely with the world. The BRT corporate environmental leaders selected Lee Thomas and Susan Moore as the first management team to support the GEMI membership.

## *GEMI Today*

GEMI was designed to be, and has remained, a member-led and member-driven organization, using voluntary initiatives and the energy of the member companies to improve environmental management and address key corporate citizenship challenges and opportunities. Today, GEMI membership represents more than 20 diverse business sectors, all of whom bring unique insights to the discussion of the common challenges posed in environmental management. By working together and learning from each other, GEMI members are continually finding new ways to do their jobs better and in a way that provides value to their companies and the environment.

GEMI is led by a Board of Directors, which is elected annually by the membership, and meets quarterly to review GEMI's progress and to address strategies that will provide value to the members. The Board is comprised of a Chair, a Vice Chair, and the respective Chairs of the Committees, which include Finance, Tools, Membership, Communications & Marketing and Benchmarking. The Board also includes a representative from the Senior Advisory Council (SAC), and a Chair Emeritus, the former Chair of GEMI.

The majority of GEMI's work is conducted in Work Groups, chaired by and comprised of representatives from member companies. Each Work Group develops a budget, approved by the Board of Directors, to develop a tool from inception through to the end of the project plan—either a paper publication and/or an interactive web tool. GEMI's +28 tools, all products of the Work Groups, are discussed later in this article.

In addition to its Work Groups, GEMI has standing committees that work on procedural, administrative, and/or strategic issues, with direction from the Board of Directors. The committees include:

- 🌐 **Benchmarking Committee:** The Benchmarking Committee identifies and benchmarks key environmental, health and safety and sustainability management practices. Examples of benchmarking topics include: interaction with corporate board of directors, EHS cost accounting practices, EHS auditing practices, relationships with suppliers/contractors, sustainability and community relations. GEMI typically completes three or four benchmark surveys per year at no additional cost to members beyond their annual dues. By comparison, if each company were to independently develop a benchmarking exercise, the cost per company could range from \$10,000 to \$20,000 per issue benchmarked. After one year, the benchmark survey results are posted on GEMI's web site, unless the membership requests and agrees that it should remain on the 'Members Only' site.
- 🌐 **Communications & Marketing (C&M) Committee:** The C&M Committee is responsible for extending GEMI's presence abroad through national and international press relations. The committee establishes well-defined guidelines for the creation and use of GEMI materials and reviews publications as they are developed. It also oversees the development of the monthly member newsletter, GEMI NEWS. In addition, the Committee focuses on creating a simple, standard marketing plan for tools and approves materials to be posted on the GEMI web site. Articles about GEMI activities have appeared in numerous newsletters and publications including, but not limited to: *Business and the Environment (BATE)*; *ECOSTATES*; *Financial Times*; *Greenbiz*; *Green@Work*; *Occupational Hazards*; and, *Sustainable Development International (SDI)*.
- 🌐 **Membership Development Committee:** The objective of the Membership Development Committee is to implement a strategic membership development plan, targeting environmentally responsible U.S. and non-U.S.-based companies. The Membership Development Committee also focuses on the needs of existing members to ensure that each year they will renew their membership in the organization. Despite the continuing fiscal challenges facing corporations, GEMI continues to grow and prosper; new members are consistently being brought into the Board of Directors as well as into leadership positions in the GEMI Committees, Networks and Work Groups.
- 🌐 **Senior Advisory Council (SAC) Committee:** The SAC is comprised of the Vice President or the most senior EHS/sustainability representative of member companies. The SAC assists in the development of future GEMI project topics and activities. Though GEMI uses a broad array of resources to identify issues that should be addressed by the membership, the SAC is the primary source through which leading EHS, sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) issues are identified and filtered. Most GEMI tools have been the direct result of member-driven ideas that came from initial discussions of the SAC committee. The SAC meets annually to review GEMI's progress and to identify issues or activities that are of specific interest to their companies. In 2007, the GEMI Senior Advisory Council (SAC) retained the Institute for the Future (ITF) to develop a sustainability map for GEMI, the *Map of Future Forces Affecting Sustainability*. The

map is a strategic tool for identifying and understanding future trends that will affect the EHS and sustainability landscape and incorporating this knowledge into strategies that create business value.

