



The Industry Voice for Workplace Solutions

minutes

BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard Meeting
Tuesday, March 14, 2006; 8:00 am -5:00 pm Eastern Time
Wednesday, March 15, 2006; 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Eastern Time
Holiday Inn Select
3063 Lake Eastbrook Blvd. SE
Grand Rapids, MI

Participants

Brad Miller	BIFMA International
Tom Reardon	BIFMA International
Dick Driscoll	BIFMA International
Chris Brandel	Bretford Manufacturing Inc.
Fred Stevens	Group Dekko
Jim Kozminski	Haworth Inc.
Larry Dykhuis	Herman Miller Inc.
Matt Earnest	Interface Fabrics
Bill Foley	Interface Fabrics
Mark LaCroix	Interface Fabrics
Anne Saliers	izzydesign
John Shank	Kimball International
Kathy Jo Boerma	Knoll Inc.
Karen Smant	Milliken Fabric
Mike Zimmerman	Sauder
Mary Ellen Mika	Steelcase Inc.
Craig Bren	Tuohy Furniture Corp.
Janan Rabiah	Association for Contract Textiles
Scott Miller	NAIMA
Kathleen Vokes	EPA, DfE Program
Sharmin Syed	EPA, DfE Program
Alison Kinn Bennett	EPA, EPP Program
Clare Lindsay	EPA, Office of Solid Waste
Shayla Workman	EPA, Office of Solid Waste
Joann Jaske	State of CA
Richard Lam	State of CA
Daniel Burgoyne	State of CA, Dept. of General Services
Peggy Jenkins	State of CA, Air Resources Board
Toni Stein	State of CA, DHS
Laura Rauwerda	State of MI, DEQ
Deborah Dunning	IDCE
Jane Wilson	NSF International

TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2006

Welcome

Bill Stough, CEO of Sustainable Research Group and project manager for the BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard welcomed participants to the meeting.

Brad Miller from BIFMA provided a descriptive overview of the notebook he passed out which can be used by participants over the course of the assessment standard development process. He pointed out the contents including the agenda of the two-day event and then conducted a role call of those present in person and those present by telephone.

The Project Manager again welcomed everyone to the March stakeholder meeting and thanked everyone for participating in the process. The Project Manager gave a brief overview of the next two days. The first half of the first day is reserved for reviewing progress made at the last stakeholder meeting in February and investigating several unanswered questions that resulted from the meeting. The second half of the first day and most of the second day were reserved for the four Work Groups to continue their deliberations. The last part of the second day is reserved for short Work Group progress reports to the full group.

Review of February Meeting Minutes

The Project Manager asked if there were any corrections or questions regarding the minutes from the last meeting. After responding to several questions for clarification, several minor corrections were identified, including using “Project Manager” instead of “he” to reduce confusion and correcting the name of the Water and Natural Resources Work Group on page five.

Review of Draft Purpose and Scope

Title – It was suggested that the word “Office” be removed from the title and that something more encompassing of business and institutional used, and take out the word “Assessment.” There was a give and take discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of using the word “Office” and “Assessment” in the title. The final consensus was to change the title to **“BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard”**

Purpose – It was agreed to place the word “voluntary” in front of BIFMA in the opening sentence.

Scope – In section 2.1 remove the words commercial and office in the first sentence and change to “business and institutional.” In section 2.3 rename the four general areas to match workgroup categories, but leave economics in to reflect the Triple Bottom Line. Change the title of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Work Group to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

3.0 Certification to the Standard – In the previous version, change “commercial” to “business and institutional.” Section 3.3 there should be a statement about the ability of the standard to have first, second, and third party certifications. It was suggested that the current sections 3.2 and 3.3 be switched in order, and in section 3.1 put in the word “assessing” in front of

“conformance”? There was an agreement that the title of 3.0 should be “Assessing Conformance.”

Review of Draft Standard Template

The Project Manager reviewed the draft standard template with stakeholders. He asked if there were any comments or suggestions for changes. After discussions, it was agreed that the title will be changed to “Preliminary BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard Outline.” In Section 4, EPA offered to provide a list of definitions as a starting point for the outline. In Section 5, the Project Manager went through the changes from the last meeting and asked if there were any additional comments, and there were none. In Section 10, “glass” and “copper” were added as additional materials listed.

The minutes of the February stakeholders meeting were reviewed. Larry Dykhuis moved for approval and the motion was seconded by Mike Zimmerman. The minutes were approved unanimously.

