UNC KENAN-FLAGLER BUSINESS SCHOOL
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CENTER for SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE

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Product Stewardship

Bridging Permission-to-Operate to Sustainability

By John W. Lott, Ph.D.

"The substance is nontoxic - it's legal to add it to animal feed," Mr. Yu at Juancheng Ouya Chemical said of cyanuric acid. "The practice has been around for many years. I often sell it to animal feed makers." This excerpt from a May 9th *NY Times* article identifies an industrial chemical contaminant added to animal feed by producers seeking larger profits. The excerpt sums up one of a growing number of issues that manufacturers must manage with what can be termed product stewardship systems.

While we see an increasing number of companies seeking to become more sustainable, news stories like this continue to demonstrate that many companies and even industries haven't done the foundation work to be sustainable. Issues related to the safety of pet food, spinach, soft drinks, computer batteries, etc. have shown that some companies sometimes lack robust systems for ensuring their products are safe for people and the environment and don't negatively impact society. Many companies are now embracing the tenets of product stewardship to minimize and often eliminate these business and societal risks.

Evolution of Product Stewardship

Product stewardship, a key step in creating a sustainable company, has been defined as the responsible and ethical management of the health, safety, and environmental (HSE) aspects of a product throughout its *total life cycle*. Additionally, product stewardship has been deemed a business process, indicating that it must be integrated into daily business practices and must include societal aspects of products. This is the definition used by the global chemical industry, which has been developing, refining, and executing product stewardship processes since the late 1980's. Arguably, product stewardship actually began with the first issuance of chemical safety data sheets in 1946. These were later made mandatory under the Right to Know laws (November 1983) following the

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establishment of OSHA in the U.S. in December 1970.

The product stewardship process has always been the main system for examining the HSE risks associated with the materials (including chemical, toxicological, and physical properties), exposure parameters, design, and uses of various types of products. The process includes not only basic materials like chemicals, but also finished goods.

The Regulatory Environment

Risk assessment initially focused only on hazard and exposure parameters, but more recently has also included compliance with the exploding body of global, federal, and regional regulations and directives aimed at products. This growth of *product-related* laws in the last few years parallels a similar growth in facility-based HSE laws that came into being in the late 80's and early 90's. Companies came to rely on site-based HSE management systems such as ISO14001 or EMAS to comply with these laws. Now, some of those same companies are only just becoming aware of legal product restrictions, often still relying on site-based rather than product-based systems to manage the HSE impacts of their products.

"Many companies haven't done the foundation work to be sustainable."

New laws have also imposed more expectations about extended producer responsibility, such as the final disposition of products. The European Union has enacted regulations placing requirements on the "end-of-life" for automobiles (End of Life Vehicles or ELV), and electronics (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment or WEEE and the companion Restriction on Hazardous Substance or ROHS). The soon-to-be-enacted Energy Using Products (EUP) directives will provide requirements on how designs are weighted according to their HSE impacts. While companies not operating globally may not consider these important, industry has witnessed the adoption of ROHS copy regulations in Korea, China, Japan, and California. As late as a year after the adoption of ROHS in Europe, *ElectronicsTalk* reported,

John W. Lott, PhD is the Corporate Global Product Stewardship Lead for DuPont and an adjunct professor at UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School teaching in the MBA program.

"Many OEMs [original equipment manufacturers] are stuck with left-over components that they are unable to use due to recent corporate strategies for converting end products to ROHS compliance."[1]

Product Design for Stewardship

Though a previously recognized part of this HSE risk process, product efficacy—the ability of a product to perform as advertised—is now more often included under product stewardship management systems. This is certainly apt when efficacy failures lead to health, safety, and environmental consequences, such as the problems that certain automaker and tire manufacturers experienced several years ago and, more recently, those plaguing computer battery manufacturers.

Additionally, there is a growing body of customer, industry, and even societal restrictions and requirements on products that address all stakeholders in the supply chain—from suppliers to consumers. The electronics, automotive, and building industries especially have seen this grow dramatically. Many companies now require the supplier end of a product supply chain to meet stewardship requirements. SONY and Samsung do so through their green partner or green procurement programs which require HSE vetting of suppliers.