In addition to its Work Groups and Committees, GEMI also has a series of Networks that conduct on-going discussions on topics of interest to GEMI members. Networks can serve as a prelude to a Work Group by helping to define or clarify a topic of interest, or as a postscript to a Work Group that has completed the development of a GEMI tool by facilitating continued learning and information sharing. Direction for the Networks comes from the GEMI Board of Directors and the membership and each Network is re-evaluated annually to determine if it will continue into the following year.

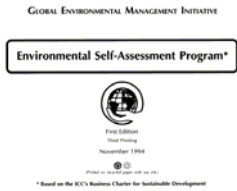
GEMI's current Networks include:

- **Climate Change Network:** The Climate Change Network redesigned and updated the GEMI web-based tool, [www.businessandclimate.org](http://www.businessandclimate.org) in 2008 and meets throughout the year to share best practices and learn about emerging climate change-related issues.
- **Emerging Issues Network:** The GEMI Emerging Issues Network meets throughout the year to learn more and share information about the emerging EHS and sustainability issues the members are addressing.
- **EMS/ISO Network:** The EMS/ISO Network meets to discuss ways members are addressing and staying informed about environmental management systems issues and ISO.
- **Metrics Network:** The Metrics Network developed the **GEMI Metrics Navigator™** and meets to share best practices relative to sustainability metrics in business.
- **Pandemic Planning Network:** The GEMI Pandemic Planning Network is in its information gathering phase and meets on an as needed basis to share lessons learned and ways pandemics are being addressed.
- **Sustainable Development (SD) Network:** The SD Network developed the *SD Planner™* and *SD Gateway™*. The Network meets to discuss ways members are addressing and staying informed about sustainable development issues.
- **Supply Chain Network:** The Supply Chain Network developed 2 tools -- *New Paths to Business Value: Strategic Sourcing--Environment, Health, and Safety* and *Forging New Links: Enhancing Supply Chain Value Through Environmental Excellence*. The Network meets to discuss ways members are addressing and staying informed about supply chain issues including sustainability and metrics in the supply chain. It is currently developing a sustainability supply chain roadmap of industry sector initiatives.
- **Water Sustainability Network:** The Water Sustainability Network developed 2 tools -- *Connecting the Drops Towards Creative Water Strategies: A Water Sustainability Tool* and *Collecting the Drops: A Water Sustainability Planner*. The Network meets to discuss ways members are addressing and staying informed about water sustainability issues.

## The 1990s: Fundamental Tools for EHS

The decade of the 1990s, from a development of GEMI tools perspective, focused on issues ranging from ways to self assess on EHS issues regarding total quality management, benchmarking, training, reporting and management systems.

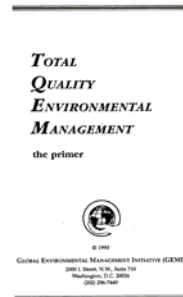
### Year: 1992



The first GEMI tool, **Environmental Self-Assessment Program (ESAP)** used the 16 Environmental Management Principles of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) as a basis, or benchmark, against which to measure performance. The tool was designed so that businesses could pinpoint ways to increase the quality of environmental policy, planning, implementation and monitoring, and to allow them to prioritize environmental improvement opportunities. Though created in 1992, this tool remains an excellent resource for any entity that is just starting to better understand how to assess its company's environmental performance.

### Year: 1993

The second GEMI tool, **Total Quality Environmental Management: The Primer**, was created in 1993 and reflected corporate trends and activities relating to how total quality management systems could positively impact how companies operated. What GEMI leaders did in the early years of GEMI's activities was to add environment to the total quality management business approach, thus the term Total Quality Environmental Management (TQEM). This primer was written for corporate environmental managers and takes a reader through the basic definitions and approaches of TQEM.



### Year: 1994

In 1994, as the concept of environmental management began to mature, GEMI created three tools.



