



International Organisation of Employers  
Organisation Internationale des Employeurs  
Organización Internacional de Empleadores

# Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

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## Context reporting

- Companies are increasingly requested to report transparently and openly on their social and ecological behaviour. Pressure on companies from politicians, consumer organisations and NGOs to report on CSR is growing.
- Denmark, France and the UK are among the countries which introduced legislation on reporting.
- At the EU level, a regulation on disclosure of non-financial information is in the European Parliament at the moment.



- The UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights request that "*business enterprises should be prepared to communicate this (how they address their human rights impacts) externally, particularly when concerns are raised by or on behalf of affected stakeholders. Business enterprises whose operations or operating contexts pose risks of severe human rights impacts should report formally on how they address them.*
- *In all instances, communications should:*
  - *Be of a form and frequency that reflect an enterprise's human rights impacts and that are accessible to its intended audiences;*
  - *Provide information that is sufficient to evaluate the adequacy of an enterprise's response to the particular human rights impact involved;*
  - *In turn not pose risks to affected stakeholders, personnel or to legitimate requirements of commercial confidentiality."*



- Besides through regulation, companies are prompted to produce sustainability reports for a variety of reasons: transparency with regard to CSR can build trust among customers, employees and the local community, and help to strengthen the credibility of companies. This is important for companies, because:
  - Trust binds existing customers and helps to win new ones in B2C (business to consumer) and B2B (business to business) business.
  - Trust increases the positive acceptance of the company in the local community and creates a good basis on which conflicts can be resolved constructively and successfully.
  - Trust helps companies to attract the best brains and to keep employees.
  - Furthermore, transparency has an internal effect and can help to identify business risks and optimise processes. On the financial market, a company's social and ecological performances play an increasing role. Financial market participants, in particular sustainability funds, increasingly require transparency with regard to companies' social and ecological behaviour.



- The benefits to the business of CSR and CSR reporting differ from one company to the next, and must be assessed individually for each company. The business case cannot be made with generalised findings.
- Depending on company size, sector, and the individual requirements of the different target groups, companies also deploy transparency regarding their social responsibility in different ways.
- The question of transparency in relation to CSR is as complex as the issue of CSR itself.



## However, companies must consider:

Besides any possible EU or national legislation, the production of a sustainability report is a fundamental decision, and one which requires companies to consider all the implications. Aspects that deserve attention include:

- Sustainability reporting cannot be deferred or halted without a range of problems. Once it has started, a company will find it difficult to discontinue this activity without loss of image.
- Preparation of a sustainability report is not a one-off event, but the beginning of an ongoing obligation.



- Those who produce sustainability reports must also have something to report. What happens if the company's social commitment is declining? What happens if the ecological impacts get worse? Are there perhaps problem areas on which the company does not really want to report to the public?
- With sustainability reports, companies lay themselves open to attack. This is true not only in relation to the circumstance of deteriorating data or facts, but also in terms of the quality of the report. Companies are being attacked more and more often because their sustainability reports are not deemed to be sufficiently meaningful.



## Companies use a wide range of methods to generate transparency

- SMEs often need to make no formal communication. Information is passed informally through direct contacts.
- In B2B and on the financial market (SRI), transparency is generated by answering targeted questions.
- In B2C, companies make considerable efforts through supplementary voluntary information on packaging, the label or in direct communication with consumers.
- Stakeholder workshops, internal communication channels, website and also sustainability reports.



## What or who is GRI?

- GRI is an independent multi-stakeholder initiative which has developed guidelines for sustainability reporting (First version of the Guidelines in 2000, G2 in 2002, G3 in 2006, G4 in 2013).
- The GRI guidelines set out reporting principles as well as specific content for the sustainability report.
- GRI originally started by CERES (Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies) and UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). Founded in Boston it is based in Amsterdam since 2002.
- For 2012 there were 2932 Sustainability Reports that used or referenced GRI listed in the GRI database.



The GRI framework is free of charge.

There are GRI's Sector Supplements - versions of the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines tailored for the following sectors:

- Airport Operators
- Construction
- Event organizers
- Financial Services
- Food Processing
- Media
- Mining and Metals
- NGOs
- Oil and Gas



## GRI Principles for Defining Report Content

- The organisation should identify its stakeholders, and explain how it has responded to their reasonable expectations and interests.
- The report should present the organisation's performance in the wider context of sustainability.
- The report should cover aspects that:
  - Reflect the organisation's significant economic, environmental and social impacts; or
  - Substantively influence the assessments and decisions of stakeholders
- The report should include coverage of material aspects and their boundaries sufficiently to reflect significant economic, environmental and social impacts, and to enable stakeholders to assess the organisation's performance in the reporting period.



## GRI Principles for Defining Report Quality

- The report should reflect positive and negative aspects of the organisation's performance to enable a reasoned assessment of overall performance.
- The organisation should select, compile and report information consistently. The reported information should be presented in a manner that enables stakeholders to analyse changes in the organisation's performance over time, and that could support analysis relative to other organisations.
- The reported information should be sufficiently accurate and detailed for stakeholders to assess the organisation's performance.



- The organisation should report regularly so that information is available in time for stakeholders to make informed decisions.
- The organisation should make information available in a manner that is understandable and accessible to stakeholders using the report.
- The organisation should gather, record, compile, analyse and disclose information and processes used in the preparation of a report in a way that they can be subject to examination and that establishes the quality and materiality of the information.



### Categories and aspects of the GRI Guidelines

Category:		Economic	
Aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Performance</li> <li>Market Presence</li> <li>Indirect Economic Impacts</li> <li>Procurement Practices</li> </ul>		
Category:		Environmental	
Aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials</li> <li>Energy</li> <li>Water</li> <li>Biodiversity</li> <li>Emissions</li> <li>Effluents and Waste</li> <li>Products and Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance</li> <li>Transport</li> <li>Overall</li> <li>Supplier Environmental Assessment</li> <li>Environmental Grievance Mechanisms</li> </ul>	
Category:		Social	
Sub- Category	Labour Practices and Decent Work	Human Rights	
Aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment</li> <li>Labour/Management Relations</li> <li>Occupational Health and Safety</li> <li>Training and Education</li> <li>Diversity and Equal Opportunity</li> <li>Equal Remuneration for Women and Men</li> <li>Supplier Assessment for Labour Practices</li> <li>Labour Practices Grievance Mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment</li> <li>Non-discrimination</li> <li>Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining</li> <li>Child Labour</li> <li>Forced or Compulsory Labour</li> <li>Security Practices</li> <li>Indigenous Rights</li> <li>Assessment</li> <li>Supplier Human Rights Assessment</li> <li>Human Rights Grievance Mechanisms</li> </ul>	
Sub- Category	Society	Product Responsibility	
Aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Communities</li> <li>Anti-corruption</li> <li>Public Policy</li> <li>Anti-competitive Behaviour</li> <li>Compliance</li> <li>Supplier Assessment for Impacts on Society</li> <li>Grievance Mechanisms for Impacts on Society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer Health and Safety</li> <li>Product and Service Labelling</li> <li>Marketing Communications</li> <li>Customer Privacy</li> <li>Compliance</li> </ul>	



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**Thank you very much for your  
attention!**