



A Report to Support Development of GOLDEN v2.0

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Organizing for the 21st century

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Executive Summary | i |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Challenges | 1 |
| 1. Ensuring Vision-Attainment | 1 |
| State Vision/Mission and Guiding Values/Principles | 2 |
| Define Goals and Actions, and Monitor Their Attainment | 2 |
| Ensure space for radical conversations | 3 |
| 2. Building Participant Engagement | 3 |
| Define Participant Goals | 4 |
| Refine Participant Roles and Engagement Strategies..... | 4 |
| 3. Adopting virtual technology..... | 5 |
| Confirm Technology Options..... | 6 |
| 4. Refining the medium-term work plan | 7 |
| Clarify MoU Signing Strategy | 7 |
| Refine the Pilot Development Strategy | 8 |
| 5. Ensure robust academic-business connections | 8 |
| Address barriers to robust connections | 9 |
| Build corporate ownership..... | 9 |
| Develop the governance structure | 10 |
| 6. Implementing the Research Agenda..... | 10 |
| Ensure data quality | 11 |
| Develop the theory and needed skill set..... | 11 |
| Integrate a publications and change strategy | 11 |
| Summary | 12 |
| People Interviewed..... | 13 |

Note: This report was prepared by Steve Waddell under an initial contract with GOLDEN. Steve was subsequently hired to work 40% time for GOLDEN on issues of communications and community development.

Executive Summary

GOLDEN is a network with enormous ambitions and a valuable vision of a world where businesses operate using a sustainable business model. It sees its role as complementing that of other initiatives working in the issue arena by filling an important gap in creating global knowledge and a platform for business to develop its dynamic capabilities for change.

As a multi-stakeholder global change strategy, GOLDEN falls into a new tradition of Global Action Networks (GANs)¹. As a large-scale, complex organizing and strategy innovation, its development warrants a particularly disciplined development strategy that both draws from the experience of other GANs and emphasizes its own reflective processes to rapidly respond to opportunities and integrate its own learnings.

This report builds on a firm foundation of initiating activities to support the next stage of GOLDEN's development. The 17 recommendations aim to further strengthen both GOLDEN's work to integrate the competencies of research centers and corporations, and further its own development.

Some of the issues the report addresses reflect those common to GANs:

- Keeping focused on “the core work”;
- Recognizing that self-reflection and learning are part of the core work, as well as assessing, measuring and changing “external” processes and structures;
- Taking a measured approach to structure, letting it grow out of experience of doing the work;
- Paying attention to the “culture” and values that can so easily be under-rated as people work to realize more concrete objectives...it is *how* the work is done that is as important as *what* the work is, in responding to sustainability;
- Striving to become ever more specific in goals, measurement and planning...without adapting inappropriate traditions from non-multi-stakeholder networks that will limit and undermine GOLDEN's potential.

There are some other issues that arise from the specific work of GOLDEN and its history that also require attention. These include:

- Recognizing and responding to the historic reality of corporate-academic collaborations usually falling far short of aspirations;
- Being more aggressive about engaging corporations as full partners – to date, GOLDEN is basically an academic initiative; and
- Assuring...continuing to “ensure”...the valued qualities of discipline and rigor, but also being relevant, innovative and flexible – recognizing that academic traditions limit, as well as enable.

¹ Other GANs include the Global Compact, the Global Reporting Initiative and Transparency International. See: Waddell, S. (2011). Global Action Networks: Creating our future together. Bocconi University on Management. Hampshire, UK, Palgrave-Macmillan.

A Report to Support Development of GOLDEN v2.0

Introduction

GOLDEN is entering a new phase of development. It is leaving its initiation stage characterized by the following achievements:

- Exploring a core concept;
- Establishing an initiating community;
- Mobilizing initiating resources;
- Defining broadly key stakeholder groups, GOLDEN's value to them and their role in GOLDEN;
- Developing a governance model; and
- Creating a broad outline of the strategy and the way it will be implemented.

It is entering a new stage of piloting and refining its initiation stage achievements. This is a brief report to support that stage, with a particular focus on community development, communications and collaborative learning strategies for GOLDEN.