Likewise, there is a growing recognition by civil society that both manufactured products and services can have wide-ranging impacts

1 *Story at www.electronicstalk.com/news/ecj/ecj100.html*

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Academic Editor	Albert H. Segars, PhD
Senior Editor	Katie Kross
Contributing Editor	Ruth Tolman

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To subscribe, unsubscribe, or update your contact information, email cse@unc.edu.

Mailing address: Center for Sustainable Enterprise, CB 3440, Kenan Center, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3440,

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on their lives. Soft drink companies in India were recently the focus of demonstrations over local water table depletions. There have also been numerous industries and companies called to account over supplier and contractor labor practices, environmental impact, and other safety concerns. Many of the companies historically targeted by these demonstrations have since developed and executed product stewardship processes to avoid similar attention in the future.

The Problem of Perception

New technologies with great promise for solving a number of society's problems have also been suspected of having a potential "dark side." Even if the suspicions are not well-founded, the public's perception of risk often makes it difficult for companies using these technologies to address and manage those risks (both real and perceived). For instance, in the late 90's, agricultural biotechnology suffered a number of societal acceptance setbacks. New genetically-modified products were shunned as "frankenfood" and banned from sale in certain countries. Through considerable effort and understanding of societal perceptions and fears, this industry has made great strides in partnering with civil society to manage the risk and realize the opportunities of this technology. One effort made in response to this challenge was DuPont's establishment of a Biotech Advisory Panel in 2000 including NGO, religious, and human rights members from all regions of the world with both industrial and societal interests in biotech.

Nanotechnology, which is daily demonstrating similar game-changing benefits, may also have unforeseen perception risks. This time, to prevent similar acceptance setbacks, global industry is making a concerted effort to engage a wide base of stakeholders to understand not only actual risks and the means to manage those, but also the perceived risks of nanotechnology.

Creating Opportunity

In the current global landscape, new businesses, entrepreneurs, as well as long-established companies must have a system to address both the risks and opportunities for competitive advantage that can be found using product stewardship. Spending 18 years in a major multinational company working with product stewardship processes allowed me to see these processes used on a wide variety of materials and finished goods—everything from cyanide to health food. These processes were benchmarked against other companies and vetted by a third party under the Responsible Care Management System. The management system for product stewardship requires a robust integration of product stewardship into the everyday processes used for sourcing, developing, manufacturing, distributing, marketing, and, in some cases, recycling product and product materials. These processes also apply to new products accessed through brand licensing, business acquisition, and joint ventures.

> ***"Business leaders need to have knowledge of the different forces that influence their products."***

Business leaders seeking to make their companies more sustainable need to have reasonable knowledge of all these different forces that can influence their products—from use of safe materials, to which markets and applications they can be used or sold into, to what future considerations need to be part of a company's intellectual capital. Product stewardship processes provide that knowledge.

John Lott can be reached at john.w.lott@usa.dupont.com

Student Spotlight:

Paquita Poindexter, MBA 2008

Paquita is a rising second-year MBA student at UNC Kenan-Flagler. After working as an IT program manager at Traveler's Insurance, she decided to pursue an MBA education to gain skills that would enable her to be a strong decision-maker, and to gain flexibility in her career path.

Before coming to graduate school, Paquita was considering a career in nonprofit work, wanting to make an impact in her job beyond just contributing to the company's financial profits. She was introduced to the idea of sustainable business practice at Kenan-Flagler and as she says, "once I understood the concept, it clicked."

Paquita believes that incorporating sustainability practice into the core of businesses is simply the right thing to do. She adds, for those who aren't swayed just by doing the right thing, that "they should incorporate sustainability into their general business practices as a part of risk mitigation. Thinking about your product or service holistically gives you the opportunity to truly assess the risks. Knowing those risks can help you mitigate them and prevent any future negative consequences."

This summer, Paquita is working for 3M's Strategic Business Development group in St. Paul, Minnesota.

...read more about Paquita...

