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Fact Sheet

The Green Products Roundtable (GPR)

February 2010

Mission

The GPR is group of representatives from the private, nonprofit, and government sectors working to (a) reduce confusion over the “green” marketplace and (b) improve the production and buying decisions of product manufacturers, institutional purchasers, and consumers.

Background

After a period of exploratory dialogue, The Keystone Center formally launched the Green Products Roundtable in October 2009. The Roundtable grew out of increasing concerns among stakeholders from the private sector, government, non-profits, and certifiers about a lack of clarity around what constitutes a green product and what the appropriate roles are for the government and private sectors.

The GPR is comprised of approximately 40 stakeholders involved in different aspects of green products manufacturing, distribution, certification, research, and consumer education. The Keystone Center serves as the independent convener and facilitator. Our facilitation team lends its expertise in process design, negotiation, and mediation to members by providing:

- A neutral forum and venue for GPR participants to learn from and engage in constructive dialogue with members holding different views;
- An opportunity to deepen mutual understanding and build productive new relationships through discussions with other members; and
- An opportunity to work collaboratively to address challenges of mutual interest.

2010 Objectives

- Develop common definitions for terms used in the green products marketplace.
- Create a schematic *essence of green* framework that identifies (a) product categories; (b) major desired environmental impacts in various product categories; (c) the attributes of concern associated with each of the categories; and (d) how the attributes can be used to make green, greener, and greenest determinations.
- Produce a statement of overarching, cross-cutting principles that can be used regardless of product categories.
- Construct a stakeholder map of major actors in the green marketing space (standards developers, certifiers, verifiers) and identify their current and emerging roles and responsibilities, best practices, and subsequently, functional or organizational gaps.
- Build a more informed and precise understanding of what institutional purchasers seek from a well codified and well managed green marketplace.
- Craft consensual guidance to government on issues pertinent to managing to green marketplace.
- Share an approach to harmonizing U.S. claims, labels, standards, and certifications with those emerging in other countries and regions.

Assumptions

Members of the GPR share the following assumptions:

- The uptake of greener products into the global marketplace is a needed and beneficial phenomenon.
- The green product marketplace will continue to be dynamic and competitive and products are likely to get greener over time if the confidence of consumers, both individual and institutional, can be maintained and bolstered.
- The government, business and NGO sectors must work together to help achieve greater rigor and public understanding of products that claim some level of greenness.
- The increasing number and nature of claims, labels, certification methods, and standards is confusing and may be impeding the long term development of a greener marketplace.
- Although no single, authoritative and fully agreed to definition of green yet exists, a credible and robust intellectual framework that allows fair product comparisons by institutional and individual consumers is needed to strengthen confidence in a green marketplace.
- Some form of marketplace management and or governance will eventually be required.

Funding

The Green Products Roundtable is funded by a dues structure to cover the costs of plenary and working group meetings. Members support the GPR financially with a sliding dues scale for nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Keystone also receives grants from foundations and government agencies to supplement the costs of this project. In some cases, we will provide financial support for selected members to participate if that organization represents a critical perspective and finances are a barrier to their participation.

About The Keystone Center

The Keystone Center has a 35-year history of serving as an independent convener and facilitator of cross-sector groups who are differently positioned on important public policy issues. The touchstones of our work are independence and neutrality, the use of the best scientific and technical information available to help inform policy solutions, an insistence on having different stakeholder perspectives represented, and a knack for engaging those stakeholders in creating well-informed, practical solutions to tough problems.

For more information, please contact any member of The Keystone Center's Green Products Roundtable team:

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