



The Industry Voice for Workplace Solutions

minutes

BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard Meeting
Wednesday, April 19, 2006
10:00 am - 5:00 pm Eastern Time
and
Thursday, April 20, 2006
8:30 am - 3:30 pm Eastern Time
Holiday Inn Select
3063 Lake Eastbrook Blvd. SE
Grand Rapids, MI

Participants

INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

Dick Driscoll BIFMA International
Tom Reardon BIFMA International
Mary T. Fraser BASF
Karen Worthy Global Group
Jim Kozminski Haworth Inc.
Larry Dykhuis Herman Miller Inc.
Dean Williams HMU, LLC
Scott Lesnet HNI Corp.
Bill Foley Interface Fabrics
Mark LaCroix Interface Fabrics
Anne Saliers izzydesign
John Shank Kimball International
Lou Newett Knoll
Scott Bartolomei Milliken Fabric
Karen Smant Milliken Fabric
Michael Zimmerman Sauder Woodworking
Mary Ellen Mika Steelcase Inc.
Denise Van Valkenburg, Steelcase Inc.
Craig Bren Tuohy Furniture

INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

Janan Rabiah ACT
Scott Miller NAIMA

GOVERNMENT

Alison Kinn Bennett EPA EPP
Heidi Karp, EPA - Green Suppliers Network
Clare Lindsay, EPA, Office of Solid Waste
Verena Radulovic EPA
Shayla Workman EPA
Toni Stein State of CA DHS
JoAnn Jaschke State of CA IWMB
Laura Rauwerda State of MI DEQ

NGOs

Rob Watson, Natural Resources Defense Council

OTHER

Deborah Dunning IDCE
Jane Wilson NSF International
Clinton Boyd, Sustainable Research Group
Bill Stough, Sustainable Research Group

Welcome

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

The project manager conducted a role call of those present in person and those by telephone and gave an overview of the progress of the last two sessions. The Project Manager gave a brief overview of the meeting agenda and described the proposed schedule for the next two days. The first half of the first day is reserved for reviewing progress made at the last stakeholder meeting in March and investigating several unanswered issues 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.

Background of Last Meetings

The project manager pointed out that the four Work Groups are working on developing approaches to their technical areas and trying to ensure small and large companies have access to the standard. The project manager then listed the goals of the BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard (BIFMA SAS) up until this point in their development. They are:

1. The standard must be meaningful to the marketplace
2. It should help differentiate Environmentally Preferable Business and Institutional Furniture
3. It should help harmonize sustainability standards for the office furniture industry
4. The standard should allow for multiple levels of achievement
5. It should provide an open alternative to proprietary certification programs
6. The standard should provide incentives for smaller companies to participate

The project manager asked if there were any additions or changes. There was a comment made that an additional goal should be to make the BIFMA SAS consistent with existing standards (e.g. USGBC's LEED Rating System, EnergyStar etc). The project manager said a list of these goals would be included in the next meeting minutes.

The project manager then began a discussion on issues raised during the last meeting; he identified the areas and provided background:

- “Should the standard allow for self-certification” was discussed in the last meeting and it was agreed that 1st, 2nd and 3rd party certification would be allowed. NSF also confirmed that conforming to ANSI standards requires the self-certification option.
- Environmental product declarations were an issue in the last meeting and it was decided that all efforts would be made to harmonize existing environmental product declarations with the BIFMA SAS.
- The issue of how to determine what is truly innovative was discussed in the last two meetings. The general thought from those present was to allocate points only for truly innovative activities that exceeded top-level practices. Making the determination on what is innovative should be as objective as possible. For example, exceeding a requirement by a certain percentage could be objective enough to be innovative.

- Multiple levels - The issue of multiple levels of conformance is settled. It was agreed that there should be multiple levels; however the levels have not yet been defined.
- Supplier vs. OEM roles was another issue brought up in the last meetings. The BIFMA SAS standard should eliminate redundant certifications as much as possible. There is concern that the supply chain will be forced to adhere to multiple certifications, increasing product price and decreasing their competitive advantage, while still allowing voluntary certifications by suppliers.
- A suggestion was made that companies should consider integrating the final BIFMA SAS into a companies ISO 14001 EMS program.

Prior to the meeting, the International Design Center for the Environment sent a one page paper describing tools for sustainable product design. The project manager asked Lou Newett from Knoll and one of the authors to provide an overview to participants.

Lou Newett introduced the document entitled “*Introduction to Tools for Sustainable Product Design, Manufacture and Selection.*” He gave a summary of the document and described how the tools and documents included in this report will help provide guidance for developing product standards and achieving better product performance. It describes the difference between a product standard, a Life Cycle Assessment and product specific requirements. The project manager asked if there were any questions about the document and noted this document will be made available to all stakeholders.

