

# Materials Sustainability at General Electric

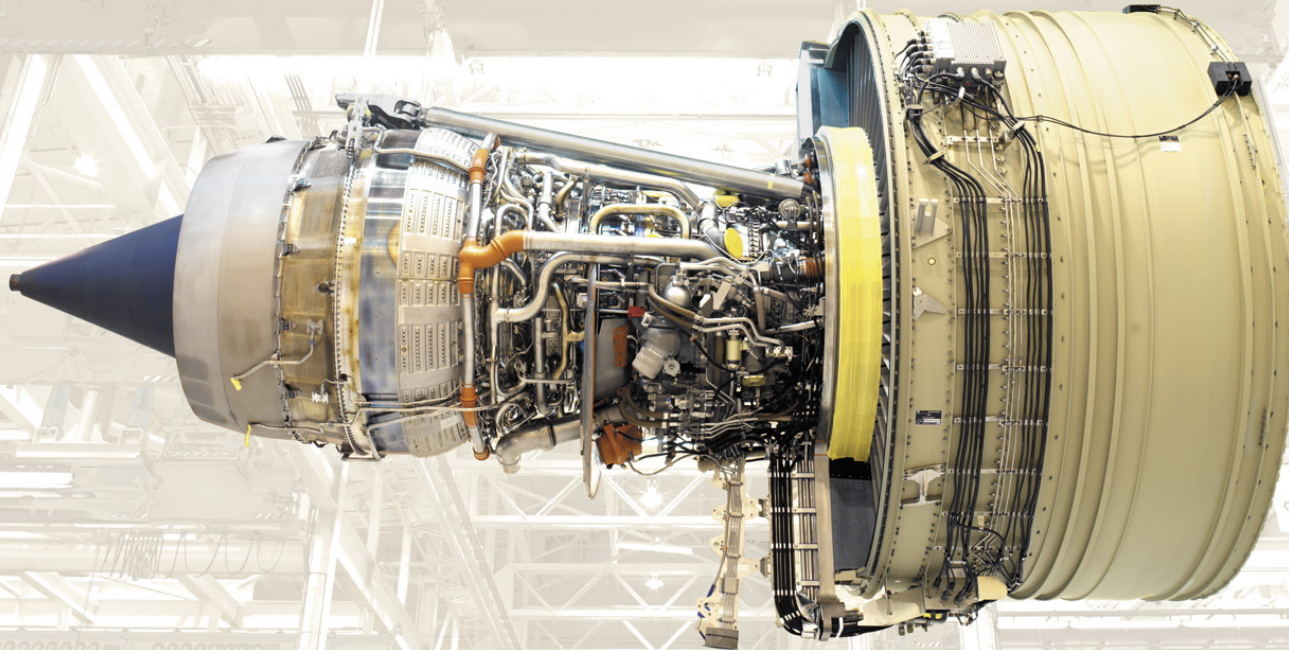
Anthony Ku  
GE Global Research



imagination at work

# GE materials usage

- GE uses ~3 Billion lbs of material in our products annually
- For manufacturing companies, typically one-half of their Cost of Goods & Services Sold is spent on raw materials. For GE, translates to ~\$35 B in 2010
- GE uses at least 70 of the first 83 elements on the periodic table



# GE criticality matrix: Approach

**Impact**

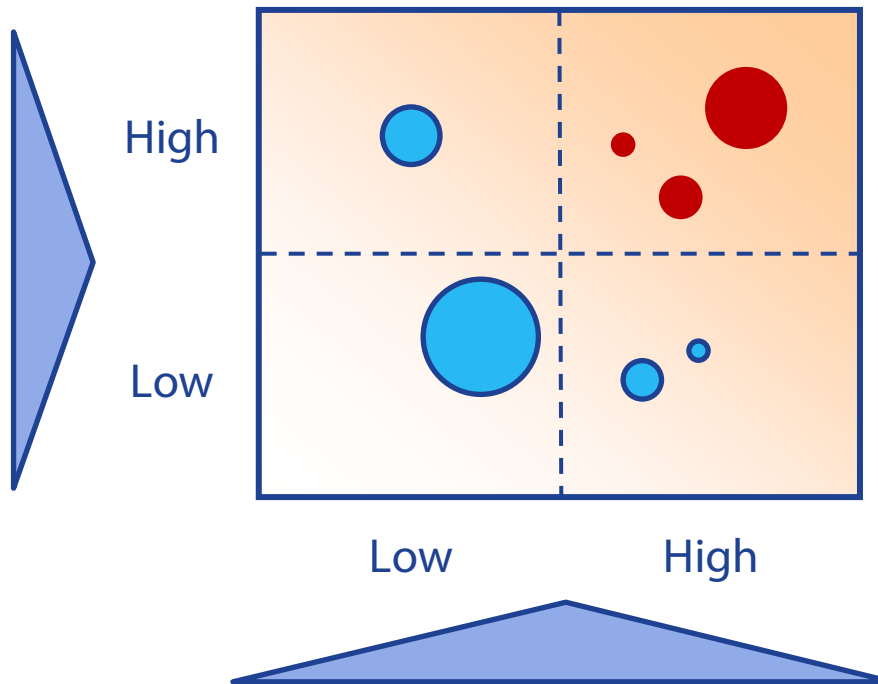
Revenue impacted

% of world's use

Substitutability  
(specific applications)

