



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Global FM Releases Findings of Sustainability Study at Sixth International Workshop**

BRUSSELS, Belgium — (17 November 2008) — The Global Facility Management Association (Global FM) held its sixth International Workshop last month in Dallas, Texas, which focused on the hot topic of sustainability and presented the results of Global FM's Sustainability Study. Leading international building product manufacturers, representatives from Global FM member organizations and members of the Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments (ASBE) presented their perspectives on how global and national trends are affecting the sustainability movement within the built environment.

Global FM Chairman Steve Gladwin opened the workshop by discussing the impact of climate change and how some of the developments related to it could have been predicted and avoided.

"We all see the dots: lakes drying up, glaciers melting, rising energy prices, etc. It is our responsibility to connect these dots and anticipate what will happen next," said Gladwin. "We have to develop a strategy and avoid allowing a worst case scenario to become reality. We must ensure that sustainability is not just a buzz word, but that it is implemented and translated into corporations' strategies and actions. With 43 percent of U.S. carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions coming from building operations, facility managers have a key role to play."

The objective of the Sustainability Study was to compile and understand the initiatives Global FM member organizations are undertaking to promote sustainability. Global FM issued a survey that polled members regarding past, ongoing and upcoming activities, projects and products related to sustainable practices.

Key findings from the study show that:

- There is no standard definition of sustainability. Several associations use other organizations' definitions including those derived by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), Study Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ORSE) and the European Committee for Standardization (CEN). Others have drafted their own or are in the process of creating a definition. When defining sustainability in the built environment, the associations that shared a definition embraced a holistic view of the facility and the stewardship of those who manage and occupy it.
- Education is a broad area, and it is one of the three main areas in which member associations are making their biggest impact. Sustainability is embedded into competencies that are taught and practiced in seminars, conferences, webinars and roundtable discussions.
- The amount of research pertaining to sustainability is growing. Some survey data, published reports and dissertations exist, but the challenge is bringing this information forward as an accessible tool. Another broad area in which most associations have advanced their knowledge in sustainability is through magazines, books and reports. Links to these publications are included in the Sustainability Study.
- Other practical tools include awards programs which recognize member companies that embrace innovative sustainable practice and best practice compilations.
- Knowledge portals containing a repository of sustainable information are a goal for two of the organizations, the British Institute of Facilities Management and the International Facility Management Association.

For a detailed overview of the Sustainability Study and its results, please visit <http://www.globalfm.org/documents/GlobalFMSustainabilityStudy.pdf>

The following speakers each spoke, first individually and then during a panel discussion, about how global and national trends are affecting the sustainability movement within the built environment:

- Tim Cole, director of environmental initiatives and product development, Forbo Flooring
- Bob Dehne, AIA, architectural services manager, Owens Corning
- Steve McGuire, environmental marketing manager, Philips Lighting
- Rob Zimmerman, senior staff engineer, Kohler Co.



For the speakers' full presentations, please visit

<http://www.globalfm.org/documents/ASBEGLOBALFMPPT101408.pdf>

All speakers stressed that including a sustainable component in the overall corporate strategy would in the long run benefit companies financially, environmentally and socially. They emphasized that it is vital to realize the urgency of the situation and that it is of key importance that different organizations involved in the built environment continue to work together to find a solution.

During the workshop the question was raised about what role Global FM would play in regard to sustainability.

“As the Global FM survey shows, all our members are dealing with sustainability on a local level, and from our panellists, it’s become apparent that they are dealing with it locally as well,” Gladwin said. “It is, however, important that sustainability in the built environment be elevated to and dealt with on a global level — and this is where Global FM will take ownership and play a key role in the future!”

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*NOTE TO EDITORS:*

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**About Global FM**

Global FM is an international not-for-profit organization based in Brussels, Belgium. It represents a worldwide community of organizations that provide leadership in facility management. For more information, visit [www.globalfm.org](http://www.globalfm.org).

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