The first expanded on the TQEM concept -- **Environmental Reporting in a Total Quality Management Framework: A Primer** was designed to help companies: identify problems before they occur; target key areas for management attention and possible expenses; provide support for needed improvements in existing management systems; and, provide a realistic basis for setting future performance expectations and holding line managers accountable.

The second tool focused on helping international companies find cost-effective pollution prevention initiatives by incorporating environmental costs into the business decision-making process. ***Finding Cost-Effective Pollution Prevention Initiatives: Incorporating Environmental Costs into Business Decision-Making*** includes topics such as identification and quantification of environmental costs and evaluating pollution prevention investments.



**BENCHMARKING:  
THE PRIMER**  
Benchmarking for Continuous  
Environmental Improvement

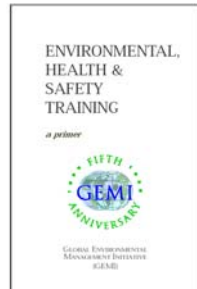


Global Environmental Management Institute (GEMI)  
1995-1996, 1997-1998, 1999-2000  
Washington, D.C. 20005

The third, ***Benchmarking for Continuous Environmental Improvement***, provides a format and structure for conducting benchmarking studies. It was designed to teach the reader how to make environmental improvements based on existing or publicly available information and resources.

## Year: 1995

***Environmental, Health & Safety Training: A Primer*** (1995) started a process that went from only learning about an issue or set of challenges, to training others in what was beginning to be a more professional EHS function within GEMI companies. This primer was designed to assist companies in training their site EH&S personnel and it included practical how-to examples, and advanced training techniques.



## Year: 1996

In 1996, GEMI began looking at various ways to identify innovative programs and approaches that would help provide incentives for companies to improve their environmental, health and safety activities.

**CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL,  
HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES  
IN TRANSITION:**

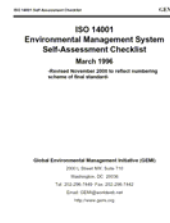
Management System Responses to  
Changing Public Expectations, Regulatory  
Requirements and Incentives

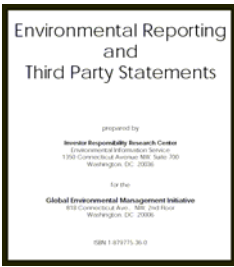
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***Incentives, Disincentives, Environmental Performance and Accountability for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Idea 21 Work Group Reports*** included three reports that looked at management systems, industry incentives and innovative programs within the United States and Europe. Two other reports were also created that year.

***ISO 14001 Environmental Management System Self-Assessment Checklist*** was based on the ISO 14001 standard and allowed for a rapid self-assessment of an organization or facility to determine how closely existing management practices and procedures correspond to the elements of the standard.





**Environmental Reporting and Third Party Statements** was designed to test whether third party attestation statements contained in voluntary corporate environmental reports added value in the eyes of external stakeholders. Other goals of the study included assessing which report elements contributed the most to communicating credibility, and evaluating the credibility of different types of organizations that perform certifications of corporate environmental reports.

**Year: 1997**

In 1997, the GEMI tools continued to expand their reach beyond just taking action on environmental activities into assessing the action being taken.

**Measuring Environmental Performance: A Primer and Survey of Metrics in Use** was designed to present a survey of environmental performance measurement tools and includes considerations for designing metrics programs, for selecting appropriate metrics, and for implementing, evaluating and improving such a program.

MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE: A Primer and Survey of Metrics In Use



Global Environmental Management Initiative

HSE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS PLANNING  
MOVING INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

**HSE Management, Information Systems Planning, Moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** was designed to help EH&S managers reach new levels of performance by partnering their expertise with that of professionals in information management, manufacturing, operations, marketing, research and development, finance and legal issues from across the company.

