Worldwide, fuel economy is not improving fast enough, according to a new report issued in March 2013 by the Global Fuel Economy Initiative (GFEI). The global vehicle fleet is falling behind targets to cut average fuel use by 50% for all new cars by 2030.

New data analysis published by the GFEI shows that the global average for light duty vehicle fuel economy, is currently 7.2 l/100km (32 mpg). This represents an improvement of just 1.8% per year from 2005 when the average was 8.0 l/100km.

However, this rate of improvement is far below that needed to reach the GFEI target of a 4l/100km or 60 mpg global average by 2030 for new cars leave aside an equivalent improvement in all cars by 2050. In order to reach this level, average fuel economy now needs to improve globally by 3% per year. Reaching this level is ambitious but achievable as, for example, the enacted fuel economy standards around the world require annual improvements of up to 4.7%.

Of particular concern for the GFEI is a lack of progress among non-OECD countries, as these emerging markets are now growing much faster than their OECD counterparts. The priority should be on helping these countries to develop and deploy more stringent fuel economy policies.

While the OECD countries are on the right track, they now need to sustain and even slightly accelerate improvements in fuel economy in order to meet the GFEI's 2030 target.

The report acknowledges the huge progress made in recent years regarding the interest, development and deployment of fuel economy policies and related vehicle technologies. This trend nevertheless needs to be sustained and accelerated in the near future.

The report: 'International comparison of light-duty vehicle fuel economy' was prepared for the GFEI by the International Energy Agency (IEA) which is a partner in the GFEI.
Chile adopts fuel economy label

On the 1st of February 2013 the Chilean Government launched the first fuel economy labelling system in Latin America and Caribbean region. Car dealers must now have a label illustrating the fuel economy standards of the vehicles on sale, as determined by the New European Driving Cycle which shows both the kilometres per litre tested and the CO2 emission.

GFEI has provided considerable support to each Ministry in terms of supplying information relating to similar international experiences in fuel economy labelling processes; publishing the fuel economy standard and CO2 index for the national vehicle fleet; and proposing a feebate system designed in collaboration with the Environment and Financial Ministries.

Two conferences on fuel economy have been held in Santiago. Chile is now one of the primary examples of the GFEI initiative at global level. This work has been supported by an agreement between UNEP, one of the main GFEI partners, and Centro Mario Molina Chile and supported by the ICCT another GFEI partner. A dedicated website with Fuel Economy and CO2 emission data for vehicles registered in Chile has been launched in partnership with environmental authorities, GFEI partners and the European Union (visit the website: www.compraunautolimpio.cl)

IEA’s Fuel Economy Roadmap wins LowCVP Prize

François Cuenot and Sara Pasquier (pictured) of IEA came to London to receive the “2012 Outstanding Low Carbon Publication or Report” award for the companion fuel economy technology roadmap / policy pathway. The ceremony was held in the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (ImeChE), and coincided with the 10th anniversary of the UK-based low carbon vehicle partnership (LowCVP).

Future Car Challenge takes over Central London

The Global Fuel Economy Initiative once again completed the RAC Future Car Challenge, a leading low energy driving event. The GFEI used the event to talk to members of the public in London on fuel economy issues.

FIA Foundation Chairman Tim Keown drove the GFEI entry, with FIA Foundation Deputy Director General Saul Billingsley joining him as co-driver. The GFEI does not back any manufacturer or technology and enters the event as a fully independent participant. The GFEI has entered different cars from different manufacturers each year that it has taken part in the Future Car Challenge. This year, the GFEI entered a KIA Rio 1.1 CRDi ‘1’ Eco.

The GFEI stand at the motor show proved popular with visitors, with fuel economy information packs handed out to the public gathering in Regent Street at the post event motor show.
**GFEI launches in Africa**

Africa is experiencing unprecedented vehicle growth, mainly due to rapid urbanization. Unfortunately, most African countries do not have vehicle policies to promote the import of cleaner and more fuel efficient vehicles. To address this situation, an Africa-wide regional workshop was held at the UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya to launch the GFEI. The workshop was opened by Ms. Alice Kaudia, the Kenyan Environment Secretary, on behalf of the Minister for Environment and Mineral Resources.

