



Item 05 – GRI Sector Standard Project for Financial Services – Technical Committees terms of reference

For GSSB information

Date	30 January 2023
Meeting	16 February 2023
Project	GRI Sector Standard Project for Financial Services
Description	This document sets out the terms of reference for the technical committees for the GRI Sector Standard Project for Financial Services for GSSB information.

This document has been prepared by the GRI Standards Division and is made available to observers at meetings of the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB). It does not represent an official position of the GSSB. Board positions are set out in the GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards. The GSSB is the independent standard setting body of GRI. For more information visit www.globalreporting.org.

Contents

Terms of Reference	3
Background	3
Mandate of the Financial Services Technical Committees	3
Scope of work	4
Responsibilities of the Standards Division and GSSB.....	4
Additional considerations	5
Composition of the technical committees.....	5
Selection criteria	6
Technical committee commitments	6
Ensuring confidentiality.....	7
Public communications protocol	7
Appendix 1. Proposed project timeline.....	8
Appendix 2. Meeting schedule	9

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For more information: visit the [project webpage](#)

1 Terms of reference

2 These terms of reference outline the mandate of the GRI Sector Standard Project for Financial
3 Services Technical Committees, including their selection and appointment, primary objectives, and
4 time commitments. The GRI Sector Standard Project for Financial Services will engage three
5 technical committees with the following formal titles:

- 6 • Banking Technical Committee
- 7 • Insurance Technical Committee
- 8 • Capital Markets Technical Committee

9 The terms of reference apply to the members on each technical committee, in their role on the
10 specific technical committee to which they have been appointed.

11 A committee member can be appointed to more than one technical committee. In such cases, these
12 terms of reference will apply to their roles on multiple technical committees.

13 As outlined in these terms of reference, the three technical committees will be required to collaborate
14 via a cross-sector exchange in which all technical committees are present.

15 Background

16 The Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), GRI's independent standard-setting body, has
17 identified the banking, insurance, and capital markets sectors as a priority for developing GRI Sector
18 Standards. A Sector Standard will be developed for each sector as part of a portfolio project called the
19 GRI Sector Standard Project for Financial Services.

20 The objective of sustainability reporting using the GRI Standards is to provide transparency on how
21 an organization contributes or aims to contribute to sustainable development. The GRI Standards
22 enable an organization to publicly disclose its most significant impacts on the economy, environment,
23 and people, including impacts on human rights and how the organization manages these impacts.

24 Sector Standards provide information for organizations in a given sector about their likely material
25 topics. Sector Standards also contain a list of disclosures for organizations to report information about
26 their impacts in relation to each likely material topic. They are designed to enhance the global
27 comparability and quality of information within a sector, enable greater transparency and
28 accountability of organizations, and support informed decision-making by stakeholders.

29 The GRI Sector Standard Project for Financial Services aims to develop Standards that improve the
30 sustainability reporting of banking, insurance, and capital markets organizations, making reporting
31 comprehensive and consistent across the sectors. It will be carried out following the [GSSB Due](#)
32 [Process Protocol](#).

33 See the [project proposal](#) for more information.

34 Mandate of the Financial Services Technical 35 Committees

36 Sector Standards are developed using multi-stakeholder expertise, authoritative intergovernmental
37 instruments, and other relevant evidence. The technical committees will contribute their expertise to
38 develop Sector Standards for banking, insurance, and capital markets.

39 The overall work of the technical committees should support sustainability reporting as promoted by
40 the GRI Standards.

41 **Scope of work**

42 The technical committees will be responsible for developing Sector Standards for the banking,
43 insurance, and capital markets sectors for the consideration of the GSSB. Within the context of the
44 GRI Sector Program, the three sectors within the Financial Services Project are described in the
45 [project proposal](#).