Featured MBA White Paper

A Primer on Green Building

Authors
Jay Carlis (MBA 2007)
Chris Jensen (MBA 2007)
Jim Hutton Johnson (MBA 2007)
Matt Liebhold (MBA 2007)
Nathan Marvelle (MBA 2007)
Allison Moy (MBA 2007)
Ashley Pinkard (MBA 2007)

As consumers seek more environment-friendly homes and businesses react to the increase in demand, both are facing a tangle of new markets, technologies, regulations, and incentives. Consumers are increasingly motivated by energy cost savings, personal health and comfort, and the ethical aspects of buying green. Most are willing to pay a premium on upfront costs for energy-efficiency features that will reduce long-term operating costs. However, consumer willingness to pay is highly volatile and depends on several external factors, including incentives offered by lenders and local governments.

Regulations and Standards

There are many competing standards in the marketplace. In addition to many local and state building codes, there are four well-recognized standards that exist today in the United States:

- *ENERGY STAR* – rating program run by the Department of Energy and the EPA. Products are rated based on the amount of energy they save compared to standard products.
- *NAHB rating system* – targeted primarily at single family homes with a focus on mainstream home builders. There is no formal certification process, however there are strong affiliation with many trade organizations and it is well known throughout the building industry.
- *Earth Craft* – aimed primarily at mainstream homes and only found in the Southeastern United States. The system primarily targets energy efficiency and building materials. More rigorous than NAHB system, it is still perceived as mainly a marketing tool.
- *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)* – emerging as the leader in the field, and becoming internationally recognized as the most robust green building standard. It uses third party verification and validation to ensure that the standards are met and encompasses much of the ENERGY STAR efficiencies and savings. While LEED is rapidly becoming the defacto international standard, it also is currently the most expensive.

Incentives for Consumers

Consumers of all incomes interested in building a green home or retrofitting an existing home with green technology can take advantage of a number of federal, state, and local governmental incentives such as tax credits. Businesses also offer numerous incentives to increase consumer demand for green housing including advantageous loans or free services. Most programs require the individual to submit to an audit or follow recognized standards.

Incentives for Developers

In parallel, green residential real estate developers can benefit from a complex and ever-changing web of governmental and non-governmental incentives. A developer must have intimate knowledge of the incentive landscape in order to realize all the benefits for which a green project is eligible. The largest incentives are typically offered by cities and counties with progressive agendas and large tax bases. With most incentives aimed at consumers, significant opportunity exists for additional incentives to encourage more green residential construction.

Alternative Energy Technologies

Green building strategies often include the deployment of renewable energy systems and the incorporation of energy efficiency tactics. The matrix below summarizes the feasibility analysis of four alternative energy solutions for homeowners and developers. The symbols indicate how each factor affects feasibility of implementation.

	Cost	Installation	Consumer Awareness	Variability	Environmental Reward	Cost Savings Over Time	Feasibility (homeowner)	Feasibility (lg. developer)
Solar Power	o	o	+	+	o	o	o	+
Wind Power	–	–	–	–	+	o	–	o
Geothermal Systems	o	–	–	–	+	+	–	–
Energy Efficiency	+	+	o	+	o	o	+	+

Symbol Key: (+) = Positive (o) = Neutral (–) = Negative

Green Building and Affordable Housing

While "green" as a building methodology has gained significant ground in the conventional home production market, it has played a more muted role in the development of publicly subsidized housing. A well-designed, affordable, green home generates cost savings for the occupant, reduces health risks (and thus medical costs), improves quality of life and provides a more durable building that requires less long-term maintenance expenditure. With a strong planning process, a developer can integrate green design into an affordable housing project for a relatively small cost premium. Anticipating the new green frontier for affordable housing, many government entities and pioneering nonprofit organizations are paving the way for the furtherance of greening affordable housing through regulatory and financial incentives. The authors conclude that the key to making green building more prevalent in the affordable-housing market is focusing less on high-end technologies and more on basic good design and development.

Conclusions

There are clear indications that consumers are motivated by energy cost savings, personal health and comfort, and the ethics of green building. While developers wait for policy frameworks to catch up with green innovation, developers can still push to keep green building affordable at the project level in their own processes. Including green in the project design from the outset will ensure that these issues are considered before costs are incurred, and will allow a developer to determine which green features are truly cost-effective for their affordable housing project.

This paper includes more in-depth discussion of each of these topics. Visit www.cse.unc.edu/knowledge to download the full paper.