This report is drawn from interviews with participants, participation GOLDEN's June 2010 meeting, and more intensive work since January 2011 to actively support GOLDEN's development. Important to note is that **almost all of the interviews were with research members of GOLDEN; there were no corporate people interviewed.** This was because of the stage of participant development, where corporate participants were not yet confirmed.

People's attitude towards GOLDEN varies from an intrigued to highly enthusiastic. There is great support for the basic hypothesis that something non-traditional is needed to realize corporate sustainability, and that an academic-corporate network can make a critical contribution. However, there is reasonable questioning and supportive skepticism about GOLDEN to-date and its plans.

The action response of GOLDEN to recommendations is highlighted in yellow.

Challenges

1. Ensuring Vision-Attainment -----

Question: What will provide coherence with GOLDEN's vision?

This question arises out of concerns about:

- Ability to focus on the collective rather than particular interests;
- The possibility of GOLDEN losing its distinctive change focus;
- The scale of GOLDEN; and
- The great diversity of participants.

A number of key elements related to GOLDEN's mission give rise to this challenge. The mission is understood here *to be a global, academic-corporate partnership that supports change of the scale necessary to respond to the sustainability challenge.* Elements giving rise to reasonable concerns about GOLDEN's ability to hold its focus are: scale, geographic dispersion of participants, necessity to work with unfamiliar people, diversity of

participants, network structure (versus command and control), the speed of GOLDEN development, and the need to transcend some core academic traditions.

A reasonable question is: Given GOLDEN's aspiration, are any of these elements "discretionary"? The only one that seems possible to change is the speed of GOLDEN's development (discussed under Challenge 4); the other elements all seem to be a fundamental "realities" of any strategy to realize the mission. There are a number of tactics to support maintaining coherence.

State Vision/Mission and Guiding Values/Principles

From one perspective this Challenge can be framed as "how to maintain accountability to GOLDEN's vision?" Affirming a statement of vision/mission and values/principles is a common tool for this. People then have a set of collective objectives and values against which to assess their actions. This also supports the "dispersed" leadership that is necessary in a robust network. Of course it also provides a framework for people to assess the actions of other participants, when disputes arise.

In GOLDEN documents can be found statements that are basically vision and mission ones. These deserve identification as such. Some values that interviewees expressed were: accountability, transparency, valuing diversity, and integrity. Of course these single words need further definition. Recognizing the many tasks facing GOLDEN at this start-up stage, and valuing definitions that are closely connected to real situations, leads to this recommendation:

Recommendation 1. That GOLDEN management team define (1) a vision and mission for review by Council and members at a later date, and (2) a set of principles that will be understood as incomplete and evolutionary.

ACTION 1: Make a statement as clear as possible of vision/mission, values/principles. A Management Team draft will be circulated to Councillors with their thoughts incorporated into a document for discussion at Vienna June 19-21.

Define Goals and Actions, and Monitor Their Attainment

A second common tool to support cohesion and focus is an evaluation/assessment/impact measurement system. Developing this requires operationally defining what GOLDEN aims to achieve, and a regular process for assessing whether it is on track.

Traditional evaluation measurements should be used, but judiciously. Using only traditional impact measurement approaches can, however, actually undermine the realization of a complex system change outcome of the sort GOLDEN aims for. For such outcomes, there are some new approaches under the broad term "development evaluation" that should be used.

These systems do not have to be complicated, and they should be integrated into the learning processes of the GOLDEN network.

Recommendation 2. That GOLDEN develop an impact measurement system.

ACTION 2: That for the next year GOLDEN adopt the following goals:

- Finish the pilot data collection by May, 2012.
- To have MoUs with about two dozen research centers by July 31 and about 100 companies by June 2012.
- The Global roll-out will start June, 2012.
- By early 2012 GOLDEN has developed its impact measurement system for the following year.

- Strategic goals for the next phase of GOLDEN will be presented to the first 2012 community meeting for adoption.
- First priority is to engage companies through membership organizations like UNGC (especially the LEAD companies), GRI and NISE. This should be possible on recommendation and invitation by these organizations since we have incorporated most of their control items in our research protocol. At the same time RCs are still requested to find the agreed amount of companies. Since we have fewer RCs involved we need to adapt the strategy.

