



For immediate release:

SPLC Virtual Event Addresses How to Best Use Data and Ratings to Drive Sustainable Procurement

PORTLAND, Oregon, Sept 9, 2021 - On Sept 29, SPLC will gather the sustainability community to dig deep on how to assess today's expanding data collection ecosystem, and the ratings, labels, and data that hundreds of reporting and rating platforms deliver.

Vetted sustainability performance data is essential to procurement, sustainable supply chains, and efforts to drive meaningful, concrete progress. But proliferating sustainability screens, labels, ratings, and data collection systems plus disparate data requirements can be confusing for purchasers and exhausting for suppliers. With ESG reporting and analysis becoming more central to financial markets, and the latest IPCC report galvanizing rapid action on the climate crisis, this event is critical to the evolution and understanding of ratings and reporting.

The third in SPLC's 2021 Deep Dive virtual event series will dig deep into root questions about the:

- tension between collecting data and taking action,
- confusion purchasers and suppliers face in a marketplace of hundreds of proprietary data collection and reporting systems,
- concern that ESG analysts may not fully address truly meaningful sustainability indicators,
- fundamentals purchasers and suppliers need to grasp to leverage reporting and rating systems effectively to drive and reward sustainability improvements.

SPLC CEO Sarah O'Brien explains, "Data collection, rating, and reporting is critically important, but can also strike purchasers as complex and confusing. The sustainable purchasing community wants and needs to leverage reporting and ratings tools for the greatest impact. The financial community has woken up to the critical role data can play in revealing risks related to unsustainable and irresponsible business practices. Yet many organizations still struggle to select among the plethora of available tools to support their strategic sustainable purchasing framework."

O'Brien explains, "The lack of data consistency across tools and systems creates barriers to evaluation and selection of suppliers, goods, and services. We've developed this convening to harness the collective intelligence of reporters, collectors, and users of sustainability data to outline successful methods for a more sustainable future."

Jumpstarting the day is a compelling Keynote Conversation between two of the leading thinkers about sustainability/ESG data. ESG pioneer and financial sector guru, Erika Karp, former CEO of Cornerstone Capital Group, and current Executive Managing Director at Pathstone, speaks to the critical role that risk analysis plays in creating truly sustainable investments, and a truly sustainable world. She focuses on the reality that "data moves markets". Joining her is sustainable business theorist Kenneth Pucker, Tufts and BU Senior Lecturer whose recent Harvard Business Review article "*Overselling Sustainability Reporting*"

sparked heated conversations within sustainability business circles. He shares his perspective that reporting is overemphasized and should be balanced by increased, impactful action to drive real change.

Following this debate, panelists Fred Gersdorff (General Motors), Julia Litvak (Medtronic), Kate Williams (Fair Trade USA), and Julia Wolfe (Commonwealth of Massachusetts), will deliver first-hand insights on *Leveraging Sustainability Rating and Reporting for Impact*.

These expert practitioners will discuss how they gather, assess, and use sustainability reporting data to build robust sustainable procurement programs. Attendees will hear how experts in impact assessment and supplier engagement set KPIs, evaluate supplier performance, and use vendor reporting to assess their own organization's sustainability performance, as well as to develop ESG-aligned data.

Workshops during the last part of the day will focus on practical guidance on how to integrate sustainability reporting, data, and labeling in support of sustainable procurement programs. They include:

- **Optimizing E-Procurement Systems for Sustainable Purchasing**, led by Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, Empower Procurement
- **Getting Started with Supplier Sustainability Reporting for Small Businesses**, led by Bob Willard of Sustainability Advantage
- **Evaluating and Selecting Product Sustainability Labels** led by Kate Harris of the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) and featuring the U.S. EPA

For more information or to register, visit <https://splcdeepdives.org>

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The Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council (SPLC), founded in 2013, convenes a global community of purchasers, suppliers, advocates, and researchers to develop and propel best practices in sustainable procurement. A membership-driven non-profit SPLC enables public and private organizations to be strategic in their sustainable purchasing for the greatest social, economic, and environmental impact. Based in Portland, OR, SPLC has over 150 active members wielding \$300 billion in annual purchasing power.

<http://sustainablepurchasing.org>