

# United States materials marketplace



United States Business Council  
for Sustainable Development



wbcscd



CORPORATE  
ECOFORUM  
Forging Next Practice in Corporate Sustainability

New marketplace allows companies to exchange underutilized materials, turning one company's waste into raw material for the other.



The National Materials Marketplace is a new joint pilot project led by the Corporate Eco Forum (CEF), US Business Council for Sustainable Development (US BCSD), and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). Bringing together more than 20 major companies with operations in the United States, the project will help participants identify ways to reuse or exchange undervalued materials via an online database, and establish new circular supply chains.

“The Marketplace project is a key step towards the shift to a circular economy – one where waste becomes the new engine for creating value,” says Peter Bakker, President and CEO of the WBCSD. Growing cross-industry collaboration for the efficient use of our resources is promising. This opens up new business opportunities while creating economic, environmental, and societal benefits.

The US-wide pilot project builds upon a similar regional project in Austin, Texas managed by the US BCSD, as well as other “by-product synergy” projects in North America, China and the United Kingdom over the past 20 years. The project uses an cloud-based materials marketplace software, originally developed by the US BCSD to support the Hebei By-Product Synergy Project under the U.S. - China EcoPartnerships program in May 2012.

**“The increasing pressure on our natural resources sends a clear message: we need to find value in discarded materials.”**

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**Andrew Mangan,**  
*Executive Director of  
the US BCSD*

The potential benefits of matching material and by-product waste streams with opportunities for reuse are massive. In recent years, General Motors has generated nearly \$1 billion in annual revenue through reusing and recycling its by-products. By finding reuse and recycling options for this material, GM avoided over 10 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions in 2014.

“Material management is a business opportunity, not just a cost-reduction strategy,” says John Bradburn, GM’s Global Manager of Waste Reduction. “We have to reach the stage where by-products are viewed the same way we view product development – part of constant improvement and innovation.”

The National Materials Marketplace Marketplace is a unique collaboration among the three business associations. Originally conceived at a CEF member meeting, the idea gained momentum with the support of early advocates including GM and Nike.

Amy O’Meara, Director of the Corporate Eco Forum explains: “US BCSD’s expertise and software were exactly what our members were looking for. And joining forces with US BCSD and WBCSD was a natural fit, given the significant complementarity of our memberships. By leveraging each of our organizations’ strengths, we can deliver increased value to participating companies.”

### current status - august 2015

**22** companies are actively participating in the pilot project, and have engaged **70+** facilities across the US. Users at these facilities have uploaded hundreds of different materials to the marketplace. **2,300,000 tons/year** of underutilized materials have been identified in the first two months of the pilot. The project has been highlighted by a number of national organizations, including GreenBiz, 3BLMedia, and Sustainable Brands.

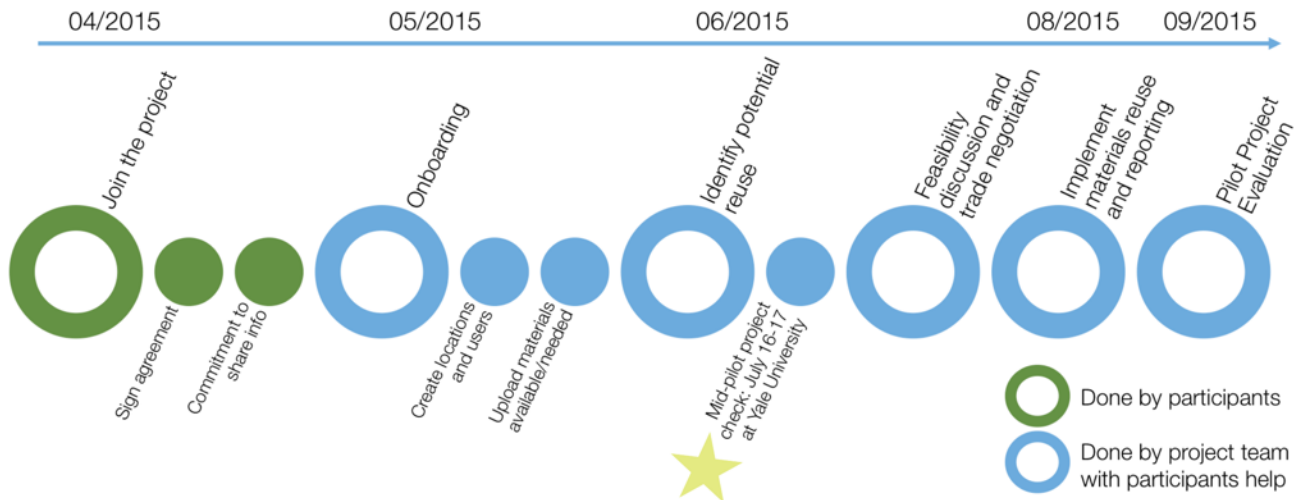
Overall, feedback from project participants has been very positive. Most participants feel their sustainability goals are well supported by this project, and that there is considerable potential for greater scale. Some participants are surprised by the variety, and high quality, of materials in the marketplace. We have also received great suggestions on future project activities, developing working groups around key material types and value chains, software improvements, and potential participants to bring onboard in the future.