GEMI PRIMER  
HSE-MIS WORK GROUP



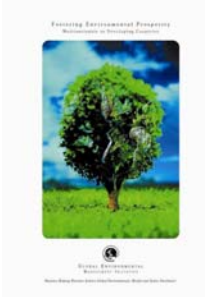
**Year: 1998**

**Environment: Value to Business (EVTB)** was the first primer that was designed to guide corporate environmental professionals in planning, creating, measuring and communicating the business value of environmental activities. This tool, developed in 1998, introduced the concept of Plan-Do-Check-Advance (PDCA) cycle of environmental management and offered suggestions for communicating business value to key internal and external stakeholders.



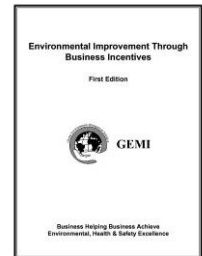
## Year: 1999

As GEMI began its journey outside the parameters of the internal EH&S activities of individual companies, there was an increasing realization that many GEMI companies were global companies that were operating in a responsible way around the globe, including the developing world.



In 1999, GEMI created a new tool, **Fostering Environmental Prosperity, Multinationals in Developing Countries**, which was a first of its kind report that linked economic data with case studies showing how multinational corporations are positive forces for both economic development and environmental, health and safety excellence in the developing countries in which they operate.

In 1999, as there was increased interest by many organizations in finding creative and effective ways to provide incentives, GEMI developed a new tool, **Environmental Improvement Through Business Incentives**. This report assessed incentives that have working in governments and the private sector to encourage companies to set environmental goals beyond compliance with existing laws.



## A New Decade: New Tools and Direction

With 10 years of experience and learning behind them, the members of GEMI began a new decade of activity and tool development in 2000 by expanding their discussions and the tools being developed to a range of general business issues that could be impacted by environmental, health and safety activities, including corporate citizenship.

## Year: 2000



The first tool in the new decade was a guidance document that was designed to help identify new processes and ways of addressing the role of environmental initiatives within broader business objectives, and how those activities can provide “top line” value to companies. **Environment: Value to the Top Line (EVTL)** includes case studies of companies who have implemented successful projects linking environmental and business objectives.

## Year: 2001

The second tool, published in 2001, focused on the important role that the supply chain plays in environmental, health and safety activities. **New Paths to Business Value: Strategic Sourcing – Environment, Health, and Safety** was designed to address the business value of managing EH&S in key procurement issues. The tool helps companies to identify when, why, and how to pursue added business value by addressing EH&S performance of suppliers and contractors, and to understand how suppliers' products and services can affect businesses and business planning.



## Year: 2002



In 2002, GEMI created its first water sustainability tool, **Connecting the Drops Towards Creative Water Strategies: A Water Sustainability Tool**. This tool and its accompanying web site ([www.gemi.org/water](http://www.gemi.org/water)) were designed to help businesses build a well-tailored strategy that fits the business' needs and circumstances. Case studies are included that highlight ways that companies can create business value by pursuing the sustainable management of water resources.

In the same year, **Exploring Pathways to a Sustainable Enterprise: SD Planner™** was created. The **SD Planner™** is a detailed and comprehensive self-assessment tool designed to help companies evaluate, plan for and integrate sustainable development into business processes.



## Year: 2004



In 2004, GEMI reached in new external directions addressing issues that impact business often outside the fence line. **Clear Advantage: Building Shareholder Value/Environment: Value to the Investor (EVI)**, is a tool that was designed to help provide businesses approaches on how to measure, manage and communicate EHS value to the financial community, thereby making “tangibles out of intangibles.”

**Forging New Links: Enhancing Supply Chain Value Through Environmental Excellence** is a tool and website ([www.gemi.org/supplychain](http://www.gemi.org/supplychain)) that was designed to identify and illustrate opportunities for EHS professionals, in collaboration with other functions within their companies, to enhance supply chain performance.



**Transparency: A Path to Public Trust** is a tool that provides approaches that companies can consider as they address transparency related challenges and opportunities.