Ensure space for radical conversations

“Radical conversations” was the term used by one interviewee, as the type of discussion that GOLDEN should support. By “radical” was meant the ability to move beyond traditional definitions of what’s discussable, about spurring people to envision a completely different model of the future and to be driven by values. For corporations this involves being transparent, accountable, and stakeholder-engaged organizations that are redefining the concepts of value, wealth and what has to be measured. For academics being “radical” means taking stances and positions to move beyond a common “historian” perspective of simply “proving” to an academic degree of certainty what has been long known; it means working for values and creating conversations and actions to support them.

Recommendation 3. That GOLDEN incorporate the concept of “radical” into its evaluation strategy and its learning activities.

ACTION 3: Confirm that GOLDEN’s overall aim is to help companies consider fundamental questions and that requires being innovative and creative by (1) incorporating the concepts into the values statement; (2) supporting space for creative/innovative thinking on an on-going basis.

2. Building Participant Engagement -----

Question: How can GOLDEN build the commitment of participants necessary to realize its goals?

Concerns that lead to this question include:

- Diverse goals of participants;
- Being flexible and pragmatic to accommodate participants’ goals;
- Lack of clarity about how institutes and corporations become members;
- Geographic spread of participants;
- Lack of responsiveness to GOLDEN inquiries;
- Diverse roles that participants want to take; and
- Time demands that GOLDEN makes.

GOLDEN is in the early stages still of building itself as a compelling attractor for the attention of its participants and others. One interviewee associates GOLDEN’s success in five years with its ability to have a “Davos” effect, by which is meant that its views and opinions are taken seriously in the highest echelons. GOLDEN should be seen as a space where critical conversations are occurring, connections are being made and key data is being generated to move the world towards sustainability.

There are numerous impediments to realizing this stature: people already have many connections consuming their time, they do not yet associate GOLDEN closely with advancing their own goals, and GOLDEN has not yet the infrastructure and relationships to

support rewarding engagement. There are some key actions that should be taken to make GOLDEN a valued and compelling space.

Define Participant Goals

A key success factor for a network is its ability to produce outcomes that are valued by those it aims to engage. It is good to be as explicit as possible about these, and to incorporate into them regular reviews to check with participants about their attainment. Networks do not usually fail because of disputes; rather, they fail as participants simply lose interest and drift away because they do not feel the network is sufficiently connected to valued outcomes.

GOLDEN has made a particularly good start with this, by creating formal MoUs for its participants. Moreover, the commitment of tailored reports for corporations and such things as the evaluation proposal for the LEAD program of the Global Compact, are other good steps in this direction.

Goal definition can be framed as part of a bigger community-orientation process. What should be done with new members, to help them become active members? There should, of course, be some introduction to the web-site. But an interview with them along the lines of the one used to develop this report should also be part of the process. And then there should be some specific actions identified to do such things as introduce the new member to other community members, and help them become active in developing connections and exchanges such as with webinars, committee memberships, and specific tasks.

Recommendation 4. That GOLDEN continue to integrate into its MoUs organization-specific outcomes, and also identify a formal review period of a year following signing of the MoU to review performance-to-expectations.

Recommendation 5. That GOLDEN develop a member orientation process.

ACTION 4: That GOLDEN develop a specific community of companies involved in the pilot to give feedback. That GOLDEN will engage companies that sign up before the roll-out to give further thought about the protocol and how GOLDEN advances. That GOLDEN develop MoUs that ensure its basic needs are met, and maintain openness to more specialized needs that can be met.

Refine Participant Roles and Engagement Strategies

This topic arises with two learnings from other networks' experience. One is that at GOLDEN's current stage of development, it is common to be "management driven": that is to say that a small group of people do much of the decision-making and work, with others who have a commitment to their success and trust them contributing in response to a quite specific request.

The other learning is that successful networks engage people in roles that fit with their interests and capacities. Inter-organizational networks have a further challenge to connect with the right people within the core organizing unit of "organization".