46 The technical committees will be tasked with providing recommendations on:

- 47 • the context of the banking, insurance, and capital markets sectors respectively, in relation to
48 sustainable development, including relevant Sustainable Development Goals and
49 international instruments and agreements;
- 50 • the likely material topics for organizations in the banking, insurance, and capital markets
51 sectors based on significant impacts on the environment, economy, and people, including
52 human rights (that may also include financed, facilitated, or portfolio impacts);
- 53 • the description of these impacts and authoritative references that evidence these impacts;
- 54 • the disclosures from GRI Topic Standards that are relevant for organizations from the
55 banking, insurance, and capital markets sectors to report on each likely material topic;
- 56 • the cross-sector exchange, where the technical committees will provide recommendations on
57 the reporting approach and disclosures relevant to the impacts that organizations in these
58 sectors have through allocating capital (through investment or debt financing). Additionally,
59 the cross-sector exchange will aim to ensure alignment on the descriptions and reporting on
60 other common likely material topics;
- 61 • additional reporting that is recommended for disclosure by organizations in the banking,
62 insurance, and capital markets sectors. Additional sector reporting is only included when the
63 Topic Standards do not provide disclosures that sufficiently reflect the impacts associated
64 with the sectors.

65 The technical committees may also provide recommendations on:

- 66 • the scope, relevant sector classification identifiers, and the Sector Standard name;
- 67 • considerations that may be relevant to Sector Standards for related sectors, specifically to the
68 sectors included in the Financial Services project; and
- 69 • revisions or updates to other GRI Standards.

70 Impacts identified within this project for which no GRI Standard exists will be assessed and prioritized
71 by the GSSB for future GRI Standards development.

72 The technical committees will not be responsible for editing the stylistic and grammatical presentation
73 of deliverables. The Standards Division will undertake such edits to ensure consistency with existing
74 GRI documents. Any style recommendations made by the technical committees will be reviewed and
75 considered by the Standards Division in-house editorial team.

76 **Responsibilities of the Standards Division and GSSB**

77 The Standards Division is responsible for:

- 78 • overall project management and ensuring compliance with the [GSSB Due Process Protocol](#);
- 79 • facilitating, providing logistical support, and preparing materials for technical committee
80 meetings;
- 81 • maintaining an online collaboration platform for the technical committees;
- 82 • engaging with the GSSB and other GRI Governance bodies;
- 83 • engaging other experts and interested parties in a peer review and on an as-needed basis;
- 84 • coordinating public exposure of the draft Sector Standards, including collecting and
85 summarizing feedback for consideration by the technical committees;
- 86 • undertaking research to support the development of the Sector Standards; and
- 87 • drafting, editing, proofreading, and finalizing the content of the Sector Standards.

88 The Standards Division will draft the Sector Standards and other relevant deliverables in accordance
 89 with the recommendations of the technical committees. The Standards Division will use the Sector
 90 Standard template and apply the appropriate house rules for terminology, style, and presentation.

91 The GSSB approves the draft Sector Standard for public exposure and the final content of a Sector
 92 Standard through a formal voting process. The GSSB will review the drafted contents and may ask
 93 one or more of the technical committees to conduct further research and/or develop the draft
 94 recommendations. Technical committee members should be committed to supporting the revision of
 95 draft contents in addition to developing these contents. Further information on the role and authority of
 96 the GSSB can be found in the [GSSB Due Process Protocol](#).

97 **Additional considerations**

98 The development of the Sector Standards is to be carried out within the existing structure and
 99 template of the GRI Standards, including preserving the hierarchy, coherence, and implementation
 100 approach of the GRI Standards. Sector Standard content must be in line with the ‘in accordance’
 101 model outlined in [GRI 1: Foundation 2021](#).

102 The technical committees should aim to develop topic descriptions that are clear, consistent, and
 103 focused on impacts from a sustainable development perspective. Content should also seek to be in
 104 line with key authoritative intergovernmental instruments (such as instruments of the United Nations,
 105 the International Labour Organization, and the OECD).

106 The discussions of the technical committees are confidential, but any recommendations made by the
 107 technical committees to the GSSB will be publicly available in accordance with the [GSSB Due
 108 Process Protocol](#). Meeting materials are confidential and should not be shared outside the technical
 109 committees without prior permission from the Standards Division.

110 GRI will hold the copyright of any deliverables associated with the project.

111 **Composition of the technical committees**

112 It is anticipated that each sector-specific technical committee will have approximately eight members.
 113 Each technical committee will aim to have at least one person drawn from each constituency on which
 114 the membership of the GSSB is based: business enterprises, investment institutions, labor, civil
 115 society, and mediating institutions.

116 In addition, geographical, gender, and cultural diversity will be considered. There can only be one
 117 representative per organization in each technical committee.