Cost pass-through  
(specific applications)

*Impact score  
computed using:  
Data from  
business units*



Highest priority elements

**Methodology references**

Duclos, Otto and Konitzer,  
Mech Eng 2010, 132, 36.

Erdmann and Graedel,  
EST 2011, 45, 7620.

Graedel et al, EST, 2012, 46, 1063.

## Supply and Price Risk

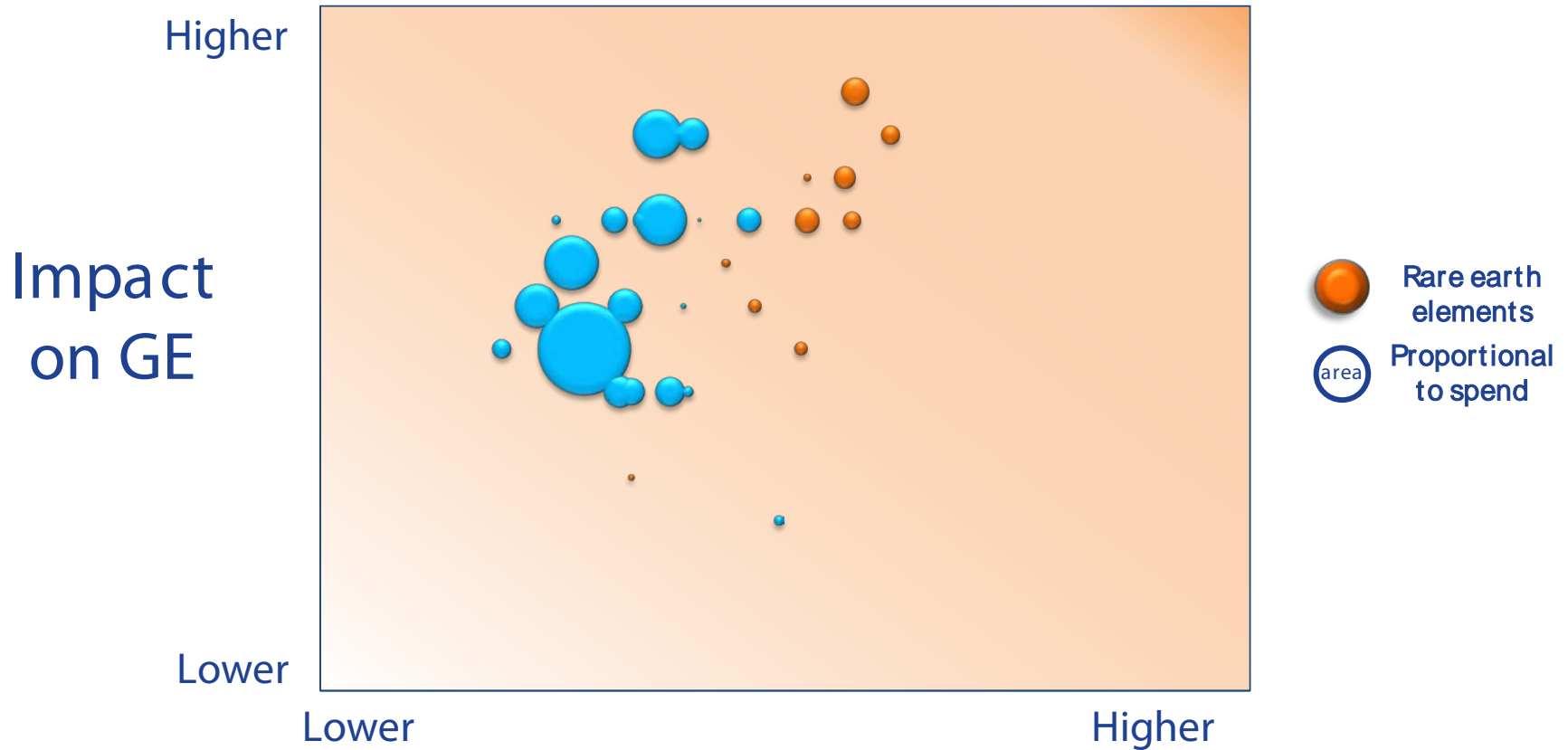
World reserves  
Co-production

Political factors  
Human factors

Competing uses  
Price volatility

*Supply risk score computed using:  
Data from producers & public domain*

# GE criticality matrix - 2012





# Options for responding to risk exposure



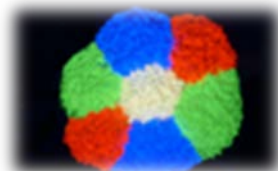
**Sourcing** ...ensure supply through fixed price contracts, forwards, options, etc.