GOLDEN has made significant progress in developing a number of roles critical to its development that include:

- Stakeholder-specific: academic, corporate, other stakeholder
- Functional: Membership in the Council, Research Task Force, Corporate Engagement Task Force, Finance Committee, Membership Committee
- Activity-based: Lead researcher, junior researcher, sponsor

However, some modest refinement is needed, in order to further build GOLDEN's attractiveness and legitimacy, and "fit" with people's interests and availability. There remain some people who are willing to lend their names to GOLDEN, facilitate developing connections of GOLDEN, and provide advice upon request. These people may not be associated with an organization that has

signed an MoU. They would not be able to play a Council role of providing accountability between those who have signed MoUs and GOLDEN; furthermore, they do not want to deal with many of the issues of a Council. However, these people could provide advice to specific Council decisions, even developing recommendations or attending Council meetings.

Recommendation 6. That GOLDEN establish an Advisory Group of people who (1) are committed to GOLDEN's vision and mission, (2) are of stature that builds GOLDEN's legitimacy, and (3) who are willing to lend their names publicly, facilitate access to their networks, provide advice and in other ways support GOLDEN.

ACTION 5: That GOLDEN develop an advisory group by the end of 2011.

Also noted during work to date is GOLDEN's desire to have individuals participate in groups like the Task Forces, for whom participation is not a sufficient priority to ensure they regularly do so. Some people prefer communications by emails; others prefer one-on-one consultations. Some will see GOLDEN as more of a priority at some times because of either their work or the current GOLDEN issue being discussed. And then there are simple issues of travel schedules (availability) and time zones. All of these have to be balanced, when assessing how to engage a particular individual. This emphasizes the need for GOLDEN to meet people "where they are". This means taking tailored approaches in terms of technological ways of interacting, and allowing "bite-size" engagement around specific tasks as well as "committee-sized" around longer-term continuous commitments; as GOLDEN develops, it will become more of a compelling attractor.

This requires GOLDEN management team be highly strategic in terms of identifying people who are important and willing to be engaged around a particular need. The team must be particularly sensitive to diversity of points of view, to ensure they act with a "community" perspective.

Recommendation 7. That GOLDEN emphasize a tailored approach to individuals at this time, in comparison to emphasize upon participation in group/mass email interactions.

ACTION 6: That:

- 1) GOLDEN confirms its aim to select any interested company or institution fitting into and supporting its research goals and subscribing to its values, vision and mission, and
- 2) GOLDEN's first priority be to engage companies through membership organizations like UNGC (especially the LEAD companies), GRI and NISE. This should be possible on recommendation and invitation by these organizations since we have incorporated most of their control items in our research protocol. At the same time RCs are still requested to find the agreed amount of companies. Since we have fewer RCs involved we need to adapt the strategy.

3. Adopting virtual technology-----

Question: How does GOLDEN and its participants use the opportunities new information technologies present?

In general people recognize the necessity and value of using leading IT for GOLDEN to be successful. However, there are several concerns:

- People generally have low experience with use of the range of IT options available;
- IT must be user-friendly; and
- People experience information over-load.

The interviews did not turn up any particular preferences in terms of data-sharing or communications. The web-site is not being used, nor is it being promoted pending some planned changes. Pressing priorities are with up-dating and keeping up-to-date the web-site, facilitating communications for virtual meetings, creating a searchable and easily accessible data-base of GOLDEN participants, and developing sharable data-bases necessary for community planning and data generated by the pilots.

Confirm Technology Options

A process is in place for up-dating *the web-site for static information-sharing*, but up-dating has not been a priority given some needed changes and the priority given to this report. There has been purposeful lack of promotion of the site.

Some changes are proposed to *the web-site community conversation options* to integrate documents and make conversations easier. However, there is good reason to be skeptical at this stage about the use of the web-site for community conversations rather than email – its use requires a separate step that people are reluctant to make. At a later stage, it could be useful for a more formal and classic GOLDEN blog.

Skype is a useful ubiquitous tool for conversations between 2-4 people who will not significantly benefit from sharing documents.