118 **Table 1: Descriptions of constituencies represented on each Technical Committee**

Business enterprise	a) An enterprise (other than a mediating or investment institution) that has been established in order to generate a profit for the benefit of its investors or owners; or b) An organization representing the collective interests of those falling into category ‘a’.
Investment institution	An enterprise primarily concerned with the direct or indirect, long-term investment of funds in business – including, but not limited to, asset owners, asset managers, development banks, exchanges, rating agencies, and market information brokers.
Labor	An organization established independently of employers and governments to represent the interests of workers.
Civil society	An organization established to promote or secure a public good relating to sustainability (environmental, social, and governance) that does not fall into any of the categories defined above.

Mediating institution	An individual or organization that provides goods and/or services associated with the reporting process and benefits from doing so.
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119 A GSSB sponsor(s) may join technical committee meetings.

120 Selection criteria

121 In accordance with the [GSSB Due Process Protocol](#), members of the technical committees are
 122 appointed by the GSSB. The principal criterion for selecting the technical committee is relevant
 123 knowledge and experience of a broad range of sustainable development issues for the banking,
 124 insurance, and capital markets sectors.

125 Members must be able to participate in technical committee meetings held in English and provide
 126 written feedback in English when requested.

127 In addition, the following criteria will be considered:

- 128 • relevant knowledge of sustainability reporting for the sector;
- 129 • familiarity with the needs of users of sustainability reports;
- 130 • related experience with multi-stakeholder initiatives;
- 131 • understanding of and willingness to work in a consensus-based, multi-stakeholder technical
 132 committee.

133 Technical committee commitments

134 Technical committee members are expected to:

- 135 • act in an individual capacity, exclusively in the public interest, and according to due process
 136 as defined in the [GSSB Due Process Protocol](#);
- 137 • review the materials provided by the Standards Division in advance of technical committee
 138 meetings in order to participate actively;
- 139 • provide timely feedback on documents or other materials distributed by the Standards
 140 Division;
- 141 • collaborate with other technical committees through the cross-sector exchange to ensure
 142 alignment across the different Financial Services Standards (banking, insurance, and capital
 143 markets) where reasonable;
- 144 • work in a manner that aims at achieving consensus.

145 The development of Sector Standards for banking, insurance, and capital markets is expected to take
 146 up to 30 months following the appointment of the technical committees. See the timeline included in
 147 Appendix 1.

148 The estimated time commitment for each technical committee member is approximately 80 hours
 149 across the entire project, including the possibility of a two-day in-person meeting. Members commit to
 150 attending approximately 40 hours of meetings and reviewing the draft Sector Standard a minimum of
 151 three times during that period. Members also commit to planning sufficient time to prepare for
 152 meetings, review other materials, and engage in supplementary content creation methods. It is
 153 estimated that this may result in up to 40 hours of time commitment across the project (excluding any
 154 necessary travel time).

155 Meetings and other engagement methods will vary depending on the needs of the technical
 156 committees and the project, such as the cross-sector exchange. Commonly used methods include full
 157 group meetings in person and virtually, sub-group workshops, and digital content creation platforms.
 158 The use of these methods will also consider any travel restrictions or risk factors related to Covid-19.
 159 Availability to travel to Amsterdam for a two-day in-person meeting in October or November 2023 is
 160 expected.

161 Virtual meetings are normally held between 1.00-2.30 pm Central European Time (CET), so that
162 members in most time zones can join. This will be adjusted based on the final geographical
163 representation of the technical committees.

164 Specific dates for virtual and in-person meetings will be defined based on the availability of technical
165 committee members within the time frames indicated below. This timeline is subject to change due to,
166 for example, members' availability, project scope changes, and internal resourcing availability.

167 See appendix 1 for the proposed meeting schedule and an itemized time commitment.

168 Technical committee members volunteer their time. There is no fee or compensation associated with
169 participation in a technical committee. Upon request, technical committee members will be eligible for
170 travel and accommodation reimbursement for in-person meetings in accordance with GRI policies.

171 **Ensuring confidentiality**

172 Technical committee meetings are held under the Chatham House Rule: 'When a meeting, or part
173 thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received,
174 but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be
175 revealed.'

176 Meeting materials are confidential; they can be shared with colleagues for input, but not with outside
177 parties without prior permission from the GRI Standards Division.