At this point in the agenda, the Project Manger asked everyone to check their notes to ensure that there were no other changes agreed to in the outline from the last meeting. No other changes were identified. The Project Manager opened up the discussion for any questions on the draft outline. The following questions and responses were discussed:

- What is the difference between Element Six and Seven: The Project Manager responded that Element Six is product oriented and Element Seven is facility oriented.
- How will environmental product declarations be handled in the standard, will conforming to the BIFMA standard help companies that are filling out other environmental product declarations? It was agreed that during the drafting, terminology will be used to ensure that the final draft is as consistent with other requirements or standards as possible. Section nine may be a logical place to include this issue.
- It was suggested that we take some time to better define what the work groups are supposed to address during the rest of the session. It was agreed that during this work session each Work Group should strive to fill in a blank scorecard similar to the template provided in the notebook and produce a completed template with prerequisites identified if possible and to identify potential point values if possible.

Discussion of Unresolved Topics

At the February meeting, the Project Manager identified several unresolved topics and he suggested that stakeholders take a few minutes on the agenda for further discussion of those topics before the work groups begin their deliberations. They include: the strategy for use of multiple levels; how OEM and supplier roles differ; how to address innovation; and the opportunity to collaborate with other standard development organizations.

Strategy for Multiple Levels - The Project Manager provided an overview of previous discussions from BIFMA’s Sustainability Subcommittee which came into the standards development process recommending that there would be multiple levels of performance. He asked stakeholders to share their thoughts on the issue of multiple levels in the standard.

It was pointed out that multiple levels were recommended in the purpose statement to provide opportunities for applicants to progressively seek higher levels of sustainable furniture, and that multiple levels provide an opportunity for all size companies to participate. A participant at the last meeting asked if there were legal problems with offering multiple levels and BIFMA offered to check with their corporate legal counsel, who responded that there were no legal difficulties preventing multiple levels in the standard.

A member of BIFMA's Sustainable Subcommittee suggested there could be four levels where level one is an entry level and level four is an advanced level. Discussion centered on how this approach could affect small companies and if it could be a barrier to them participating. The consensus was that the multiple levels would foster participation by small companies and still provide a challenge to large companies to reach the highest level. However, all agreed that more work needs to be done in defining the levels and identifying prerequisites for each level. The Project manager summarized the discussion on the issue by instructing the workgroups to address multiple levels and identify prerequisites, with a goal of not excluding any segment of the industry.

OEM's and Component Supplier Roles

The Project Manager described the concern expressed at the last meeting regarding the fear of higher costs resulting from redundant certifications from suppliers and OEMs. Participants asked if the standard should allow or encourage component certifications, since an OEM will most like have to get the final product re-tested to assure conformance to the standard. Will this cause unnecessary complexity and costs?

Stakeholder discussions indicated an intent to provide flexibility for suppliers and OEMs. This would include allowing a supplier to be able to seek voluntarily conformance with the standard if they thought it had market value. On the other side of the discussion were several suppliers that were concerned that the standard would require certification by suppliers.

Participants discussed the desire for allowing use of other certifications to other standards to count, and reiterated that one of the goals of this standard development process is to minimize the proliferation of standards, by allowing them by reference in the document. This approach can reduce the cost of licensing and registration fees for the business and institutional furniture industry. The Project Manager summarized the deliberations by acknowledging that the general agreement reached is to promote voluntary conformance to the standard, not require suppliers to be certified, and not promote duplication with other standards but recognize them by reference.

Innovation

The Project Manager described how questions arose at the February meeting about how the standard would approach innovation, where innovations would be allowed and how points would be allocated. Discussion started with some of the ways other standards or programs handled innovation, specifically how the US Green Building Council allowed points for innovation in their certification programs. It was pointed out that LEED rewarded points in two ways; one for being "truly innovative" and a second way was for significantly exceeding established top levels.

The question "who will manage the awarding of innovation points" was asked, and would it be BIFMA? Staff from BIFMA indicated they do not have staff resources to support the approval of innovation points. It was suggested that there are several options to handle awarding

innovation points: a committee structure could be created to review innovation; a third-party certification auditor could allow innovation credits; or the market take care of it by letting the company self-award innovation points. Participants made the following additional comments:

- Only third-part auditors should be allowed to certify the innovation credits.
- Innovation credits should only be allowed for greatly exceeding an element already in the standard.

The Project Manager asked if stakeholders wanted to make a decision on innovation at this point or keep all options open. The consensus was to keep all options open and revisit the issue after more progress has occurred with the standard development.