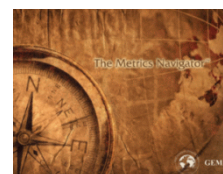
## Year: 2007

In 2007, GEMI launched **Collecting the Drops: A Water Sustainability Planner** ([www.gemi.org/waterplanner](http://www.gemi.org/waterplanner)). This tool guides a user through the process of taking a corporate water sustainability strategy and converting it into a site or unit strategy for water.



**GEMI SD Planner™** and **GEMI SD Gateway™** ([www.gemi.org/sd](http://www.gemi.org/sd)) is a detailed comprehensive planning tool that can be used to establish baseline performance, assess opportunities, set goals, develop action plans and evaluate progress towards a company's sustainable development objectives. Version 3.0 of the **SD Planner™ & SD Gateway™** was launched in 2008 allowing users to have the ability to easily browse through case examples by category and search for specific case examples by keyword, as well as tag case examples as 'favorites' to revisit later.

The **GEMI Metrics Navigator™** ([www.gemi.org/metricsnavigator](http://www.gemi.org/metricsnavigator)) is a tool to help organizations develop and implement metrics that provide insight into complex issues, support business strategies and contribute to business success. The tool presents a thorough, six-step process to select, implement and evaluate a set of critical few metrics that focus on an organization's success.

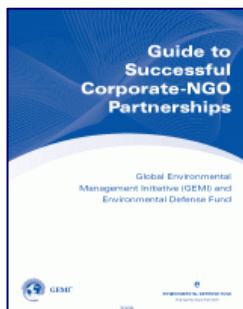


## Year: 2008



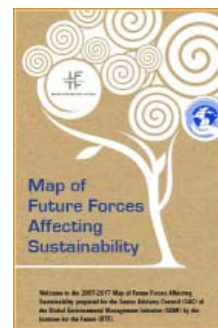
The **GEMI Business and Climate Change web site** ([www.gemi.org/businessandclimate](http://www.gemi.org/businessandclimate)) describes ways that businesses can incorporate climate change objectives in their decisions and operations. The site provides information and guidance for businesses in all stages of the strategic planning lifecycle for climate change.

The **GEMI HSE Web Depot** ([www.gemi.org/hsewebdepot](http://www.gemi.org/hsewebdepot)) is a web-based information resource that is a framework for health, safety & environment-management information systems (HSE-MIS) and is based on a Plan, Do, Check, Advance (PDCA) lifecycle. The HSE Web Depot presents a framework for HSE-MIS planning, development, system rollout and improvement; and, organizes company experiences within these areas.



**GEMI-Environmental Defense Fund (EDF): Guide to Successful Corporate-NGO Partnerships** is the product of collaboration among GEMI member companies and Environmental Defense Fund. It is intended as a comprehensive aid to organizing, designing, implementing and measuring the success of corporate-NGO partnerships. The **Guide** also includes several case examples of successful partnerships. While the focus is on environmental projects, we feel the lessons learned can apply to any type of sustainability-driven partnership that involves active engagement between businesses and NGOs.

The **GEMI - Institute for the Future's (ITF) Map of Future Forces Affecting Sustainability** ([www.gemi.org/sustainabilitymap](http://www.gemi.org/sustainabilitymap)) is designed to help GEMI companies develop their own perspective of a future being shaped increasingly by external forces linked to the concept of sustainable development. The Map includes elements that some may view as controversial, but recognizes the objective of this effort is to provoke thoughtful discussions that will help companies shape their business strategies in light of a more sustainability-driven future.



## Tools in Practice

GEMI's contribution to EHS management is evident in the reputation the organization has gained for itself over the past seventeen years, and in the caliber of the members who choose to participate and continue participation. GEMI tools have been cited by a wide range of media resources on sustainable development, supply chain management and outsourcing, corporate social responsibility, and others, in such news sources as *Fortune Magazine*. GEMI also participates in the annual UNEP Consultative Meeting on Business and Industry and has given several presentations over the years on the functional value of GEMI tools, and the importance of using such tools and case studies when addressing global EHS and sustainability issues.