The project manager asked the group if there were any other issues that need to be addressed. The group had no issues to discuss and the project manager then asked participants to focus their attention on the March meeting minutes.

Review of March Meeting Minutes

The Project Manager asked if there were any corrections or questions regarding the minutes from the last meeting. After providing participants time to review the March meeting minutes there were no comments. The minutes were accepted into the record based on the consensus of those present.

Review of Current Draft

The project manager led stakeholders through a review of the purpose, scope, and standard outline changes made at the March meeting. He read the revised wording from the last meeting and asked for comments on changes or additions.

Purpose

There were no comments or changes to the Purpose.

Scope

A comment was made to consider giving incentive points (extra credit) under subsection 2.6 if a company takes the extra step of becoming certified to other standards.

Certification to the Standard

Subsection 3.1 was edited and now reads “The standard is useful for assessing conformance of business and institutional furniture and/or materials or components used in the manufacture of furniture products.”

Outline

The title of the outline was edited and now reads “Preliminary BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard Outline.”

There were no other changes or comments on the draft Purpose, Scope or standard outline.

Meeting Goals and Objectives

The project manager said his goal at the end of this two day meeting is to begin adding substance to the standard outline. The project manager raised the issue of overlap between the groups and plans that are being developed on working through that issue by holding joint work group meetings and identifying one work group to take the lead on all issues that overlap multiple groups. One of the important results of this meeting is to obtain feedback on the Social Responsibility Work Group’s progress to meet the request of BIFMA’s board of directors to report back on their progress at the May board meeting.

The project manager then asked if there were any final questions about the draft. There were no additional questions and then participants were asked to suggest how best to use the extra time until lunch break.

A participant asked if the group could spend some time discussing the issue of how best to assign points and how to apply weighting for each category. The following issues were discussed:

- It was suggested that each group should assume they have 100 point to give out as a way to normalize between the groups;
- A recommendation was made for each group to discuss how the 100 points could be broken up into levels of performance; and
- A concern was raised that the 100 points may be too unworkable for some groups (creates de-facto weighting).

After further discussion, the Work Groups agreed to the following guidelines:

1. Continue defining the groups boundaries
2. Identify your prerequisites
3. Identify the appropriate credits
4. Consider how to allocate multiple levels

A potential problem about how to coordinate work between the different groups concerning similar approaches to issues was brought up. An example given was how are other groups addressing integration of supply chain issues? There is concern that the language and approaches taken by each group could be in conflict. A comment was made suggesting that since we are still so early in the process we should be more concerned with forming the framework now, and working out the conflicts later. There was a recommendation that the

groups should decide their own point system to get their boundaries identified and wait on figuring out how the point systems of each group can be synchronized into a whole.

The general agreement among stakeholders present was to continue to identify the boundaries of the workgroup, prerequisites and credits to include within the boundaries and then determine the level of difficulty or level of importance for the credits. The rest of the day was devoted to individual work group meetings.

Thursday, April 20, 2006

The Project Manager welcomed everyone to the second day of the BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard Stakeholder meeting. The project manager conducted a role call of those present in person and those by telephone and gave a brief overview of the day's meeting agenda.

At yesterday's session it was determined to spend the majority of the afternoon on Thursday reconvening as an entire group in order to have a two-way conversation about the progress of each group. Each group will receive a minimum of a half an hour to report progress and problems. The project manager asked the groups to identify the issues where they have reached a consensus and then to identify the issues that need additional input from the larger group.

The project manager asked if there were any issues that needed to be discussed. The social responsibility group asked the other groups if they are including the supply chain in their credits. Representatives from each of the other work groups indicated that they were all addressing supply chain issues in their groups.

At 9:00 am the group broke into the four technical sessions to work on completing the guidelines and identifying unresolved areas to present to the larger group. The group agreed to reconvene at 1:00 pm for a whole group report back session.

Thursday Afternoon - Reconvening of the Whole Group

The project manager welcomed everyone back after lunch and the technical breakout sessions and discussed the rest of the day's agenda. Due to the upcoming BIFMA board meeting report, the social responsibility group presented first.

Work Group 4 - Social Responsibility

Co-chairs Bill Foley, from Interface Fabrics and Larry Dykhuis, from Herman Miller presented the social responsibility group's preliminary scorecard and guideline documents, describing the prerequisites, credits and the intent, requirements and the potential techniques and strategies of each credit.

Prerequisite One – Applicant Must Meet or Exceed OSHA Standards

Comments - This prerequisite should include meeting local standards in the country of origin, such as OSHA in the United States. It was pointed out that if a company has a program in place to ensure worker safety and protect health and they document this information, then it should be able to meet the requirements in the prerequisite. It was noted that the prerequisite does not

prohibit companies from applying OSHA standards across its world wide supply chain, but also allows meeting local laws and regulations that achieve the same objectives.