Close to fifty participants from twenty African countries attended the regional launch. The countries were drawn from north, west, east and southern Africa. At the workshop, the results from two African GFEI pilot countries – Kenya and Ethiopia – were presented.

The workshop also discussed cleaner vehicle strategies currently being implemented in Chile, South Africa, Egypt and Mauritius.

Results from the two pilot countries show that African countries are not taking advantage of the on-going improvements in vehicle fuel economy. For example, Ethiopia’s average fuel efficiency remained stagnant in the 2005 to 2008 period – at 8.70L/100km compared to the global average improvement from 8.07L/100km to 7.67L/100km during the same period.

**Fuel Economy warning for Commonwealth Countries**

Commonwealth countries can cut their cumulative oil bill by £2 trillion by 2050 and can help cut the world’s road transport energy use and CO2 emissions by nearly half in that same time, by adopting a high-impact, low-cost solution of improving vehicle fuel economy, according to a paper published by the Commonwealth Advisory Bureau (CAB) and sponsored by the GFEI.

In an Opinion Piece for the CAB, Dr. Lew Fulton from the University of California Davis, a GFEI partner, warns that the oil importing countries, which make up the vast majority of the Commonwealth, could face high economic costs given the explosion in the number of vehicles on their roads over the next few decades.

Dr. Fulton said:

“The number of road vehicles, and road fuel use, in Commonwealth countries could double by 2030 and increase four-fold by 2050. Given that about half the Commonwealth’s and world’s oil is used in transport and oil accounts for about 95% of transport fuel use, this could spell economic disaster for the oil importing countries which make up the vast majority of the Commonwealth.”

Focusing on Kenya, Dr. Fulton warned that with rapidly increasing motorisation, that country’s total fuel bill could reach $75 billion by 2030 with devastating consequences for the country’s economy.

However, with support from the GFEI a partnership of six major international organisations, Kenya has begun to explore steps towards cutting this cost increase by at least a quarter by 2030 and by half by 2050. These savings could be even greater if they were combined with other transport policies, such as shifting vehicles to new fuels, and curbing car travel growth through sensible transport policies.
IEA launches roadmaps for greater fuel economy

“Tackling road transport energy use is vital to enhancing energy security and reducing carbon dioxide emissions globally,” IEA Deputy Executive Director Richard Jones, said as he launched two key IEA reports in late 2012. “Conventional combustion engine vehicles are set to be around for a long time and without the right policy mixes, like the ones described in these publications, the demand for energy from road vehicles will be unsustainable.”

One report, Technology Roadmap: Fuel Economy for Road Vehicles, describes the technologies needed (such as high-pressure fuel injection systems) to achieve a much more efficient road-vehicle stock by 2030, while the second, Policy Pathway: Improving the Fuel Economy of Road Vehicles, describes the policy packages, made up of fuel economy labeling, standards and fiscal policies, that can help deliver improved fuel economy.

With the right policies, countries can use available, cost-effective technologies to greatly improve the fuel economy of road vehicles over the next 10 to 20 years, and at the same time save billions of US dollars in fuel costs but governments need to act quickly.

Spotlight on Australia

GFEI has once again offered its support to the fourth GreenZone Drive public education event held in August, in Australia.

This time the event travelled to Queensland, where seven manufacturers or importers presented 22 individual vehicles to the general motoring public, fleet operators, general, environmental, business and motoring media, and local and state government, at both political and administrative level. Over the full course of the weekend more than 300 drives were undertaken, utilising a preset 4 km/12 minute drive loop that allowed a mix of driving along dual carriageway and suburban streets.

GFEI partnership expands

The University of California, Davis Institute of Transportation Studies (ITS-Davis) has become a partner of the Global Fuel Economy Initiative.

The Institute is a leading global university centre on sustainable transportation and works with all major stakeholders in its field. Lew Fulton, who had played an integral role in the development of the GFEI while at the International Energy Agency will continue his work with GFEI at ITS-Davis.

ITS-Davis is the latest organisation to join the GFEI following the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) earlier this year. There are now six partners including ITS-Davis: the FIA Foundation, the International Energy Agency, International Transport Forum and the UNEP as well as ICCT.