- The devotion of member companies to EHS is evident in their internal EHS management strategies, many of which are detailed as case studies in GEMI tools. For example, in a piece entitled "The Role of Sustainability at 3M" in the *GEMI Metrics Navigator™*, the emphasis placed on environmental, social and economic sustainability by **3M** was demonstrated in the descriptions of its sustainability programs. The required use of a "Life Cycle Management (LCM)" platform in the development, manufacturing and distribution of all products helps to reduce the environmental, health, safety and energy impacts throughout the entire product life cycle; the Pollution Prevention Pays (3P) platform goes back thirty years, focusing on reducing pollution at its source, and is a cornerstone for process improvements to reduce waste and improve productivity. Says the piece, "a company is only as good as its employees," and 3M employees are devoted to responsible EHS and CSR practices. (*Metrics Navigator™*, 2007).
- **Bristol-Myers Squibb Company** is yet another example of a GEMI company being on the cutting edge of EHS policy and helping others to learn from its experience. The *Metrics Navigator™*, also detailed how Bristol-Myers Squibb was "an early leader in reporting EHS metrics...participated in developing the first draft of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and was among the first to apply the GRI reporting standards." The Company developed "extensive infrastructure, including procedures and databases...for EHS data collection, verification and reporting," which has allowed it "to assess its potential impacts, to determine appropriate performance targets and to measure progress towards such targets." Though Bristol-Myers Squibb Company began EHS metrics reporting because of external pressure, the internal system has gone above and beyond—and provided tangible, internal business benefits at the same time. (*Metrics Navigator™*, 2007).
- **DuPont** also exemplifies the role many GEMI companies play in leading the industry towards more sustainable business practices without sacrificing productivity or profit. As a large energy user, DuPont has both high manufacturing cost and a large environmental footprint, particularly as regards greenhouse gas emissions. By committing to increase its use of renewable energy sources—targeting 10% renewable energy by 2010, in only three years—DuPont "is taking a leadership role in changing the market landscape by increasing the demand for renewable sources, demonstrating the use of renewable sources as a practical

alternative in managing energy consumption and reducing their associated environmental impacts” (*Metrics Navigator™*, 2007).

- The **Dow Chemical Company** exemplified not only its commitment to the environment, but also to corporate citizenship in helping a client in Singapore to use water more efficiently. Using the FILMTEC system, the client implemented a system for reclaiming waste water, drastically reducing its environmental impact as regards water sustainability. Since 2000, an RO plant operation has been processing tertiary-treated wastewater effluent using FILMTEC fouling resistant elements and converting it to high-grade industrial water for Singapore’s petrochemical industry. Since start-up, the Singapore client’s reverse osmosis plant has performed well within the stringent operating conditions imposed. The high recovery of 86 percent pioneered by this project is now considered an industry benchmark in tertiary effluent wastewater reclamation. Operating costs are lower compared to older plants using membranes that are not designed to be resistant to fouling (*Collecting the Drops: A Water Sustainability Planner*, 2007).
- In the 2003 *Forging New Links: Enhancing Supply Chain Value Through Environmental Excellence*, even more examples of GEMI companies excelling as business leaders in EHS can be found. A case study of **Motorola**’s Inbound Discrepancy Reporting (IDR) System detailed how a collaborative effort by EHS, Logistics, Quality, Finance, Packaging, and Sourcing representatives to develop a comprehensive approach to packaging and pallets allowed the company to save over \$1 million in the first year alone, and over \$5 million in 2004. Not only did Motorola establish new guidelines for packaging and shipping, but they further implemented the IDR system as a way to track supplier compliance, update supplier scorecard performance, and quantify the cost of non-compliance for potential recovery costs due to supplier defects. Between the years 2002-2003, IDR realized a 58% reduction in pallet-related injuries, saving \$400,000 in Workmen’s Compensation cost; a 12% reduction in discarded pallets, equating to \$120,000 of cost avoidance in new purchases; \$400,000 savings in transportation expenses; \$100,000 savings in reduced handling and storage of pallets; and a 16% improvement in recycling rate of non-hazardous wastes. Motorola took what was originally an EHS initiative—an effort to reduce injuries and decrease unnecessary waste and transportation—and developed it into an effective means of improving not only EHS and CSR practices, but also to focus on eliminating unnecessary spending and creating savings that could be passed along to consumers. (*Forging New Links*, 2003).
- **FedEx** has been similarly concerned with the environmental impact of its packaging, and has been a leader in the field in minimizing that impact as much as possible. In 1998, FedEx revolutionized its packaging system, changing the overnight envelopes from 100% virgin bleached fiber to 100% recycled materials in only a year. They also redesigned their basic envelopes, releasing a new packaging made of 100% recycled whiteboard in November of 1999, with 35% of the recycled material coming from post-consumer content. Though there was a slight increase in production cost—one that could not be passed along to the consumer, as FedEx envelopes are provided for free to customers—the company felt that its environmental initiatives were important in keeping the company a leader in the field, and worked over the next few years after the envelopes’ release to reduce the unit cost back to its original level. (*Forging New Links*, 2003.)