Almost all participants expressed interest in using a web-conferencing system for community meetings. The experience with *elluminate* to date has been painful, however. Major difficulties are associated with attempts to access by telephone and without headsets. Despite the difficulties, *elluminate* appears to be the preferred solution: it integrates audio while many others do not, it is good in relatively low-band-width environments, it offers a sophisticated array of options that will be appreciated as GOLDEN develops more sophisticated needs, and in one of the most referred-to ratings (<http://c4lpt.co.uk/recommended/top100-2010.html>) it is placed highest and is increasing in popularity.

The *web-site participant profile* has been redesigned to provide all the needs for data on participants in a searchable data-base.

On-line data-sharing has been experimented with, through *google docs* with reporting performance on MoU signing. This is a very specific use as performance-to-a-specific-task, that can be replicated with other tasks such as the development of the pilot projects.

The organization and ease of access to *documents on the web-site* will be improved with proposed changes, but needs further promotion to avoid the on-going problem of confusion about the “latest version” of documents.

The *research data-base* is not something that this report can comment on.

All of these tools should be reviewed in another six months when the needs of the pilots will be clearer and the experience with the current options will be deeper.

Recommendation 8. That GOLDEN sets as an immediate priority up-dating of the web-site and gathering of profile information from participants; that *elluminate* continue to be experimented with for web-conferencing; that google.docs continue to be used for performance-to-tasks; and that the web-site be promoted for storing current document versions.

Recommendation 9. That in six months GOLDEN further review its IT options.

ACTION 7: The recommendations are adopted; that a newsletter be developed; that a communications team of Steve, Floriana, Brandon and Pernille will be established to further develop the strategy.

4. Refining the medium-term work plan -----

Question: What's the plan through 2011?

People understand the general goals to engage a couple of dozen research institutes and 100 corporations by the end of 2011. However, their concerns include:

- The feasibility of the goals – too aggressive for the time allowed;
- The complicated nature of the work;
- How growth will be managed with adequate oversight;
- Falling into a “bigger is better” mindset;
- Becoming top-heavy;
- The need for quality participation – quality companies, research centers, individuals;
- Lack of clarity about the RC and corporate recruitment strategies.

With a start-up, there is confusion because there is lack of experience and lots of experimentation; patterns, clarity and “solutions” gradually emerge based on discussions and experience. Significant confusion at this stage of GOLDEN's development is not worrisome; a year from now it would be. Of course some individuals are more comfortable working in this type of environment than others.

Having said that, many participants reasonably expressed concern that the current plan of GOLDEN is under-defined, and some are quite skeptical of what they do understand. The key goals communicated are around 10 pilot sites by April, and by the end of the year a couple of dozen research centers and 100 corporations; as well, people understand that there will be a three-year process of working with them. It is time to fill-in some of the details about how this will all unfold. Without further details, participants will be reluctant to play their roles (take action), a structured learning process will not be possible, and there is great opportunity for either losing of coherence with too little control, or stifling of opportunity and energy with too great of control.

Clarify MoU Signing Strategy

There are two key strategic questions for the next year. One is about how MoUs for the RCs and corporations will be secured. This is related to some people's concerns about quality, believing that there is a particular type of organizational member that GOLDEN should be aiming for. This has to do with both the quality of the individual organizations, and the overall mix of organizations needed. Is willingness to sign an MoU with the implied interest in GOLDEN a sufficient quality? How do we manage the overall mix to align with the January meeting's thoughts? How do we approach subsidiaries, if their parent is already in GOLDEN? How do we know if someone is already approaching a corporation?

There are two strategies to engage corporations. One is through an RC and an historic relationship that it has with a corporation. There is still question about how well this will work at the scale that GOLDEN requires, given caution at the January meeting, experience to date and some interviewees' experience that RCs are unwilling to engage an historic corporate partner for a collaborative initiative. The second strategy is to work through network organizations. Again, there is reason to be cautious, although experience is quite limited.

MoUs with RCs also have proven slow in maturing. There are many reasons for this, including the time GOLDEN has needed to actually finalize the MoU and the general pace of academic bureaucracy. However, another is simply the length of time necessary to get everyone on board and answer all the questions.

