

# Follow-up Questionnaire: Forum on SMM in the Built Environment

## Introduction

The following questionnaire is intended to obtain input from participants in the Forum on Life Cycle Approaches to Sustainably Manage Materials in Building and Infrastructure Projects (the Forum), which was held January 31- February 1, 2018 in Washington, DC. During the Forum, participants were asked to identify important next steps for the design and construction industry, non-profits, governments, and others to take to advance sustainable materials management (SMM) in the built environment. EPA intended to conduct a prioritization exercise for these next steps during the Forum. However, due to time constraints, EPA was unable to complete the activity, and we are asking for participants' "virtual" input now.

This questionnaire asks participants for input on the relative priority of the many actions, grouped into six themes, identified during the Forum. For more detailed information on these themes please review the [Forum on Life Cycle Approaches to Sustainably Manage Materials in Building and Infrastructure Projects Summary Report](#) available on EPA's website. Survey Gizmo estimates that this questionnaire will take you approximately 8-12 minutes to complete. While the analysis and output will be anonymous and will not include any identifying information, we will use information that you provided when registering for the Forum to help interpret the data. If you would like to opt out of this questionnaire, please email us at [Boxman.suzanne@epa.gov](mailto:Boxman.suzanne@epa.gov) by September 17, 2018.

Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your valuable perspective!

---

## Background and Perspective

The following questions ask about your background and perspective to help interpret responses to this questionnaire.

---

1. What is your primary area of focus? \*

- Buildings
- Non-building infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, water, energy)
- Both buildings and non-building infrastructure
- Other

2. How would you describe your primary role(s) relative to SMM in the built environment? (please choose all that apply) \*

- Owner/operator of buildings or infrastructure (public or private)
- Developer, construction contractor, and/or deconstruction contractor
- Manufacturer and/or supplier of products/materials
- Waste/materials handler and/or marketer
- Architect
- Engineer
- Specifier
- Administrator of certification/rating systems (e.g., director, researcher, staff)
- Administrator of professional association (e.g., director, researcher, staff)
- Federal, state or local public official
- Researcher
- Other

3. About how many years have you been engaged in projects involving SMM in the built environment? \*

- < 5 years
- 5 - 9 years
- 10 - 14 years
- 15+ years

## Priorities for Action

The following questions ask you to rate the actions identified by participants in the Forum based on their relative priority for advancing SMM in the built environment. The actions are grouped into six themes (one per page).

## Priorities for Collaboration and Partnerships

Forum participants emphasized the importance of collaboration and partnerships for advancing SMM in the built environment—in general and in a specific project setting. Which of the following actions do you feel are most important to promote collaboration and partnerships?

4. Develop and support collaboration among stakeholders across the environmental life cycle for the following reasons: \*

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Don't know
Raise awareness and understanding of the value of SMM to encourage adoption of SMM approaches	<input type="radio"/>				
Strengthen connections and reduce barriers among practitioners to foster trust and innovation in SMM approaches	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

5. Facilitate collaboration on the following specific topics: \*

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Don't know
SMM in non-building infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, water, energy)	<input type="radio"/>				
Best practices and benefits of early project-level collaboration to advance SMM	<input type="radio"/>				
Relationship between resiliency and SMM	<input type="radio"/>				
Health-based assessment standards (e.g., related to chemical composition of products)	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

## Priorities for Innovation and Research

Forum participants highlighted the fact that sustainable solutions are often innovative, requiring research and testing to demonstrate results, encourage adoption of successful ideas, and foster further innovation. Which of the following actions do you feel are the highest priorities for innovation and research to advance SMM in the built environment?

6. Support proof-of-concept testing of new materials, products and SMM approaches (e.g., conduct demonstration projects, develop testing standards). \*

- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| High priority         | Medium priority       | Low priority          | Not a priority        | Don't know            |
| <input type="radio"/> |

Comments

7. Conduct and/or share research on the following topics: \*

- |  |               |                 |              |                |            |
|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|------------|
|  | High priority | Medium priority | Low priority | Not a priority | Don't know |
|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|------------|

Barriers and strategies for materials recovery, processing and storage infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>				
Using rating systems and building codes to promote resiliency and SMM	<input type="radio"/>				
Innovative techniques for aligning tenant and/or user behavior with sustainability goals	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

8. Conduct research on the impact and best practices for recovery, separation, and reuse, recycling and/or disposal of the following materials: \*

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Don't know
Polymers and composites	<input type="radio"/>				
Treated wood	<input type="radio"/>				
Gypsum wallboard	<input type="radio"/>				
Other materials discussed during the Forum (please identify in the Comment box)	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

## Priorities for Life-Cycle Data and Tools

Forum participants highlighted the need for more and better data and information management tools. Which of the following actions do you feel are most important for developing life-cycle data and tools to advance SMM in the built environment?

