



## **GEMI Sustainability Disruption Work Group 2022**

### **Vision**

To bring together corporate sustainability leaders from across sectors to identify, understand and develop strategies to prepare for a wide range of possible future global disruptions that may challenge short to mid-term business sustainability goals, while creating new opportunities for leading organizations to position themselves for greater resiliency and success in the long-term.

### **Mission**

Build on the successful 2021 Sustainable Disruption Project (SDP) to support an on-going cross-sector forum to identify, share and develop practical processes and tools for better anticipating, evaluating and preparing for short-, mid- and long-term disruptions that may impact business sustainability (e.g. extreme weather, natural disasters, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, resource scarcity, changes in political administrations, infectious diseases, and many other possibilities). Through this work, help corporate sustainability leaders to prepare their organizations to rapidly respond, lead and prosper through such disruptions.

### **Background**

In 2021 GEMI convened the SDP Work Group to create a cross-sector forum to identify and understand many different conceivable short-, mid- and long-term disruptions that may impact business sustainability and develop strategies and processes to help corporate sustainability leaders to prepare their organizations to rapidly respond, lead and prosper through such disruptions.

To do this, GEMI led project participants through a process via facilitated, interactive virtual workshops throughout 2021. In some cases, tools from other projects were adapted to provide hands-on exercises for sharing and reflection.

The three workshops focused on:

1. **Lessons from maintaining sustainability programs DURING disruptions.** - what changes, what has been maintained without change, what has been leveraged with or by disruptions. What mix of resiliency (withstanding disruption to return to prior state) and adaptation (making fundamental changes for prepare for a different present and future) did companies rely on? How has the changing information landscape changed the way we detect, monitor and manage disruptions?
2. **Implications for corporate sustainability PROGRAMS for the FUTURE.** Looking at the program you have and lessons from the previous workshop, how should your sustainability program be the same or different going forward? What would be substantively different? What would be unchanged, but priorities or "packaging" might be different?
3. **Developing practical approaches.** Identify and develop practical and usable approaches to help corporate sustainability leaders identify, understand and shape business strategies to address short, mid and long-term disruptions, from whatever the source. Identify potential future tool development to support these approaches.



Work Group participants found the 2021 Project to be productive with useful take-aways including:

- “We need to operationalize this better, looking for disruptions beforehand. What’s our process, how do we come up with our list.”
- “How interconnected all these disruptions are.”
- “Our process needs to look at three things: what’s happening inside the business, what are the external forces that could affect the business, and **what** can Corporate Sustainability do about it.”
- “We need to look at alternate ways to quantify long-term impact. I can have conversations with different executives on what numbers could I supply them, like loss of coastline.”
- “How to raise awareness, how to think longer-term.”
- “Helping to see where we can spread the word farther around the company, including going beyond ESG reporting.”
- These issues are key to attracting and maintaining labor. “We’ve seen people coming to [my company] because of our sustainability side.”

### **What will the GEMI Sustainability Disruption Work Group Do in 2022?**

The 2022 SDP will be guided initially by 2021 SDP Work Group participants’ interest in continuing to exchange ideas and solutions especially in different sectors, with a focus on practical tools.

Through three virtual workshops and related off-line work, the project will help participants:

- Identify the critical processes for anticipating, evaluating and preparing for disruptions.
- Develop systemic approaches (and key supporting tools) to help create, challenge and strengthen those processes.
- Focus on and develop approaches for the small number of critical challenges including quantification of impacts and scenario-based risk analysis.
- Explore systemic connections required for and impacts resulting from preparation and response to disruptions from an internal and external perspective.

As in 2021, Work Group participants and especially the GEMI Member Co-Chairs will help ensure that workshops focus on the issues with the highest urgency and value for participants.

### **How will the GEMI SDP operate?**

The GEMI SDP will be led by GEMI members and supported by GEMI’s staff. The work group activities will kickoff in Q1 2022 and will be led and supported through virtual sessions throughout the year.

### **What will be the cost to participate in the GEMI SDP?**

GEMI Members will be able to participate in the work group as part of their membership contributions to GEMI. GEMI dues are \$12,500. Companies and organizations choosing not to become a member of GEMI may join as participants in the work group alone for 2022, for a fee of \$4,500.

To learn more about how to participate, contact Steve Hellem at [shellem@navista.net](mailto:shellem@navista.net)