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Item 01 – Draft summary of the GSSB meeting held on 22 October 2020

For GSSB approval

Date	6 November 2020
Meeting	19 November 2020
Description	This document presents the summary of the GSSB virtual meeting held on 22 October 2020.

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.

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2 Participants

3 Present:

Name	Constituency
Judy Kuszewski	Chair
Robyn Leeson	Vice-Chair
Loredana Carta	Labor
Peter Colley	Labor
Evan Harvey	Investment institution
Kirsten Margrethe Hovi	Business enterprise
Vincent Kong	Business enterprise
Joseph Martin	Business enterprise
Tung-Li (Tony) Mo	Civil society organization
Jennifer Princing	Business enterprise
Gustavo Sinner	Mediating institution
Kenton Swift	Civil society organization
Michel Washer	Business enterprise

4 Apologies:

Name	Constituency
Corli le Roux	Mediating institution
Rama Krishnan Venkateswaran	Investment institution

5 In attendance from the Standards Division:

Name	Position
Bastian Buck	Chief of Standards
Laura Espinach	Head of Technical Development
Mia d'Adhemar	Senior Manager Sector Program
Anna Krotova	Senior Manager
Miguel Pérez Ludeña	Research Lead Sector Program
Veronica Wachong	Senior Coordinator Sector Program
Gillian Balaban	Team Assistant

6 List of abbreviations

GSSB	Global Sustainability Standards Board
SD	Standards Division

7 Decisions and action items

8 *Decisions*

9 **GSSB Decision 2020.19** The GSSB resolved to approve [Item 01 – Draft summary of the GSSB](#)
10 [meeting held on 15 September 2020](#).

11 **GSSB Decision 2020.20** The GSSB resolved to approve [Item 04 – GRI Sector Standards Project](#)
12 [for Oil, Gas, and Coal – Proposed member for working group](#).

13 *Action items*

GSSB	
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GSSB to provide feedback on Item 02 – GRI Sector Standards Program – Revised list of prioritized sectors and Item 03 – GSSB Work Program 2020-2022 to the SD by email by close of business 30 October 2020.
Standards Division	
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SD to take GSSB feedback under advisement and present the list of prioritized sectors, incorporating this feedback, for GSSB approval at its meeting on 19 November.SD to present the Work Program 2020-2022 for GSSB approval at its meeting on 19 November.

14 Sessions 1 & 2: Private sessions

15 These were private sessions.

16 Session 3: Welcome

17 The GSSB was presented with [Item 01 – Draft summary of the GSSB meeting held on 15 September](#)
18 [2020](#) for approval.

19 GSSB Chair Judy Kuszewski (henceforth the Chair) welcomed the GSSB and presented an overview
20 of the meeting agenda.

21 A GSSB member asked whether the timeline for the agriculture and fishing project would be
22 presented at a future meeting, as it was mentioned as an Action item in the summary but was not
23 included in the present meeting agenda.

24 The Standards Division confirmed that the timeline for the agriculture and fishing project would be
25 presented at a subsequent meeting.

26 **GSSB Decision 2020.19** The GSSB resolved to approve [Item 01 – Draft summary of the GSSB](#)
27 [meeting held on 15 September 2020](#).

28 Session 4: GSSB Work Program 2020- 29 2022 update

30 The GSSB was presented with [Item 02 – GRI Sector Standards Program – Revised list of prioritized](#)
31 [sectors](#) for approval and [Item 03 – GSSB Work Program 2020-2022](#) for information.

32 **Proposed list of prioritized sectors**

33 The SD presented a list ranking the priority of projects to be covered under the Sector Program,
34 including a list of top 10 sectors to be prioritized for development next, following the first two pilot
35 projects on oil, gas, and coal, and agriculture and fishing that are currently underway.

36 A GSSB member called attention to the growing importance of artificial intelligence (AI) across
37 sectors and questioned whether IT and services should be in group 3 of the prioritization.

38 The Chair confirmed the GSSB's ambition to be forward-thinking, and suggested that AI can be
39 addressed at a topic level alongside the Sector Program. The SD pointed out that while the chief
40 criteria used to prioritize sectors are impacts on sustainable development and feasibility of producing
41 the Standard, the ranking is flexible and may alter over time in response to such needs and
42 developments.

43 A GSSB member noted that the number of companies wishing to report in each sector is also a
44 relevant factor in assigning priority, as that affects impact. The SD replied that sectors with most GRI
45 reporting already feature in the top 10 priority sectors for development, and that information on
46 uptake will be taken into account in prioritization for future projects. However, the SD also noted
47 that current uptake figures should be considered with caution, as report registration numbers are
48 not complete.