Notes from the Field

Faculty & Student Projects

The Financial Times published an op-ed article by **Al Segars**, entrepreneurship chair and CSE director, called "Personal View: Unpicking the paradoxes that deny progress." (Mar. 28)

U.S. News & World Report cited **UNC Kenan-Flagler's** Sustainable Enterprise MBA program in "Acting Like You Mean It" which was posted by *CBSNews.com*. (Mar. 30)

WRAL.com reported results of the **Sustainable Venture Capital Investment Competition** (SVCIC). (Apr. 6) *CNN.com* also featured the SVCIC in "Competing for more than profit." (May 18)

CSE Director **Al Segars** presented at the IBM World Business Conference in New York and the Department of Navy in Washington, D.C. on electronics recycling innovations and brownfields investment, respectively.

The *Chapel Hill Herald* quoted assistant professor **Lisa Jones Christensen** in "Business students bring skills to Peru," outlining the new Carolina Microfinance Initiative. (Jun.12)

Assistant professor **Larry Chavis** presented "Decentralizing Development: Allocating Public Goods via Competition" at the Minnesota International Economic Development Conference May 4-5.

UNC launched its new Institute for the Environment, an $11M campus-wide institute focused on environmental research, education and engagement on April 12. ...more

UNC's Urban Investment Strategies Center, led by **Jim Johnson**, has completed a new study. "A profile of Immigrants in Arkansas" was published in April 2007 for the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation.

Jay Swaminathan, professor and chair of OTIM presented "India's Role in the Global Economy" to North Carolina's K-12 and community college educators. (Mar. 29)

UNC Kenan-Flagler Alumni in the News -

The News & Observer featured **David Kirkpatrick** (EMBA'91) and SJF Ventures, of which he is managing director and co-founder in "Investor's focus is Earth-friendly." (Apr. 3)

The New York Times featured a letter from **Loren Berlin** (MBA/MRP '07) in "Africa and Win-A-Trip" urging a columnist to publish stories of hope and let Americans read about successes in Africa. (Apr. 17)

Forbes featured Good Capital, where **Deb Parsons** (MBA '06) is marketing and operations officer, in "Doing Well, Doing Good." (Apr. 23)

UNC MBA Careers in Sustainable Enterprise Update:

The 2007 recruiting year produced tremendous full-time and summer intern positions for Kenan-Flagler MBA Sustainable Enterprise students, including:

Class of 2007 Full-time Positions

- Self-Help –*Secondary Market Marketing Associate*
- Community Energy –*Creative Marketing Manager*
- Microsoft Corporation –*Product Manager (Emerging Markets Team)*
- Highwoods Properties –*Manager of Investments*
- Bank of America –*Vice President*
- EnerNOC –*Corporate Development Analyst*
- GE Infrastructure –*Experienced Commercial Leadership Program*
- Aflac Inc. –*Business Development Consultant*
- Centex Homes –*Strategic Marketing Analyst*
- Greenfire Development –*Development Associate*
- SunEdison, LLC –*Senior Proposal Writer*
- Bank of America –*Senior Analyst*

Class of 2008 Summer Internships

- Wal-Mart –*Sustainability Intern (Energy Group)*
- Teach for America –*Intern*
- Dissigno –*Intern*
- Kenan Institute Asia –*Tourism Destination Marketing Intern*
- DuPont –*Marketing Leadership Program Intern*
- Greenfire Development –*Green Building Intern*
- Education Pioneers –*Summer Fellow*
- The Conservation Consultant –*Business Intern*
- PMA Consultants, LLC –*Intern*
- Burt's Bees –*Marketing Intern*
- National Parks Business Plan Initiative –*Business Plan Consultant*
- Los Alamos National Laboratory –*Intern*
- UNC Center for Sustainable Enterprise –*CSE Consulting Associate*

(representative list as of 6/10/07)

CSE Events

Sept. 19
CSE Distinguished Speaker:
Andrew Winston,
author of "Green to Gold:
How Smart Companies Use Environmental Strategy to Innovate, Create Value, and Build Competitive Advantage"
Kenan-Flagler Business School
Chapel Hill, NC