Prerequisite Two – Applicant Must Document Intent to Identify, Avoid and Prevent Injuries

Comments - For example in this prerequisite it should include an OSHA SIC code to help identify injury incident rates for an industry. A comment was made to move the references to the Global Reporting Initiative and SA 8000 out of the requirements section and into the reference section to avoid confusion.

The project manager asked if there were any questions regarding the prerequisites and if they seem like achievable measurements. Bill Foley commented that the social responsibility group developed this documentation with a world-wide view. The energy committee recommended creating an area in the matrix to assign whether the prerequisites and credits are facility or product specific or both.

The project manager asked if there were any questions about the prerequisites. There were no comments from the group. He then moved on to the recommended credits.

Credit 1 Comments - There was a comment that harassment policies might be included in this section.

Credit 2 Comments- There were no comments

Credit 3 Comments - There were no comments

Credit 4 Comments - There was a comment that the requirements under diversity section may be too encompassing to document. The project manager asked if the credits were arranged from easy to hard. Bill Foley said the credits are not currently weighted from easy to hard, but the tasks within each credit were assigned from the easiest to the hardest.

Credit 5 Comments - There was a comment about liking the inclusion of points for engaging the community in environmental programs such as voluntary stream cleaning programs.

Credit 6 Comments – On the point of “does the OEM have supply chain management practices that question the social responsibility of your suppliers” It was suggested that the requirements could be simplified.

The project manager asked the group what their general impressions of the entire program. The following comments were made:

- A comment was made on whether or not the group has given consideration to how much time or dollars conforming to the credits will take to maintain and certify to the standard. Work Group members said that that has not been a consideration at this point. The project manager suggested that the project is not far enough along to determine the cost or human resource input, but will eventually.
- Comments were made that the social responsibility requirements may be too overwhelming. Bill Foley responded that the work group’s intent was to identify and put all the essential

information they could identify on the table for feedback. He emphasized that a company doesn't have to obtain all points to become certified.

- The project manager suggested that the essential issue in terms of time and cost is what is required for the prerequisites. Most of the comments suggested that documenting conformance to the prerequisites would not be difficult for companies that have a good existing health and safety program. The other credit points are available if a company wants to put additional resources into achieving a higher level of certification.

The project manager asked if the work group thought the prerequisites and major elements were reasonable and the consensus was that they were all reasonable. Additional discussions revealed that the concern was about what the details are to achieve points for the elements. Bill Foley said the group was trying to give the subject a wide exposure and that simplification of the details for each element will come over time.

It was suggested that for a company to comply with the social responsibility standard as it is written would not cost a company a lot of money. If you are complying with ISO 9000 or 14001 standards you may already meet a majority of the criteria.

The project manager asked "In terms of the credits is there anything that is troublesome." A comment was made that the prerequisites would not require additional paperwork. If the paperwork has already been completed for one of these or other programs it would just need to be shown to meet the standard's criteria.

The question was asked how the other workgroups measure up to the amount of material and detail of credits as shown by the social responsibility group. The project manager commented that the two groups needing additional work are the Human Health and Ecosystem Health and Water and Natural Resources Work Groups. A comment was made that the Energy Efficiency Work Group was sufficiently developed that their members should soon be available to help other groups.

Tom Reardon indicated that he wants to present the Social Responsibility Group's work to the board at their May meeting. He would like more detail, and specific examples or references on the prerequisites to show that the social responsibility portion is not too far beyond what BIFMA member companies are already doing. The project manager suggested that there should be an interim meeting of the work group in preparation for the next board meeting.

The question "what are the current certification standards in the market place that BIFMA hopes the standard would replace?" Tom Reardon indicated that BIFMA is hoping to introduce this into the market place as one of the first furniture standards.

A comment was made that the next meeting in May needs to incorporate more dialogue in the larger group rather than in the small breakout sessions to obtain feedback. In preparation for the May Stakeholders meeting it was suggested that each workgroup prepare a document that encompasses the most urgent issues that need feedback from the whole group of stakeholders.

It was announced that BIFMA is negotiating with NSF to develop a cooperative arrangement, and therefore it is uncertain at this time where the location for the next meeting will be; either in Grand Rapids or Ann Arbor, Michigan. BIFMA will notify stakeholders as soon as the location is determined.

Denise VanValkenburg from Steelcase, Inc. and Chair of the Human Health and Ecosystem Health Work Group announced that at 10:00 am on May 11th there would be a separate conference call on the Product Emissions credit before the next meeting to discuss numerous issues that have arisen that could affect the standard. Anyone interested in participating will be welcome, BIFMA will send out details before the date on how to get involved.

The project manager thanked everyone for participating in the April Stakeholder meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.