9. Develop and/or enhance life-cycle data in the following areas: \*

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Don't know
Life-cycle data for core building materials and products (e.g., expanded scope of products, better quality data)	<input type="radio"/>				
Connections between chemicals used in products and potential impacts from product reuse, recycling and/or disposal	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

10. Make existing life-cycle data more accessible and useful through the following actions: \*

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Don't know
Improve user-friendliness of existing life-cycle inventory (LCI) data	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop a common LCA data platform for use across product transparency reports (e.g., environmental product declarations) and rating systems	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

11. Help decision makers use existing green building and infrastructure rating systems to make more informed choices through the following actions: \*

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Don't know
Enhance quality of rating systems to help ensure comparability among different rating systems	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop a unified approach for using different rating systems in Federal, state, and local government procurement decisions	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop guidance on features and applicability of different rating systems	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

12. Develop a system to track materials from their origin to their current use in building and infrastructure stock. \*

High priority

Medium priority

Low priority

Not a priority

Don't know

Comments

---

## Priorities for Telling a Better Story About SMM Approaches

Forum participants discussed the need to "tell a better story" about the benefits of SMM approaches in the built environment, including not only environmental benefits but also local economic and transformational benefits. Which of the following actions do you feel are most important for conveying the benefits of using SMM approaches in the built environment?

13. Develop and disseminate the following type of information – in the form of case studies, reports, brochures, fact sheets, info-graphics, ad campaigns, etc. – about SMM approaches: \*

High  
priority

Medium  
priority

Low  
priority

Not a  
priority

Don't  
know

Economic benefits, including cost savings and local economic benefits

Connections to other related movements/initiatives familiar to stakeholders

Comments

14. Develop the following types of resources to help share information about the benefits of SMM approaches: \*

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Don't know
Clearinghouse of success stories and demonstrated best practices	<input type="radio"/>				
List of speakers willing and able to explain the benefits in relevant forums	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

## Priorities for Enhancing Secondary Material Markets

Forum participants emphasized that promoting next-life uses through secondary material markets will be essential for advancing SMM approaches. Which of the following actions are most important for enhancing secondary material markets?

15. Develop and disseminate the following types of information: \*

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Don't know
Practical guidance on collecting and processing secondary materials for new construction	<input type="radio"/>				
A risk assessment framework to inform decisions regarding use of secondary materials	<input type="radio"/>				
Information and practical guidance on reverse supply chain processes for large quantity products	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

16. Enact public policies intended to achieve the following: \*

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Don't know
Provide regulatory clarity regarding “waste” status of recovered materials	<input type="radio"/>				
Strengthen demand for secondary materials (e.g., via public agency procurement policies)	<input type="radio"/>				
Provide incentives (e.g., tax abatements) for materials recovery and marketing	<input type="radio"/>				
Promote independent certification of construction and demolition recycling facilities	<input type="radio"/>				

Comments

## Priorities for Shifting Paradigms

Throughout the Forum, participants noted important paradigm shifts that are taking place across the country. These included: reducing the quantity of materials needed or the quantity of products needed upfront; shifts from thinking about first costs to life-cycle costs; moving from planned obsolescence of products to designing for durability and next-life uses; and moving from separate teams and roles on individual building projects to more integrated teams and collaborative environments. Which of the following actions do you feel are most important for advancing these paradigm shifts?

17. Raise awareness and foster change through the following actions: \*

High priority      Medium priority      Low priority      Not a priority      Don't know

Post information regarding existing resources and tools regarding SMM approaches on websites frequented by key stakeholders

Conduct outreach via professional associations to raise awareness of potential benefits, best practices, and resources available for SMM approaches

Facilitate more widespread use of costing approaches that encourage a shift in emphasis from first costs to life-cycle costs

Highlight SMM approaches that achieve desired outcomes (e.g., adaptive reuse first, resilient design for long-term savings)

Comments

## Near-term priorities

The preceding questions asked you to rate actions in terms of their importance in advancing SMM in the built environment. The following questions ask you to identify near-term priorities from the actions that you identified as "high priority." Near-term priorities are actions that could be undertaken now to achieve near-term outcomes and/or lay the groundwork for other actions and long-term change.

[Design Note: We are currently working on a survey design approach that will populate the list under this question with just those actions that the respondent identified in previous questions as "high priority."]

18. Please identify five items that you believe are the most important near-term priorities. \*

## Interest in Further Engagement

19. Please rate your interest in the following: \*

Very interested

Somewhat interested

Not interested

Helping to plan future engagements on SMM in the built environment

Attending and participating in future engagements on SMM in the built environment

Compiling and/or contributing to a list of groups working on similar topics

Compiling and/or contributing to resources to be included or referenced in a clearinghouse of information on SMM in the built environment

Hosting a clearinghouse of information on SMM in the built environment

Receiving additional information on SMM in the built environment (e.g., joining a list serve)

Comments

20. This concludes the questionnaire. Please let us know if there are any additional comments that you would like to share regarding priorities for action discussed during the Forum.

Thank You!

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your response is very important to us.