Oct. 11
Distinguished Speaker:
Martin Eakes,
Founder & CEO, Self-Help
Kenan-Flagler Business School
Chapel Hill, NC

Local/Regional Events

Jun. 26
Sustainability Café
Raleigh, NC

Jun. 29
Lecture: R. Neal Elliott, ACEEE
"Role of Efficiency Resources in State Energy and Climate Policy"
Duke University, Durham, NC

Aug. 13-15
30th Annual CMSDC Business Opportunity Conference
Charlotte, NC

Aug. 15-17
World Energy Engineering Congress
Atlanta, GA

Aug. 24-26
Southern Energy and Environment Expo 2007
Fletcher, NC

Sept. 6
GreenNC: Building for a Sustainable Future
NCSU, Raleigh, NC

Sept. 13
Speaker: John Wiens, The Nature Conservancy
"Is conservation science irrelevant to conservation practice?"
UNC, Chapel Hill, NC

Oct. 22
2007 North Carolina Sustainability Awards & Conference
Chapel Hill, NC

CSE Program News

CSE Achievements: 2006-07 Highlights

The Center for Sustainable Enterprise advanced its mission of education, research, and outreach in 2006-07. Highlights include:

- Significantly enhancing the MBA Sustainable Enterprise curriculum. In 2006-07, Sustainable Enterprise was added to the MBA "custom core," with over 120 first-year students enrolled. Several new electives were also taught in the MBA program, including: Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility, Product Stewardship for Sustainability, Investment Strategy for Sustainability, International Development, and Social Entrepreneurship.
- Extending the reach of the MBA Sustainable Enterprise concentration, graduating 36 students in the class of 2007, double the number in the previous class.
- Successfully launching the CSE Knowledge Bank, with over 350 people registered to access the Knowledge Bank within a month of launch.
- Improving, and earning recognition for CSE Consulting, winning a North Carolina Sustainability Award in the "Innovative Initiatives" category and successfully completing a second year, increasing the number of student participants from four to six and delivering projects to Bank of America, Johnson & Johnson, Progress Energy, Orange County Partnership for Young Children, Philip Morris, and Bilboa Energy.
- Bringing thought-leaders to campus including: Marjorie Kelly, author of *The Divine Right of Capital* and founder of *Business Ethics* magazine; Mark Albion, author of *Leading a Values-Based Business*; and Fred Krupp, president of Environmental Defense.
- Redeveloping the CSE newsletter, Sustainable Enterprise Quarterly including redesign and expansion of the publication's content.
- Completing a grant-funded Environmental Footprint Assessment project with Bank of America, in connection with the UNC Carolina Environmental Program.
- Sponsoring the second annual Sustainable Venture Capital Investment Competition (SVCIC).
- Sponsoring 34 Kenan-Flagler MBA students to attend the 2006 annual Net Impact Conference.
- Hosting a highly successful 8th Annual Sustainable Enterprise Career Fair: 25 organizations attended including new participants Whole Foods, Deloitte, Tom's of Maine, Burt's Bees, and more.
- Supporting a broad range of enrichment and experiential learning activities: the CSE Mentoring Program, practicum program support, career development programs, Net Impact Club activities, and social events.

Alumni Spotlight:

Lindsay James, MBA 2003

Lindsay James is the Manager of Sustainable Strategy for the commercial flooring division of Interface where she is responsible for translating the company's sustainability leadership into the marketplace.

When asked why she thought more companies don't incorporate sustainability as Interface has, she replied, "There's a perception that sustainability is costly. While there might be initial upfront costs, there are huge long-term payoffs when sustainability is appropriately integrated throughout the organization..."

After earning a BA in biology and economics at UNC-Chapel Hill and working for several years doing cost-benefit analysis of environmental legislation, Lindsay adopted Paul Hawken's argument that, while business is responsible for much of the environmental degradation we see, it is also the most powerful, innovative, and persuasive institution there is and has the most hope of changing the current environmental situation.

This realization led Lindsay to pursue her MBA at UNC Kenan-Flagler.

… read more about Lindsay…

News from around the World

The **U.S. Postal Service** announced it is the only mailing or shipping company in the U.S. to achieve "Cradle to Cradle" Silver Certification from McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry for its Priority and Express Mail packaging.