The project is also gaining international attention, with growing interest from international organizations like the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, and enthusiasm from the WBCSD Global Network to implement similar national-level projects across Europe.



**PICTURED ABOVE** General Motors has “steel offal” listed in the marketplace, which is a steel by-product of GM’s stamping operations. GM produces ~40,000 pieces per month in about 12 different shapes and sizes. Due to its consistent size, quality and predictable quantity, pieces have reuse potential and value beyond traditional scrap metal markets.

where we're headed



The pilot phase of the project will conclude in mid-September, after which the US BCSD and WBCSD will create and distribute a final report on our project experiences, key metrics, reuse opportunities identified, potential environmental and economic impact, key partnerships that have developed as a result of the pilot, and our next steps moving forward.

for more information



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### RELATED MATERIALS

- [Slide Deck](#)
- [Austin Materials Marketplace Regional Project Website](#)
- [US BCSD Website](#)
- [US-China EcoPartnerships Program](#)

### PROJECT PRESS

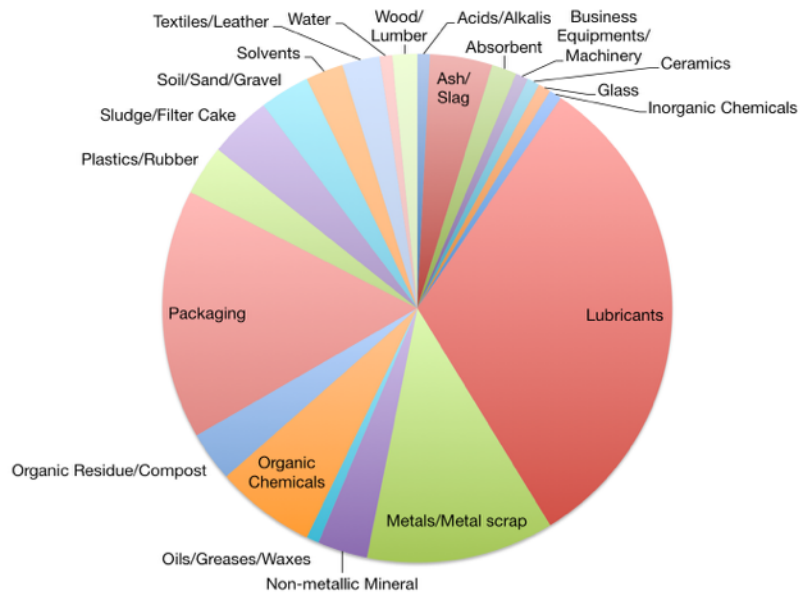
- [GreenBiz](#)
- [Sustainable Brands](#)
- [3BLMedia](#)
- [Fastlane \(GM's Blog\)](#)

### SOFTWARE DEMO VIDEO

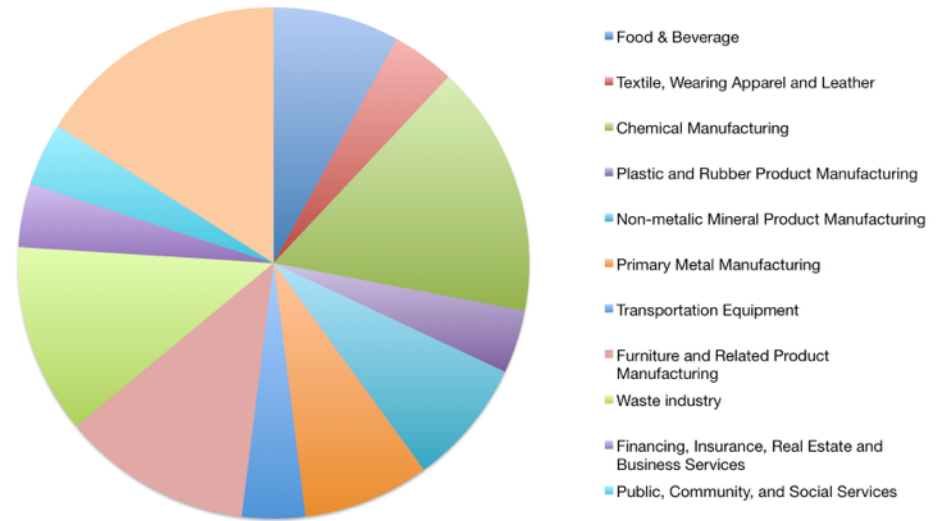
- <https://vimeo.com/137884504>



## materials available



## industry types



## who's involved



## at a glance

