

Item 01 – Draft summary of the GSSB meeting held on 15 May 2025

For GSSB approval

Date	20 May 2025
Meeting	15 May 2025
Description	This document presents the summary of the GSSB meeting held on 15 May 2025

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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This document does not represent an official position of the GSSB

Participants

Present:

Name	Constituency
Carol Adams	Chair
Jeff Robertson	Vice-Chair
Charles Cho	Civil society
Chulendra De Silva	Mediating institution
Yan Dong	Civil society
Zuzanna Muskat Gorska	Labor
Anne Lindsay	Labor
Tomoo Machiba	Mediating institution
Anna Nefedova	Mediating institution
Deborah Ng	Investment institution
Igazeuma Okoroba	Business enterprise
Felipe Martinez Rodriguez	Business enterprise
Galya Tsonkova	Business enterprise

Apologies:

Name	Constituency
Rebecca Coriat	Investment institution
Giulia Genuardi	Business enterprise

In attendance from GRI:

Name	Position
Bastian Buck	Chief Standards Officer
Harold Pauwels	Director Standards
Mario Abela	Director Standards
Gelkha Buitrago	Director Sector Standards
Gillian Balaban	Sr. Coordinator Governance Relations

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full name
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
GSSB	Global Sustainability Standards Board
SD	Standards Division

Decisions and action items

The GSSB resolved to approve the following:

GSSB Decision	Item number
2025.16	01 – Draft summary of the GSSB meeting held on 19-20 March 2025

Action items for consideration are as follows:

Action items	
Session 2	Develop a consultation version of the new GSSB Work Program and evaluate the GSSB's anticipated workload for 2026.
Session 4	Further develop the jurisdictional adoption pathways for GRI Standards, focusing on ways to increase demand for impact reporting.
Session 5	Update the global systems paper based on GSSB comments and present for approval in the near future.

Session 1: Welcome to meeting

The Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB) Chair, Carol Adams (henceforth the Chair), welcomed the GSSB. The Chair presented an overview of the meeting agenda. A quorum was established, and the above items were presented to the GSSB for approval.

The Chair corrected the previous meeting's summary; lines 136 and 137 have been removed for clarity.

Bastian Buck confirmed that *GRI 102* and *GRI 103* had been approved via electronic vote after the March meeting. The final versions and the vote summary were shared for information only, as they are now part of the formal documentation and relevant to the upcoming public consultation on the project for Sector Standards alignment with recently updated Topic Standards.

It was noted that several action items will be finalized in the June and Q3 meetings. A new action item was suggested to evaluate the GSSB's anticipated workload for next year, particularly as new appointments are considered.

There was a brief on ongoing policy submissions, emphasizing GRI's position on regulatory simplification while maintaining focus on significant impacts and alignment with global standards. A recent meeting with European regulatory representatives reaffirmed the importance of double materiality and standard alignment.

Session 2: GSSB Work Program 2026-2028 – Topic and Sector Standards

Chief of Standards, Bastian Buck, Director Standards, Harold Pauwels, and Gelkha Buitrago, Director Sector Standards, presented a first draft of the 2026-2028 Work Program considering ongoing and upcoming revisions of Topic and Sector Standards, future projects, and prioritization of resources.

The following points were raised by GSSB members and addressed as follows:

