



# Sustainable Consumption Facts and Trends

From a business  
perspective

The Business Role Focus Area



# A statement of intent

From the WBCSD's Business Role Focus Area workstream on Sustainable Consumption & Consumers

Current global consumption patterns are unsustainable. Based on the facts and trends outlined in this document, it is becoming apparent that efficiency gains and technological advances alone will not be sufficient to bring global consumption to a sustainable level; changes will also be required to consumer lifestyles, including the ways in which consumers choose and use products and services.

We recognize the need for business to play a leadership role in fostering more sustainable levels and patterns of consumption, through current business processes such as innovation, marketing and communications, and by working in partnership with consumers, governments and stakeholders to define and achieve more sustainable lifestyles.

## Foreword

“The target of this work is to demonstrate that WBCSD members want to be proactive in addressing the global challenges related to shortage of resources, water scarcity, climate change and loss of biodiversity. Understanding and adjusting to the requirements of future consumers who will increasingly want to make ethical choices will be important to the whole business community. Overlooking this trend would be shortsighted and a risk for any company, and we believe it is the responsible companies who will be successful in the long run. Companies can also influence consumer behavior towards more sustainable choices, both through product development and consumer information. It is our aim that this trend analysis on sustainable consumption will act as a trigger for innovation and ultimately for more sustainable consumption.”

*Kirsi Sormunen, Vice President & Head of Environmental Activities, Nokia*

“The role of business and the role of consumers are intrinsically linked in terms of the sustainable use of products. Consumers choose to buy a product for a combination of reasons. One is and will remain excellent performance at an adequate price. In the future, delivering performance that is both based on sustainability and recognized as added value will become increasingly important for consumer choices. This development offers great potential as a driver for

innovative products – not merely in the sense of ‘green’ products, but in the sense of offering smarter consumer-relevant solutions that link product quality to the shared responsibility of producers and consumers. The environmental footprint of the product in terms of production and disposal and – in many cases even more importantly – the proper use of the product with respect to its environmental impact will be decisive. To address this, we must work more closely with consumers, communicating top performance, the added value of sustainable products and enabling behavioral changes.”

*C-A Weinberger, Corporate Senior Vice President and Global Chief Marketing Officer, Henkel*

“Addressing sustainable consumption requires innovative thinking that goes ‘beyond the fence’. The fundamentals of business activity in society will be impacted by resource shortages and environmental degradation. This document seeks to explore trends in business approaches that align corporate values and marketing activities in the context of the creation of marketable, sustainable solutions. Once this broadened view is established, it opens new dimensions of market opportunity but not at the cost of the environment.”

*Frank Henke, Vice President & Global Director, Social and Environmental Affairs, adidas Group*

“We need to connect sustainable production with sustainable consumption. This means understanding current and future consumption patterns, then harnessing innovation to develop more sustainable products, services and behavior change initiatives. This publication will help us all learn from those leading the way in identifying opportunities for sustainable value creation for consumers, businesses and society as a whole.”

*Dr. Peter White, Director of Global Sustainability, Procter & Gamble*

“Technology innovation has driven the explosive growth of the 20th century – growth that now presents us with a new set of local and global challenges. Rising effectively to these challenges requires us to work closely with our consumers to redefine the value that we offer to them, and to redefine our corporate values in line with our vision of a sustainable and prosperous society.”

*Hidemi Tomita, General Manager, Corporate Social Responsibility Department, Sony Corporation*

“I see an important role for business in the discussion about sustainable consumption in helping to find an optimal balance between self-regulating market mechanisms on the one hand and legislative, ‘level playing field’ initiatives on the other.”

*Dr. Andrew Griffiths, Director EHS Europe, Umicore*

“The role of business is to make markets work. This document is a call to action to make markets work for sustainable consumption.”

*Cassie Phillips, Vice President, Sustainable Forests and Products, Weyerhaeuser*