Now the MoUs and preliminary corporate promotion materials are developed, there is good reason to believe that things can move more smoothly. But there is still good reason to question the goal of signing on 100 corporations by the end of the year. As one interviewee noted,

GOLDEN is not *responding* to a market...it is *creating* one. That's much more challenging. Given the experience, there is now greater ability to refine the goal in terms of the way corporations will become GOLDEN members and realistic dates. Spreadsheets have recently been developed to help refinement.

With greater clarity about these questions, the broader GOLDEN community can be more intensely involved in developing the GOLDEN membership.

Recommendation 10. That GOLDEN (1) clarify the qualities of the RCs and corporations that it is ideally looking to engage, (2) refine its strategy and time-line about how these will be engaged, and (3) revisit the dates for engaging 100 corporations.

ACTION 8: (1) That the elaborated action plan to be developed by the Vienna meeting integrate the strategy described in Action 6; (2) the date for engaging 100 corporations be re-set to April 1, 2012. Frank will take leadership in the plan development.

Refine the Pilot Development Strategy

The second key strategic question for the next year concerns development of the pilot assessments. If these are going to provide the basis for future assessments, they require a very specific learning strategy and documentation. What is the initial plan of steps? What happens at each step? How does the initial plan change, and why? What are the different paths for conducting an assessment and what are the factors that lead to one path versus another?

Recommendation 11. That GOLDEN refine the initial plan of steps for the pilot process, and develop a learning support process to ensure documentation and learning are produced for support of future assessments.

ACTION 9: That Frank incorporate milestones for the pilot process into the medium-term plan;

That MT members to inform the rest of the MT about latest developments and to give short presentations of complex matters or documents (short webinars) such as the research protocol;

That Steve work with others to develop recommendations for a learning process for early June, with particular focus on (1) how it influences the June community meeting and its outcomes and (2) how to integrate learning from the data and learning from the companies and people.

5. Ensure robust academic-business connections -----

Question: How does GOLDEN develop the quality of relationships between corporations and research centers necessary to realize its goals?

This is one of the most commonly expressed concerns, that arises from:

- Lack of models of really robust academic-corporate networks;
- Recognition of a power imbalance, where academics depend upon corporations for access and financing;
- Recognition that the project requires a big shift for academics from an historic, objective orientation to being an active, concerned participant-support of change.

Interviewees view GOLDEN as very distinctive from traditional research projects because it aims to not just produce knowledge, but also to directly connect that knowledge to generating new capacity and change. Some people reference "action research"; others "engaged scholarship", and others "consulting". This different goal for GOLDEN academics requires a strategy, skills and accountability that are different from those that academics

are used to. A major concern therefore is how to develop these and ensure that GOLDEN is not overwhelmed by traditional academic approaches, while accessing the important relevant traditional academic competencies.

People also note that to date GOLDEN is largely a research center network. The general strategy has been to develop the academic network so it is an attractive platform for corporations, and a viable one for achieving the mission. However, this means that there has been relatively little involvement and no ownership of GOLDEN and its activities by the corporate community. This must rapidly change.

“Trust” is a word that came up as a quality that needs to be developed. People pointed out there are some significant issues, such as confidentiality, that must be treated seriously. Goals and ways to achieve them must be sensitive to each others’ interests.

Address barriers to robust connections

Barriers arise from different goals, cultures, values, and power. Both corporations and academic institutes and their staffs are associated by their opposites with stereotypes. Being explicit about distinct goals as in the MoUs and getting collective support for them is an important step to addressing these differences. One interviewee also pointed out that there is a basic power imbalance between academics and corporates, since the former depend upon the latter for access and financing.

GOLDEN needs to create a community conversation about all this, as the foundation for building a process to address the barriers to robust connections and build the skills and processes to overcome them. This requires a categorical learning and development strategy that can be launched at the Vienna meeting as has been planned for Day 2.

Recommendation 12. That GOLDEN create a learning and capacity-development strategy to support development of robust academic-corporate connections.