- The GSSB asked when the Universal Standards could be revised, while recognizing the importance of the Topic and Sector Standards revisions. The SD will determine the appropriate moment over the next three years and, where possible, combine it with other Standard updates.
- The GSSB asked for details on how conflict-affected and high-risk areas (CAHRA) will be included in the update of *GRI 410: Security Practices 2016*. The SD wants to follow the advice in the reports from the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, the Red Cross, and previous speakers to the GSSB. The SD suggests incorporating CAHRA into the revision of *GRI 411: Rights of Indigenous People 2016* and *GRI 413: Local Communities 2016*. As many security issues are related to vulnerable groups, particularly local communities, the SD may integrate security practices and conflict areas into the revision work.
- The GSSB asked how resources are managed to develop and revise Topic and Sector Standards. The SD explained that the focus continues to be on revising and updating overdue Standards. The SD has built an internal team focused on revising and updating the existing Topic Standards, which limits the capacity for developing new standards. In parallel, the SD established a Sector Standards team that has the capacity to handle its current workload, as well as the possibility to allocate resources differently for future sector-related work over the next three years. The SD noted the interrelation between Topic and Sector Standards, highlighting the importance of having a fully aligned portfolio. This will be achieved by the end of the next three-year work program, after which any revisions are expected to be incremental.
- The GSSB sought clarification on the digitization standard and whether GRI requires a dedicated artificial intelligence (AI) standard, noting that AI may be a cross-cutting issue. The SD confirmed that AI is under consideration following initial research, but advises deferring work on it due to other priorities in the coming years.
- The GSSB discussed the next steps in developing the draft Work Program. The SD outlined how input from the GSSB and GRI governance bodies can be incorporated as part of the process.

Session 3: Adoption pathways for the GRI Standards

Mario Abela, Director Standards, presented a paper on the pathways towards jurisdictional adoption of the GRI Standards. In response to the paper, the GSSB and SD had the following comments:

- The GSSB asked about the preferred adoption pathway of GRI staff. The SD clarified that the paper aimed to demonstrate flexible adoption options across diverse jurisdictional needs, rather than recommending a preferred approach. The GSSB and SD acknowledged that flexibility is key to adoption, but the Standards are most effective when applied as a complete package. Accordingly, there is scope to strengthen impact reporting as part of the adoption pathways, specifically by revising lines 67-68 and 94-95.
- The GSSB highlighted the need to demonstrate that jurisdictions can progress from initial adoption, such as the Universal Standards, to integrating relevant Topic and Sector Standards, and called for guidance to support this process.
- The GSSB suggested incorporating the prioritization of sectors as the greatest need for impact reporting. The SD agreed, noting that a phased adoption approach, starting with Universal, followed by Topic and Sector Standards, can support this approach.
- The GSSB raised concerns about jurisdictions softening impact disclosure requirements and stressed the need for stronger stakeholder messaging to maintain demand for GRI Standard adoption. In response, the GSSB requested a paper from the Management Board on how to stimulate such demand. This could include positioning the Universal Standards as the 'adoption' starting point, which can enshrine the principles of double materiality and serve as the basis for identifying significant impacts, in line with the GRI Standards.
- The SD and GSSB discussed the need to develop materials for regulators informed by existing practices and tailored to different jurisdictional realities. The SD agreed to present research data to illustrate current adoption practices and provide guidance on adoption, which can be included as an annex to the requested paper.
- The paper requested by the GSSB will also involve GRI's policy team.

Session 4: The evolution of the corporate reporting system and the GRI Standards

Mario Abela, Director Standards, presented an updated paper on the evolution of the global reporting system. In response to the paper, the GSSB and SD had the following comments:

- The GSSB noted that the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) can be included in the list of standard setters in Table 1 and suggested that the table contrasts the distinct roles of the GSSB and ISSB in establishing double materiality, rather than implying a straightforward alignment.
- The GSSB also proposed that Line 16 could further describe how *GRI 3: Material Topics 2021* is a crucial tool for linking impacts with related risks and opportunities.
- The GSSB discussed how the global system can address both sustainable development and the sustainability of an organization. The SD responded that updating the paper with clearer characteristics between the GSSB and ISSB could help illustrate these differences. The GSSB and SD also agreed that a concise visual representation could support public understanding of the distinctions and interconnections between global reporting, where impact reporting complements risk and opportunity reporting.
- The GSSB highlighted trends in some countries where organizations are shifting from GRI to integrated reporting. The SD added that it could elaborate on the paper's 'connectivity' message and reinforce it by explaining how impact reporting informs better financial reporting. It is helpful to set this within the context of 'integrated reporting' as that has become an important feature of corporate reporting, particularly in Japan.
- The GSSB recommended further describing how key actors can include citizens in a respective line of text.

Session 5: Any other business and close of public sessions

No other business was raised, and the Chair closed the public meeting at 13.53 Central European Summer Time (CEST).