These are but a few examples of the impressive advances GEMI members have been making in EHS management for nearly two decades. Each GEMI tool includes extensive reports and case studies from the GEMI membership. Almost as impressive is the overwhelming commitment of these and all GEMI companies to helping others in the business community achieve similar levels of EHS excellence—truly bringing to life the GEMI mission of “business helping business.”

GEMI members share their collective experience and expertise in EHS in a variety of ways. The case studies included in GEMI tools give concrete examples of how responsible environmental practices can be implemented without damaging profits, supplementing the strategic content of the tools with real-world evidence that the strategies work. GEMI held a series of conferences highlighting environmental concerns, rewarding progress and facilitating discussion of what remains to be done.

Most recently, GEMI's 15<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary conference in 2005, "Successes, Current Challenges, and Future Trends," featured a variety of keynote speakers discussing contemporary environmental issues, as well as panels discussing GEMI's past, present and future. Prior to that conference, GEMI held events such as the 2003 "Sustainability Through Strategic Partnerships" conference, the 2002 "Securing the Future—Paths Forward" conference, the 2001 "An Odyssey in Environmental Excellence" conference, and the 2000 "Environment and Business Conference."

GEMI and its member companies truly put into practice all aspects of their mission statement—they achieve EHS excellence and increase shareholder value themselves, and function as responsible corporate citizens helping business as a whole to share in the benefits of responsible EHS management strategies.

## *Collaborations and Partnerships*

In addition to all of its other activities, GEMI has also entered into a number of very constructive collaborations and partnerships with external organizations.

### *Partnership Organizations*

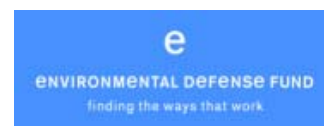


GEMI is a founding partner of the **Business Roundtable's S.E.E. Change initiative**, which was launched in 2005. Seeking to leverage the power of business as a force for good, Business Roundtable launched a sustainable growth initiative encouraging leading U.S. companies to embrace business strategies and projects that measurably improve Society, the Environment and the Economy. S.E.E. Change, encourages CEOs of the nation's leading companies to commit to business strategies that combine traditional corporate goals of higher profit and lower cost with a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and social improvement. Roundtable companies will be asked to set challenging goals that contribute to both the bottom line and improvements to the quality of life – now and for future generations.

As a Partner of S.E.E. Change, GEMI provides its tools to Roundtable members and participates in the S.E.E. Change Steering Committee.

### *Partnership Projects*

GEMI has partnered with **Environmental Defense Fund** to develop a "Guide to Successful Corporate/NGO Partnerships," which was launched to the public in 2008. As social and environmental performance becomes increasingly important to the private sector and external stakeholders alike, some companies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are benefiting from collaborating rather than clashing around "green issues." This guide will seek to educate the public and private sectors on the potential for positive environmental and economic success through collaboration between corporations and NGOs.