ACTION 10: That Steve develop a learning and capacity-development plan.

Build corporate ownership

Interviewees had different opinions about the appropriate moment to engage corporations. Some felt they should have been engaged as full partners from the very beginning, with active input into the research protocol and other activities to date. Others felt that the academic platform had to be first developed, and that corporations are not interested in being engaged in the developing the protocol. In any case, corporate ownership must be quickly developed and the pilot sites are the best way to do this. They provide a framework for deepening the understanding about how to engage corporations, with corporates that have committed to GOLDEN and invested in its success. Pilots can be used to investigate how, in fact, corporates might influence the protocol development and other activities.

Both the pilots and solicitation of other corporations provide critical experiences that should be treated as action research experiments to develop corporate ownership. Documentation of these experiences in real-time should produce guides for people looking to engage corporations.

Recommendation 13. That GOLDEN develop an action research strategy to develop corporate ownership.

ACTION 11: Confirm that:

- 1) It is a fundamental principle of GOLDEN to entertain a research process by *Engaged Scholarship* (ie. developing research processes in cooperation of academics and company representatives).
- 2) It is advisable to design the interventions in year 2 in a way that they are comparable for all companies. Only by doing so the documented changes after the second evaluation in year 3 can be compared across companies. If the interventions are not

comparable the changes could only be compared with the control group within each company.

Develop the governance structure

A governance structure for GOLDEN is defined. Its core unit is membership of representatives of organizations that have signed MoUs with GOLDEN. Originally the goal was to have a Council elected before the Vienna meeting, but the number of MoUs that will likely be signed by then make this inadvisable – an election with too few members would be worse than no election. Virtually no one raised the issue of governance as a concern in interviews, suggesting that GOLDEN can continue for a while still with its founding Council. However, this Council has also been largely inactive, with the Milan community meetings and staff providing the real leadership. The Vienna community meeting can be anticipated to provide similar legitimate leadership. Following this, however, an election process should be defined. As well, a date should be set for the next community meeting with the goal of having an elected Council before that meeting. Given academic schedules and the need to inform the community of pilot experiences, it is safe to anticipate that another community meeting should be held in January 2012. Delaying elections to coordinate with this meeting will also allow participants time to gain more experience to decide if they would like to be on Council, and for people to get to know each other and who they might like to support for election.

Recommendation 14. That GOLDEN plan a community meeting for January or June 2012 and hold Council elections before then.

ACTION 12: That

- 1) The next workshop is planned to take place in Boston or Minneapolis from November 9 – 11, 2011.
- 2) A workshop schedule will be maintained one year in advance ahead by Frank.

6. Implementing the Research Agenda-----

Question: What challenges must researchers address to do their work with excellence.

Since the interviews were largely with academics, some specific concerns arose for them, including:

- Data-handling – the data-base strategy and how to use a data-based of the scale being developed;
- Confidentiality;
- Development of a research strategy that would provide the necessary depth;
- Quality of data and analysis;
- Capacity to incorporate “consultant”-like skills;
- Competency in necessary skills on sufficient scale.

Although the research agenda was not part of the interview, since interviewees were largely researchers issues about it naturally arose. There appear to be three types of concerns. One is about data: ensuring there would be sufficient and robust data, that it would be of quality, that it would be recorded appropriately, and that it would be accessible and analyzed appropriately. The second issue is about the skills of the researchers: do they have the necessary action research/engaged practitioner/consultant capacities, and do they have the technical skills such as interview skills. A third concern is about GOLDEN’s theory: what is it?

Another concern of researchers is publications. One person commented that GOLDEN will be dealing with inherently “messy” and “emergent” issues that will not produce neat

theoretical papers of the type A-journals will be interested in. Another person emphasized the importance of publishing in industry journals as well, given GOLDEN's change agenda and the need to contribute more directly with corporations. And another person suggested that one product that GOLDEN should soon produce is a theory paper.

