



## 3 Best Practices for Elevating Product Stewardship Program Effectiveness & Impact

Product Stewardship programs are essential for ensuring supply chain continuity, product regulatory compliance, customer responsiveness and to reduce negative impacts to the environment and worker health.

As organizations make commitments to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives, Product Stewardship and issues such as product lifecycle and circular economy, are becoming key priorities. The challenge for organizations is how to engage cross-functional teams, their supply chains, and their customers most effectively and in ways that are mutually beneficial. Digital solutions enable this engagement and give way to best practices for tackling the challenges faced by organizations today.

### Elevate your Product Steward Program Effectiveness & Impact with these Three Best Practices:

#### 1 Synthesize Multiple Demands – Compliance & Customer

Organizations must address multiple demands from both customers and the regulatory landscape within which they manufacture and distribute. In most cases, commonality exists across those demands. An organization's ability to minimize the internal burden hinges on their ability to establish processes that identify and address that commonality, with flexibility when needed.

**How Digitization Can Help.** Digital solutions can translate commonality into automated processes, workflows, and reporting frameworks. An organization can respond more quickly to customer requests for product information when the organization's digital system supports tracking of product information from the finished product level to the material and chemical constituent level, and when the digital system can automate the connection between product information and product compliance/conformance information. By integrating product stewardship digital solutions with an organization's ERP system, change can be managed more effectively, including new suppliers, new products, new/updated regulations, and more.

## 2 Minimize Supplier Burden & Maximize Supplier Value

Suppliers are inundated with multiple requests for information about materials and components. There will never be one single method for sharing information with multiple customers. The best we can do is minimize the supplier burden and maximize supplier value.

**How Digitization Can Help.** Eliminate spreadsheets and consolidate requests to suppliers through easy-to-use, web-based systems that utilize industry standards while also allowing for the flexibility most organizations need. Supplier due diligence for REACH, SCIP Reporting, RoHS, and other product regulatory obligations can be addressed through data sharing standards set by IPC and other streamlined data inquiry formats that align with similar standards. Responsible sourcing due diligence related to minerals can be addressed through standards developed by Responsible Business Alliance (RBA). Standards help to minimize variability, but they also limit an organization's ability to tailor their supplier due diligence programs to account for industry nuance and specific business needs.

## 3 Integrate Cross-Functional Teams

Product Stewardship is a cross-functional issue involving teams from Compliance, Sourcing, Engineering, Quality, and more. How do you engage these teams effectively towards a common goal? Product Stewardship programs require close coordination of cross-functional teams to effectively manage and complete regulatory, market, and customer-driven requirements.

**How Digitization Can Help.** Communication and interoperability are key to engaging cross-functional teams. By centralizing activities within a single system and/or set of digital workflows, different teams can be prompted for inputs and information tailored to their interest and contribution. By automating communication of program performance to Sourcing teams on supplier due diligence campaigns, Compliance and Quality teams on outcomes of product compliance and conformance checks, Engineering teams on material compliance and availability, Sales teams on regional market conformance, and others, cross-functional teams can interact and move forward with confidence. Through system interoperability, compliance, regulatory, and due diligence information can be shared with those systems used most often by functional teams.

**Benchmark Gensuite**, a comprehensive cloud-based ESG management software platform, provides a complete suite of Product Stewardship & Responsible Sourcing solutions to meet your program needs. Recognized as a Representative Vendor for Supplier Sustainability Applications by Gartner in their 2021 Market Guide, the suite features robust functionality for responsible sourcing goals as well as broader ESG initiatives.

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**Learn more about how the Benchmark Stewardship suite can digitize and elevate your program to ensure delivery on critical ESG commitments and KPIs.**

<https://benchmarkgensuite.com/product-stewardship-software/>