178 **Public communications protocol**

179 Public communication on issues related to the activities of the technical committees and the
180 development of the GRI Standards is the responsibility of the GSSB. Technical committee members
181 may publicly express their personal opinions and views but may not speak on behalf of the technical
182 committee, GSSB, or GRI.

183 The names and biographies of members will be published on the GRI website. Members are welcome
184 to publicize their participation and the activities of the technical committees through press releases or
185 social media channels. Members are asked to work with the Standards Division or GRI's
186 communication team to coordinate any such activity ahead of time.

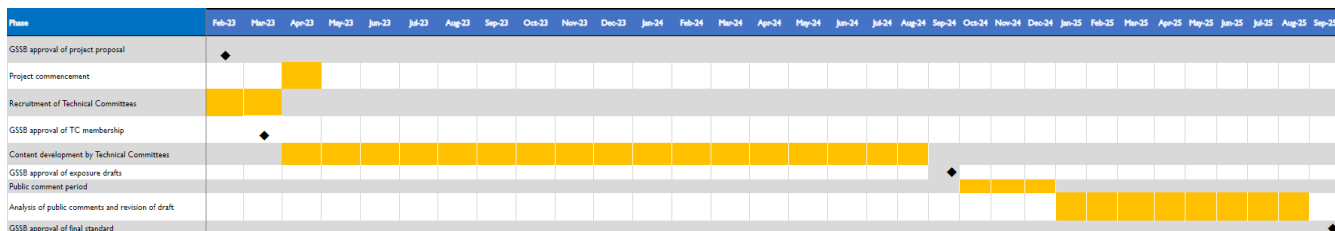
187 Technical committee members are advised to use the following when referring to their participation in
188 this process:

189 '[name of member] has been appointed by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), GRI's
190 independent standard-setting body, to serve on a technical committee to produce a Standard for the
191 [banking/insurance/capital markets] sector. This work will also consider how organizations in this
192 sector should report sustainability information with regards to their role as investors across many
193 other sectors.'

194 In such communication, technical committee members will always frame their contribution and
195 participation in relation to the specific sector for which they were selected (e.g., the banking sector
196 and Banking Technical Committee).

197 **Appendix 1. Proposed project timeline**

198 To be completed prior to technical committee appointments. The commencement date of this project
 199 has not been finalized and is subject to resource availability. The following project timeline is based
 200 on the estimated project duration.



This document does not represent an official position of the

201 Appendix 2. Meeting schedule

202 The following table outlines the minimum number of meetings expected to occur throughout the
 203 project. Specific dates for all meetings will be defined based on the availability of technical committee
 204 members within the time frames indicated below. This timeline is subject to change due to, for
 205 example, members' availability, project scope changes, and internal resourcing availability.

206

Meeting	Time commitment	Approximate date
Technical committee meeting 1 (all sector briefing and project introduction)	2-hour virtual meeting + 2 hours review of preparatory materials	May 2023
Technical committee meeting 2	3-hour virtual meeting + 2 hours review of preparatory materials	July 2023
Technical committee meeting 3 (cross-sector exchange)	2-day in-person (approx. 12 hours) meeting + 2 hours review of preparatory materials	October or November 2023
Technical committee meeting 4	2-hour virtual meeting + 2 hours review of preparatory materials	January 2024
Technical committee meeting 5 (cross-sector exchange)	3-hour virtual meeting + 2 hours review of preparatory materials	April 2024
Technical committee meeting 6	2-hour virtual meeting + 2 hours review of preparatory materials	July 2024
Sub-group meetings	1.5-hour virtual sub-group meeting	As needed
Public comment period		October-December 2024
Technical committee meeting 7 (cross-sector exchange)	3-hour virtual meeting + 2 hours review of preparatory materials	March 2025
Technical committee meeting 8	2-hour virtual meeting + 2 hours review of preparatory materials	April 2025
Technical committee meeting 9	2-hour virtual meeting + 2 hours review of preparatory materials	July 2025

207 In addition to the meetings listed above, it is expected that the technical committees will participate in
 208 a survey following meeting 1, review the draft Sector Standard three times, twice prior to the public
 209 exposure and once following, and participate in stakeholder engagement activities during the public
 210 exposure period and support the launch of the Standard.