Ensure data quality

Understandably the Research Task Force to date has largely been involved with research protocol development. The first set of questions interviewees raised about data is largely related to its implementation and products. Of course the Task Force has developed the protocol with these issues in mind, and the pilot projects will provide further in-put to these concerns. How these will be addressed, however, is still unclear. It would be useful for the Task Force to identify some core questions related to data quality and define a strategy associated with the pilot implementation to address the questions. This activity would naturally engage the researchers involved in the pilots. In the interest of community-building, accessing volunteer energy, training people for the roll-out, and enhancing quality, it would be good to get other community members also involved.

Recommendation 15. That the Research Task Force identify core questions related to data quality concerns and create a strategy to address them around the pilots that engages the broader GOLDEN community.

ACTION: That people with these concerns be referred to the Research Handbook.

Develop the theory and needed skill set

The needed skills arise out of the specific theory that GOLDEN is developing. This theory is being investigated by a methodology or set of methodologies. Indeed, these will be signature GOLDEN developments and contributions. One person suggested that one product that GOLDEN should soon produce is a theory and method paper. All of this needs some attention and quite quickly if the uncommon skills that people sense will be needed are to be adequately developed.

Recommendation 16. That the Research Task Force consider establishing a sub-group to address the questions about GOLDEN's theory-methodology and skills.

ACTION: That the recommendation be adopted.

Integrate a publications and change strategy

GOLDEN needs a publication strategy that is derived from its sustainability change agenda. For individual academics, publications in A journals are associated with career advancement. GOLDEN can make an important contribution to this, which will also advance GOLDEN's own interests – the more advancement of GOLDEN researchers, and the more publications that GOLDEN researchers produce, the more influential GOLDEN will become. However, there is also need to address the non-traditional publications outside A journals. Related again to the comment about GOLDEN creating a market, not selling to one: GOLDEN is in effect aiming to influence academia, not simply be part of it. What is the GOLDEN critique of academia as it is, and how might it influence its publication strategy?

Recommendation 17. That the Research Task Force consider establishing a sub-group to develop a publications strategy that is supportive of GOLDEN's change goals and researchers' publications needs.

ACTION: That Maurizio and Carmelo to develop a consortium agreement (similar to EU projects) in which the rules for publications are presented.

Summary

GOLDEN's aspirations are unique in terms of scale and scope. However, the scale and scope are the product of its distinct aspiration to support significant change in response to the sustainability imperative. Without global scale and broad functional scope, it cannot realize the change it wants to see.

GOLDEN is a network of linkages. But more than that, it is a community. For GOLDEN to be successful, it will have a sufficiently large and engaged group of individuals and organizations who identify strongly with its goals, work and other participants. People will have a shared commitment, understand their roles in realizing GOLDEN's vision, and know how to play their roles effectively within the broader range of the community's activities. As a community, participants will see GOLDEN as *their* place where they can realize high aspirations.

As is stated in its invitation to corporations, GOLDEN responds to four uncomfortable truths:

- 1) Sustainability challenges will grow in complexity and diversity;
- 2) No company can do it by itself – competitive dynamics require a systemic approach;
- 3) There is a big gap in our knowledge about *how* to move corporations powerfully and effectively towards sustainability;
- 4) The source of sustainability lies with fundamental change in organizations' culture and individuals' leadership style.

GOLDEN is based on the assumption that a collaboration of academics, corporations and associated networks can address these truths. There are significant challenges to testing that assumption that need to be addressed. Perhaps the most basic one is people's willingness to move outside of their traditions and comfort zones...what one person meant with the description of "being radical". Another core assumption of GOLDEN is that its participants can and will move outside of their comfort zones, in response to its pressing vision of a sustainable world with value-creating corporations. GOLDEN's still must prove those assumptions correct.

People Interviewed

1. Anders Aspling
2. Arevalo Jorge
3. Bagdadli Silvia
4. Brueck Frank
5. Brusoni Stefano
6. Castelló Itziar
7. Ding DaWei
8. Googins Bradley
9. Hamann Ralph
10. Lettl Christopher
11. Mark Drewell
12. McIntosh Malcolm
13. Pinney Chris
14. Post Jim
15. Sachs Sybille
16. Speckbacher Gerhard
17. Swannick John
18. Waddock Sandra