



7/21/11

To: Ray Jensen, Associate VP, ASU University Business Services  
From: Kevin Dooley, Academic Director, The Sustainability Consortium  
Re: AASHE STARS

The purpose of this letter is to affirm that The Sustainability Consortium (TSC), co-founded and managed by Arizona State University, is engaging in innovative activities.

TSC was founded in July 2009 by researchers at Arizona State University and the University of Arkansas. TSC involves diverse and global participants that work collaboratively to build a scientific foundation for more sustainable consumer products. Key leadership representatives and affiliates from both founding institutions were instrumental in securing agreement for the launch of TSC. Equal partners in the initiative, each contribute the majority of personnel, facilities, and services that do the work of TSC.

Consortium members include over 70 leading global retailers, manufacturers and consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies, including ALCOA, Best Buy, Disney, McDonalds, Walmart, Ahold, Kroger, Marks & Spencer, Safeway, Darden Restaurants, Toshiba and Unilever (<http://www.sustainabilityconsortium.org/members>). Dozens of NGO's and academic institutions are also involved both at a governance and working group level. These stakeholders are developing transparent methodologies, tools and strategies to drive a new generation of products and supply networks that address environmental, social, and economic imperatives. Arizona State University and the University of Arkansas jointly administer The Sustainability Consortium. The Consortium's Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from Arizona State University, the University of Arkansas, The Walt Disney Company, Walmart, Pepsico, Proctor & Gamble and Dell. With the expected addition of several international universities and NGOs this year; voices from an increasingly broad range of stakeholders will be represented.

Arizona State University researchers conduct various studies of the sustainability of consumer products that will lead to the development of sustainability labels similar to nutrition labels that currently are placed on food products. In addition to the research directly done, Arizona State University researchers commission research from outside entities based on the expected sustainability return of such research.

The development of Sustainability Measurement Reporting System (SMRS) is a life-cycle assessment (LCA) based information system that facilitates decision-making about consumer goods and their supply chains. The SMRS can be used by any organization in a supply chain to collaborate and share data with upstream suppliers and downstream customers, and manage internal operations and product design. The SMRS is designed to facilitate the consistent exchange of sustainability related information at the product



level, for use by manufacturers, retailers, and eventually consumers. Other stakeholders such as NGOs, policy makers, and researchers will also use SMRS to understand the environmental and social impacts of particular products, and where innovation opportunities exist.

The SMRS will allow companies without deep LCA expertise to analyze and report on product information with a reasonable amount of effort, while at the same time providing an avenue for those companies with deep investments in LCA to fully utilize existing and future product level LCA work.

Currently TSC has worked through a multi-stakeholder process to develop technical documents pertaining to the life cycle of seven products: orange juice, yogurt, cereal, computers, laundry detergent, showering products, and surface cleaners. The work is currently under independent review.

Here is a sample of the other research projects that TSC has been involved in:

*Consumer Market Research to Support Sustainability Measurement and Reporting Standards (TSC, Harrison Group and Deloitte)*

This research identifies the gaps that exist between the scientific perspective of product sustainability and that of the consumer. With concentration around current TSC sectors, this research focuses on sustainability impacts and life cycle analysis from the consumer perspective across thirty product categories with four primary goals: (1) Identify product impacts that consumers are most concerned with and motivated by (2) Size consumer understanding and response to sector SMRS developments, (3) Identify who consumers trust and turn to for product sustainability information, and (4) Determine the high level communication dimensions that are most relevant and motivating for consumers.

*A Review of Water Scarcity Indices and Methodologies (TSC)*

In the past 20 years many indices have been developed to quantitatively evaluate water resources vulnerability (e.g. water scarcity or water stress). The difficulty of characterizing water stress is that there are many equally important facets to water use, supply and scarcity. Selecting the criteria by which water is assessed can be as much a policy decision as a scientific decision. This review provides an overview of the primary water scarcity indices and water resource assessment methodologies at the forefront of political and corporate decision making.

*Biodiversity Metrics Development (TSC)*

Review of existing biodiversity and land-use metrics and evaluation of potential for use in Standards for Measurement and Reporting (SMRS) and as Sustainability Performance Drivers (SPD). Identify gaps or research needs in metrics, driver, indicator development. Pursue avenues to fill those gaps via collaborations with researchers, NGO experts and corporate/retail leaders.

*PAIA Methodology Development (TSC, MIT)*



Sponsored Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology developing the methodology to convert the bill of attributes of a given laptop to its lifecycle environmental impact through product proxies.

You can find more information at [www.sustainabilityconsortium.org](http://www.sustainabilityconsortium.org)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Dooley".

Kevin Dooley  
ASU Academic Director, The Sustainability Consortium