

The Green Supplier Network (GSN) *An industry-government collaboration*

The **Green Supplier Network (GSN)**, a collaborative venture between industry and EPA, works with *all levels of the manufacturing supply chain* to achieve environmental and economic benefits. GSN improves performance, minimizes waste generation and removes institutional roadblocks through its innovative approach to leveraging a national network of manufacturing technical assistance resources. Through GSN, suppliers are able to continuously improve products and processes, identify cost-saving opportunities, and optimize resources and technologies with the aim of eliminating waste.

The key features of GSN are:

- *Technical Reviews.* The Department of Commerce Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) (*a program of the National Institute of Standards and Technology*) delivers industry-specific technical assistance reviews to suppliers; conducted one-on-one at individual facilities. MEP centers are tasked with providing solutions to business and environmental concerns. Additional support is provided by state environmental technical assistance offices. EPA is not involved in any on-site technical assistance.
- *Green and Lean.* Using Lean and Clean manufacturing practices, GSN focuses on incorporating energy/materials efficiency and process optimization into the supply chain, achieving both environmental and economic benefits.
- *Cost Savings.* All cost savings identified through the program stay with the supplier, enabling participating suppliers to be more competitive and cost responsive to their customer.
- *Outreach.* The GSN approach can reach all tiers of the supply chain. By partnering with and working through leading companies, GSN can reach the estimated 70 - 80% of manufacturing activities outsourced by major manufacturers in recent years.
- *Metrics.* Aggregate economic and environmental benefits are quantified through the simple and hassle-free data collection and reporting capabilities of the MEPs.
- *Continuous improvement.* GSN establishes a permanent delivery mechanism to engage manufacturers and their suppliers in continuous environmental/economic improvement.
- *Removing Obstacles.* GSN encourages suppliers to identify obstacles such as outdated specifications, and provides a forum for identifying options for change.
- *Reduced Liability.* GSN provides a third-party forum for information transfer that helps to minimize the liabilities associated with direct communications between customer and supplier.
- *Partnerships.* GSN will partner with state, local and other federal agencies to bring the best technical, financial and research assistance to participating companies.

The Green Suppliers Network is an umbrella program under which several partnerships will be conducted. The Suppliers' Partnership for the Environment, is the first such partnership and one that is exclusively centered on the automobile supply chain. GSN is the evolution and replication of the automotive model to other industry sectors.

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