Standard development partners

Since the February meeting an opportunity has developed to investigate the potential of collaborating with other organizations to jointly develop a sustainable furniture standard. Tom Reardon, Executive Director of BIFMA gave a brief background overview of discussions with NSF International about the potential of working together on the standard development process. He explained several of the advantages that he saw including the ability to share administrative and technical resources, share the logistics of stakeholder meetings and potentially accelerating the development process.

He introduced Jane Wilson from NSF International. She gave a brief background on NSF and their current activities with other standard development initiatives. She described the two basic methods of standard development; the canvass process and the committee process. BIFMA uses the canvass process and NSF International uses the committee process. Several questions were asked regarding how the transition would occur if the two organizations decided to join together, how voting would be accomplished and what roles each organization would take the lead on if the discussions resulted in an agreement.

The consensus was that a collaborative effort would increase the credibility of the effort, bring more resources to the project and may reduce the time to finish the standard development. The Project Manager asked if BIFMA had the support of stakeholders to continue discussing the potential of working with NSF and there were no dissenting opinions.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2006

The Project Manager welcomed everyone to the second day of the BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard Stakeholder meeting. He suggested that the work groups made a great deal of progress yesterday and opened up the meeting to participants that wanted to address any concerns or issues that came up since Tuesday's report back session. There were no immediate issues of concern identified. He then opened up the meeting by inviting each work group to report back to the group on their progress.

Work Group 1 - Human and Ecosystem Health

Laura Rauwerda from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality was the spokesperson for the work group. She reported that the work group spent a lot of time addressing potential

requirements for Human and Ecosystem Health and identifying potential prerequisites. The following issues were discussed:

- Members were concerned about material flow overlap, specifically with chemicals used along the entire supply chain.
- They were concerned that there may be overlap with the water group.
- There was concern expressed that there were no representatives from the furniture industry in Tuesday's session.
- Framing the development into the scorecard template has worked well.
- There is still a need to identify specific chemicals for Life Cycle Inventory data and the group believes the BIFMA Fabric Emission Standard (FES) committee will be able to provide chemical useful information on indoor air quality testing on harmful chemicals.

It was agreed that before the work groups broke into their separate sessions the water and natural resources (group 3) and human and ecosystem health (group 1) will meet in a joint session to evaluate the potential overlap between them and divide the work accordingly.

Work Group 2 – Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

The Project Manager asked how using the template worked and if the group had made any progress in identifying prerequisites? Since the group developed the template, they are satisfied that it has been beneficial to helping the group make progress and have identified the need to have an energy policy for the company as a prerequisite. The following issues were discussed:

- There is concern that in this work session no one in the group has a technical background in energy so there is a need for technical review soon to ensure they are still on track. They were not sure how many points should be allocated for this section? Members asked how many points will be possible for each group? The Project Manager responded by suggesting at this stage the work groups identify all of the points that you think is pertinent to the project and we will hold off on researching the total points until all of the other groups are done and we have an idea of the range being proposed.
- The Project Manager commented that the energy group is creating a guide book for their section that may be useful to the other groups to use. He asked John Shank from Kimball International to give a brief explanation of the approach. John identified the outline they were using, which included the Heading of the point as listed in the scorecard, the Intent which provided an explanation of the direction, Requirements and a Resource section.

Several members offered technical expertise to assist the work group.

Work Group 3 - Water and Natural Resources

The Project Manager asked how using the template worked and if the group had made any progress in identifying prerequisites? Mark LaCroix from Interface Fabrics and Mike Zimmerman from Saunders Furniture were the spokespersons for the Group. Mark suggested that they would talk about wood and other materials. The following issues were discussed:

- For wood the work group is considering making as prerequisite documentation of the chain ownership of the wood and not allowing the use of endangered wood species.

- Mike suggested that they were trying to determine how in depth to go in breaking something down in terms of its material makeup? How far into the system do we go? Should we be doing LCA's?
- They expressed concerns that there were overlaps with Group 1. especially surrounding chemicals.
- They are focusing on determining how to address the recycled content of materials, especially the issue of the relative value of post consumer waste vs. post industrial waste and should there be a weighting factor used.
- California considers recycled steel as so prolific a material in the market place that they recommend discounting the value of recycled steel in products, but this seems somehow unfair to metal furniture manufacturers.
- How best to address material content and embodied energy issues?
- We need to use common terminology throughout the standard documents.

Work Group 4 - Social Responsibility

The Project Manager asked how using the template worked and if the group had made any progress in identifying prerequisites? The scorecard template was helpful in defining the boundaries of the issues and potential prerequisites. Currently the group is considering the following prerequisites, documentation that you are addressing social responsibility, Employee Health and Safety Management Oversight, labor and human rights management processes, or the use of an accepted ethical code, although none have been decided on at this time. The following issues were also discussed:

- Identifying the documentation or phraseology that backs up our recommendations.
- Several comments were made about liking the simplicity of the draft proposal.
- Worker health issues may overlap with what Group 3 is requiring.
- It was pointed out that health and Safety issues are showing up in a number of the work group documents.