The *Economist* Jun. 2 issue featured cover story, "Cleaning Up: A 15-page report on how business is starting to tackle climate change."

Enterprise Rent-A-Car announced plans for the most comprehensive environmental platform in its industry, including the largest fleet of low-emission, flexfuel, and hybrid vehicles and investment in renewable fuel research.

Wachovia plans to build at least 300 LEED-certified financial centers by 2010. By the end of 2008, all new Wachovia financial centers opened in the U.S. will be built to LEED specifications.

ABN AMRO won the *Financial Times* 2007 Sustainable Bank of the Year Award. In its second year, the awards drew 151 entries from over 100 banks in 51 countries and included a new Emerging Markets category.

Wal-Mart is partnering with Conservation International to certify that diamonds and gold it sells are environmentally and socially responsible.

The **U.S. EPA** presented the 2007 Energy Star Awards to over 80 businesses and organizations in recognition of leadership in reducing greenhouse gases by increasing energy efficiency, including Advanced Energy for building energy-efficient, low income homes in North Carolina.

Consumer Reports added a global warming solutions center to their GreenerChoices.org website, offering practical, measurable ways for consumers reduce their carbon footprint.

Weyerhaeuser and **Chevron** plan to study the feasibility of creating biofuels from wood fiber.

IBM is partnering with The Nature Conservancy through its Big Green Innovation business unit to launch software to help business and government make well-informed environmental decisions.

Yahoo! plans to be fully carbon neutral by the end of 2007 by reducing energy use and investing in emissions-fighting projects. **Google** also plans to be carbon neutral by 2008.

Ethisphere magazine released its first listing of the World's Most Ethical Companies after examining over 5,000 companies across 30 industries – 92 companies made the list including **Nike**, **GE**, and **Dole**.

SRI group **Calvert** created the Global Alternative Energy Fund following the release of a climate change/alternative energy survey indicating 85% of respondents see opportunity in alternative energy investing, but only 16% had discussed them with a financial advisor.

The Enertia Building System was named the top invention in the 2007 Modern Marvels Invent Now Challenge. Enteria uses nanotechnology to turn wood into a thermal battery to store solar energy – without changing appearance or structural properties – allowing a house to heat and cool itself.

Home Depot has created a new labeling program – "Eco Options" – to highlight environmentally friendly products on its shelves.

The Automotive X PRIZE will award a multimillion-dollar prize for the development of an automobile that gets 100 miles per gallon and appeals to the mass market.

HSBC will offer business and individual banking customers a "Green Kit" as part of its new "There's No Small Change" environmental campaign.

A new Climate Counts Scorecard ranks 56 major companies to help consumers see which companies are serious about fighting climate change. **Canon** topped the inaugural ranking.

Over the next 18 months, **Kellogg** plans to stop advertising products not meeting specific nutrition guidelines to children under age 12.

Coca-Cola has partnered with WWF to improve its water use and conservation efforts.

Resources

Raising Our Game: Can We Sustain Globalization?
SustainAbility report examining future scenarios for sustainable development and proposing a new set of rules for business to meet the challenges ahead.
(May 2007)

Scaling Up: Global Technology Deployment to Stabilize Emissions
Report from Goldman Sachs' Center for Environmental Markets and WRI outlining a plan for implementing technologies to reduce climate change emissions worldwide.
(Apr. 2007)

AASHE Digest 2006: Annual Review of Campus Sustainability
Report including over 600 stories about sustainability initiatives at higher education institutions.
(Mar. 2007)

Environmental Burden of Disease: Country profiles
WHO report including country-by-country analyses of how environmental factors impact health.
(Jun. 2007)

Global Trends in Sustainable Energy Investment 2007
Analysis of trends and issues of financing renewable energy and energy efficiency by the UNEP Sustainable Energy Finance Initiative.
(May 2007)

Insuring for Sustainability: Why and how the leaders are doing it
U.N. Insurance Working Group report highlights best practices and opportunities of sustainable insurance.
(Jun. 2007)

Stakeholder Engagement: A Good Practice Handbook for Companies Doing Business in Emerging Markets
IFC booklet on best practice for building and sustaining constructive relationships for enhanced development.
(May 2007)