## *Education Partners*



GEMI partnered with the **National Council for Science and the Environment's (NCSE) Council of Environmental Deans and Directors (CEDD)** to conduct workshops to provide CEDD members with an understanding of GEMI and its tools with the intent and that they could be incorporated into course curriculum. Thirty-five schools attended the workshops. To-date, the following four schools have used the tools: Barnard College, Colleges of the Fenway, Duke University and Samford University.

## *Current Activities and Outreach*

In addition to the efforts of its Work Groups, Committees and Networks, GEMI is currently working on further developing the "GEMI Brand," making the organization and the benefits it provides both better known and more widely marketed. The method for achieving this is threefold: emphasis is placed equally on education, tools and current members.

GEMI has identified three signature issues that it will be focusing its activities on for the next couple of years. GEMI is still in the discussion phase as to how best to address these issues to meet the needs of its members and the organization as a whole. The issues are: Climate and Energy; Supply Chain; and Water Sustainability.

GEMI has developed a catalogue of its tools, and continues to provide easy access to its tools, with all publications available electronically and without cost via its web site, [www.gemi.org](http://www.gemi.org). GEMI also works cooperatively with a wide range of governmental organizations such as the United Nations, the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Commerce.

GEMI is also continuing to build and develop relationships with colleges and universities, small/medium businesses and cooperative efforts with the government and NGO organizations to raise awareness of the issues in which GEMI is involved, its tools and of the organization itself.

GEMI members also participate in a wide range of international and domestic meetings and conferences, are speakers and panelists at various industry functions and are members of diverse industry associations—all of which demonstrate the caliber of GEMI's members as leaders in EHS management, and promote the organization through those with whom it can be associated.

## *Looking Forward*

The Global Environmental Management Initiative has grown and matured since its beginning in 1990, remaining constantly on the leading edge of EHS issues and development. The organization is strong with its membership continuing to grow and to create and develop new tools and discussion forums around emerging ideas and approaches. GEMI offers members the opportunity to work with many of the world's leading companies in developing and promoting the very best in global EHS and corporate citizenship strategies that can be applied around the world in a cost-effective manner. In addition, the cost savings and benefits derived from GEMI benchmarking further allow GEMI to share its knowledge as it continues to strive to help business help business to excel in EHS, shareholder value and corporate citizenship.

With the increased attention to a wide range of environmental, sustainability and climate-related issues, and with concerns being raised around the world by the realities of globalization, strong EHS and corporate citizenship leadership is vital if global companies' licenses to operate are to be continually renewed and welcomed. GEMI has both the experience and commitment to take on these issues as they develop, and the organization's continued growth and development are evidenced in the expansion of GEMI's focus to include key sustainability and corporate citizenship issues. GEMI strategies remain environmentally friendly, socially responsible, fiscally sound and a valuable resource for the business community.

## ***Conclusion: GEMI Corporate Leadership – Looking Back, Moving Forward***

GEMI was formed almost 20 years ago as a grassroots initiative by leaders in the business community, to be a nonprofit business association of "business helping business achieve EHS excellence, shareholder value, and corporate citizenship." GEMI has been and continues to be an organization that is member-driven, with "sweat equity" a key part of the organization's operations. In its seventeen-year lifetime, GEMI has produced 28 interactive tools promoting responsible EHS practices, in addition to all of its other internal and external activities.

GEMI's work is ongoing. Work Groups continue to develop creative and innovative methods for the improvement of EHS and sustainability practices. Networks continue to identify, discuss and address new emerging issues.

GEMI is comprised of environmental and sustainability professionals who are leaders and challenge solvers within their companies, striving each day to make the world a better place for the environment, for the economy and for society.

The organization, since its creation, has been committed to focusing on and merging environmental commitments, economic considerations and environmental leadership.

The results of almost 20 years of effort and commitment make it clear to all that the founders of GEMI would be pleased with how far GEMI has come, and with the important role that EHS and sustainability issues will continue to play in a world where corporate citizenship has become a goal of all responsible global companies.

**\* 2009 \* WRITTEN BY STEVEN B. HELLEM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND AMY M. GOLDMAN, DIRECTOR\***