The Project Manager summarized the morning report out session by stating that it seems that all of the groups are still very much in an exploratory mode and working on identifying the full scope of their areas of responsibility. He suggested that they continue on this path and at some point in the near future when the groups believe they have the boundaries identified, and then there will be an opportunity to identify and coordinate any overlaps that still exist and plug any remaining wholes in the standard outline.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 15TH WORK GROUP PROGRESS SUMMARY REPORTS

After a day of work group sessions the groups reconvened to discuss the day's progress. The Project Manager asked each work group to provide a summary of the progress made and to identify areas that the group needs assistance or additional resources to continue. Reports were made in the order presented.

Work Group 4 - Social Responsibility

Work group members will continue researching the documentation that is needed to support the points listed. Additionally, background documentation for guidance will come from this research.

Issues Identified:

- Diversity (credit 4) needs more work and understanding. Ethical Business Standards may need to be further addressed as well.
- The Community Outreach credit (credit 5) could emphasize environmental programs / involvement. This area could be used to further develop the argument of why the social responsibility portion is necessary in the sustainability assessment.
- When creating the draft document, was it looked at from a company or product scope where some issues were site specific and some were evaluated on a company scope and others were tried to be written in a way that stretches beyond North America.

Work Group 1 - Human and Ecosystems Health

Issues Identified:

- After the joint session with the Natural Resources and Water Work Group this morning, it was agreed that this group would take responsibility for emission issues from them.
- Currently the group is getting lost trying to use the scorecard matrix because of the large amount of environmental information that is covered by the scope of this work group, including the new responsibilities from the morning.
- Overlap was noted with the Social Responsibility group on health and safety issues.
- There was general consensus that a prerequisite for this area is the completion of a chemical inventory to know what is being used, especially among those items you have direct control over.
- OSHA conformance is still an unresolved issue. It is specific to U.S., but not to the world.
- Discussion on the issue of “End of Life” and whether or not it should still be included in this work group, the natural resources and water work group or both.
- There is the feeling that this work group may need to meet between full group meetings.

Work Group 2 Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

- The group has made significant progress in developing the guidelines from the scorecard.
- We have identified individuals to conduct further research to fill out the intent, requirements and potential technologies and strategies identified in the point scorecard.
- There still needs to be further defining of some of the percentages used in the scorecard to make sure they are realistic.
- There still needs to be research conducted on the issues surrounding the embodied energy points.

Work Group 3 Water and Natural Resources

- Chemicals of concern is still an overlap area with other work groups.
- More research on the availability and cost premiums for FSC/rapidly renewable wood needs to be completed.

- We are concerned that the normal approach to a Life Cycle Assessment doesn't allow you to recognize the diversion of a waste stream from a landfill.
- We are trying to ensure companies will not get points by changing a product to steel and achieving the recycled content points, so we are trying to develop a formula to discount the recycled content of steel (e.g. California's concern) to address this issue.
- Under design elements, how do we approach the product's life span? This still needs to be considered.
- We will try to provide information on the recycleability of materials to help identify harmful materials that could be designed out.
- In LEED the cost of the documentation to prove conformance to the standard is high and likewise the cost of this standard may be proportional to the number of credits, we need to be concerned with this issue to keep cost reasonable.

All the workgroups agreed they will use the same approach to organize their information; the scorecard, and the guidebook with the headings used by the energy work group. The Project Manager will then use these documents to start compiling the information into the standard outline.

Resolution of Past Action Items

- A contingent will be meeting with the National Center for Manufacturing Science to discuss chemical inventories and possible help with material life cycle impact assessments.
- EPA will provide common definitions that will be useful to the work groups and can be put on the website. Currently have a document called "Terms of Environment" that Clair Lindsey will provide links for the documents. They are regulatory definitions.
- Should the standard allow for self-certification? So far the consensus is that it is too early in the process and it should not be removed as an option.
- BIFMA will work with the Project Manager to set up the work group meetings in-between the full group meetings.

Herman Miller announced it is holding an environmental conference in Zeeland, Michigan on May 18, 2006 and invited stakeholders to attend.

The project manager announced the next meeting will be on April 19th and 20th and that further details would be coming from BIFMA. He thanked all participants for their contributions and promised to provide follow up information and updates as the project moves forward.