49 A GSSB member pointed to certain inconsistencies between the top ten priority sectors and the
50 annex (rubber is included with forestry in the top 10 sectors, but is included in the scope of the
51 agriculture and fishing sector in the annex). The GSSB member also commented on connections and
52 synergies between sectors (such as both agriculture and forestry being foundational for textiles, or
53 the connection between infrastructure and construction), and noted that more such connections
54 could emerge over the course of the projects and inform the ordering of the sectors.

55 Another GSSB member requested information on why mining and metals have been split into
56 separate sectors, why only iron and aluminum are included as metals in the list, and whether the
57 focus will fall on downstream activities and recycling, in addition to primary activities.

58 The SD explained that the current distinction between the manufacturing and extractive parts of the
59 industry is aimed to better capture impacts on sustainable development, and the criteria to include

60 iron, aluminum, and steel is based on standard industry practice and the way these companies are
61 organized. The SD clarified that borders between sectors can be refined as work progresses. The
62 activities covered under the sectors remain to be scoped out.

63 The SD will take GSSB feedback under advisement and present the list of prioritized sectors,
64 incorporating this feedback, for GSSB approval at a subsequent meeting.

65 **Overview of revised work program for 2020-2022**

66 The Standards Division (SD) presented an update of its revised work program for 2020-2022,
67 focusing on the proposal for 2021. The SD drew attention to a new preamble to the work program
68 highlighting the role the GSSB can play in forming a single coherent global set of sustainability
69 standards.

70 A GSSB member asked for clarification on whether the focus on a harmonization of standards in the
71 preamble was a signal to other organizations that the GSSB sees its work to be in integrating GRI
72 Standards with others.

73 The Chair confirmed this to be the case and highlighted the role the GSSB can play in the practical
74 aspects of harmonization of standards.

75 A GSSB member commented on the discrepancy between what the GSSB aspires to achieve with
76 the work program and what budget constraints allow, and hoped that a renewed focus on funding
77 would address this.

78 The SD requested the GSSB to provide any further comments on the work program by email to the
79 SD by close of business 30 October 2020, in time to finalize the document before the GSSB meeting
80 on 19 November.

81 **Actions:**

- 82 • GSSB to provide feedback on [Item 02 – GRI Sector Standards Program – Revised list of](#)
83 [prioritized sectors](#) and [Item 03 – GSSB Work Program 2020-2022](#) to the SD by email by
84 close of business 30 October 2020.
- 85 • SD to take GSSB feedback under advisement and present the list of prioritized sectors,
86 incorporating this feedback, for GSSB approval at its meeting on 19 November.
- 87 • SD to present the Work Program 2020-2022 for GSSB approval at its meeting on 19
88 November.

89 **Session 5: GRI Universal Standards Project** 90 **update**

91 The SD presented an overview of the public comment submissions on the Universal Standards
92 exposure draft, including an overview of respondents and key themes. The key themes covered in
93 the responses include the revised concepts of 'material topic' and 'stakeholder', the process for
94 identifying material topics, the reporting model and statements of use, and revisions relating to
95 Sector Standards and governance disclosures. The SD also explained the methodology involved in
96 analysis of the feedback.

97 The SD presented a schedule for a series of more detailed, theme-specific discussions to be held
98 with the GSSB through November and December on revisions to the Universal Standards following
99 the public comment.

100 Session 6: GRI Sector Standards Project 101 for Oil, Gas, and Coal update

102 The SD presented an update of its activities under the Sector Standards Project for Oil, Gas, and
103 Coal. This included an overview of the public comments on the Oil and Gas exposure draft. The SD
104 reiterated that the public comment period had the dual purpose of eliciting feedback on the
105 exposure draft as a template for all Sector Standards, as well as on the oil and gas content
106 specifically. The overview presented by the SD referred to themes that applied to Sector Standards
107 in general; submissions relating specifically to oil and gas will be presented at a later date. Themes
108 covered included implementation approach, usability, mandatory reporting, and the requirement to
109 comply with or explain why a topic is not material.

110 The SD presented the timeline for revision of the Oil and Gas Standard, and for developing an
111 exposure draft for coal.

112 **Approval of proposed member for Oil, Gas, and Coal Project working group**

113 The GSSB was presented with [Item 04 – GRI Sector Standards Project for Oil, Gas, and Coal –](#)
114 [Proposed member for working group](#) for approval.

115 The Chair called for comments or questions regarding the proposal. No comments or concerns
116 were raised. The GSSB approved the proposed member by consensus.

117 **GSSB Decision 2020.20** The GSSB resolved to approve [Item 04 – GRI Sector Standards Project](#)
118 [for Oil, Gas, and Coal – Proposed member for working group](#).

119 Session 7: Any other business and close of 120 meeting

121 No other business was raised and the Chair closed the meeting at 15:01 CEST (Central European
122 Summer Time).