**Manufacturing efficiency** ...reduced waste, recycled waste, advanced manufacturing (i.e. additive)



**Recycling** ...manufacturing shrinkage and end-of-life products, repair, re-manufacturing



**Material re-design or substitution** ...reduce or eliminate at-risk element, use alternate material



**System substitution** ...use an alternate technology to satisfy a customer's need



Broaden material sources

Optimize usage

Redesign materials & systems

# Material sustainability at GE



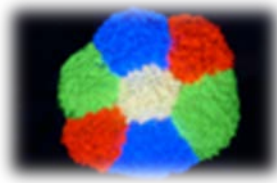
Sourcing



Manufacturing efficiency



Recycling



Material re-design  
or substitution




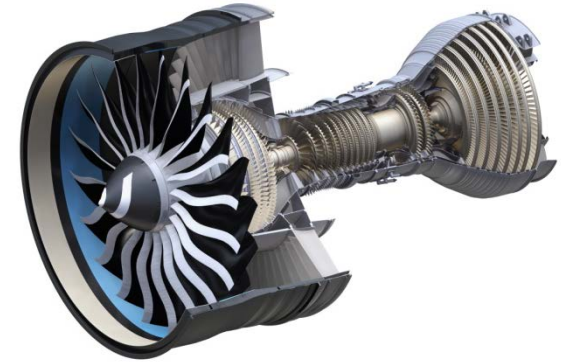
System substitution

Rhenium	Rare Earths
✓	✓
✓	
✓	✓
✓	✓
	✓

Each element and each application will use a unique mix of options

# Example – Rhenium in superalloys


- Used in turbines: Aviation, Gas, Oil & Gas hot sections
- Rarest of elements: 1 oz Re per 120 Tons of Cu ore
- 2006: prices up 6X, sufficient availability uncertain



**Sourcing** ...developed suppliers and worked with suppliers for better recovery of revert of Re containing materials



**Manufacturing efficiency** ...improved handling of Re waste stream and developed chemical processes to recover Re from this waste



**Recycle** ...developed process to reclaim, clean, and re-use Re containing alloys from end-of-life turbine blades



**Material re-design or substitution** ...developed and certified N515 alloy with  $\frac{1}{2}$  as much Re for CFM56 HPT blades and N500 with no Re as CFM56 shrouds

# Metal recycling by GE Aviation



## End of life parts

- 110,000 lbs '09 (<1% of '09 usage)



**SOS Metals**

## Recycler

- Clean off coating
- Identifies metal



## Casting

- Uses part in heat
- Lower cost cast



New Part



GE Customers



GE Service Shops



Aviation

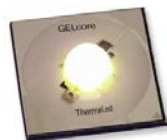


# Rare earth elements used in GE products



Y, Ce, Tb  
La, Eu

Fluorescent lamp phosphors



Y, Ce,  
Tb, Eu

White LED phosphors



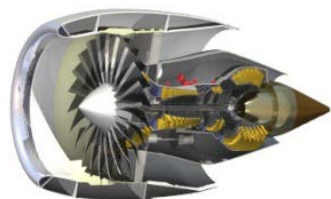
Nd

Reveal lamps



Nd, Dy, Tb

Industrial motors



Y

Thermal barrier coatings for aircraft engines



Y

Thermal barrier coatings for gas turbines



Nd, Dy, Tb

Generators for 1.5MW+ wind turbines



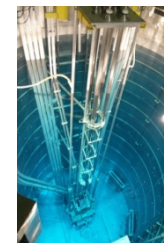
Y, Ce, Tb  
Gd, Eu, Lu

Scintillators for CT & PET imaging



Gd

MR contrast agents



Gd

Neutron moderation for GE Nuclear

# Example – Rare earths

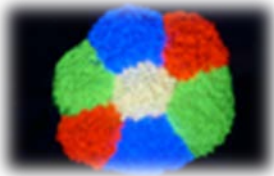
- 97% produced in China – industry consolidation with production and export quotas
- Prices peaked at 10-20X in mid-2011
- Certain of the rare earths expected to be in short supply through 2015



**Sourcing** ...working with global mines and separators to broaden sources



**Recycle** ...developing recycling strategies for fluorescent lamp phosphors, including phosphor rejuvenation for end-of-life lamps



**Material re-design or substitution** ...developing alternate phosphor systems to reduce the rare earth content. Using nano processing to reduce rare earth content in permanent magnets



**System substitution** ...LEDs for Lighting