

This table shows a list of topics identified as relevant by different stakeholder groups. They can be considered as stakeholders' suggestions or requests for topics to be monitored or disclosed by organizations.

Additional information about the project can be found at <https://www.globalreporting.org/reporting/sector-guidance/Topics-Research/Pages/default.aspx>

39 – Telecommunication Services

30 Topics

Providers of communications and high-density data transmission services primarily through a high bandwidth/fiber-optic cable network. Operators of primarily fixed-line telecommunications networks and companies providing both wireless and fixed-line telecommunications services not classified elsewhere. Providers of primarily cellular or wireless telecommunication services, including paging services.

Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
Economic	Indirect economic impacts		<p>Commentary for Telecommunication Sector Supplement for EC13 (Describe the organization's indirect economic impacts. Identify major externalities associated with the reporting organization's products and services.):</p> <p>The telecommunications sector brings significant indirect economic effects. For example, prices, bandwidth and processing power can all have considerable impacts on the productivity of individual enterprises, industrial sectors and the wider economy.</p> <p>It has all been asserted that the application of communications technology and computing can affect innovation and competitiveness.</p>	214*	Civil Society Organization



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
Environmental	Materials	Materials that are banned, restricted or scheduled for phase-out	<p>Commentary for Telecommunication Sector Supplement for EN1 (Total materials use other than water by type. Report in tonnes, kilograms, or volume. Provide definitions used for types of materials.)</p> <p>In defining types of materials, segmentation should allow report users to understand materials that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • banned, restricted, or scheduled for phase out in markets where the organisation operates; • critical (e.g., columbite- tantalite); • represent the largest percentage of overall material inputs. <p>It is recognized that manufacturers and service providers will have different approaches to managing and monitoring material use.</p>	214*	Civil Society Organization
	Energy efficiency of buildings		Telcos also often own substantial amounts of real estate such as offices and retail outlets. Opportunities exist to increase the energy efficiency of their real estate.	479	Business
	Energy efficiency of operations	Data center and network equipment	<p>Contribution to climate change: positive contribution of products and impact of own operations through energy consumption by telecommunications networks</p> <p>* positive contribution of products (in terms of dematerialisation, journey substitution and increases in energy efficiency in other industries) and strategy to advance these effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data on energy consumption and CO2 emissions - strategy and measures to reduce overall energy consumption incl. reduction targets - measures and programmes for increasing the energy 	397, 498	Financial Markets & Information Users



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			<p>efficiency of telecommunication networks</p> <p>In terms of dematerialisation, journey substitution and increases in energy efficiency in other industries, telecommunication products can make significant contributions to slowing the pace of climate change. On the other hand, CO2 emissions resulting from the high levels of energy consumed by telecommunications networks, constitute one of the sector's principal environmental impacts.</p>		
			<p>Sources of energy can be classified into two groups: renewables sources of energy and non-renewable.</p> <p>Recently there has been debate over whether improvements in energy efficiency can actually result in greater consumption of resources overall as lower costs enable more demand (more supply at a lower cost). This is known as the Jevons Paradox. Energy innovation continues to occur inside the data centre and computer chassis, but given the scale of predicted growth, the source of electricity must be factored into what is meant by 'green IT'. Energy efficiency alone will, at best, slow the growth of the sector's footprint. Given the potential impacts of the Jevons Paradox, improved IT efficiency will likely increase its environmental footprint even beyond what is currently projected without a shift away from dirty sources of energy.</p>	223	Civil Society Organization
			<p>Climate change also represents a risk for Telcos. The energy demands of running a telecommunications network are significant – they typically account for over 70-90% of a telecommunication company's total energy</p>	479	Business



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			use. Moreover, total energy use is likely to increase in future years as take-up of use expands. To address this issue Telecommunications Service Providers can work with Equipment Manufacturers to increase the energy efficiency of network equipment and with each other to share base stations.		
			<p>The ICT sector holds many of the keys to reaching our climate goals by innovating solutions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and increase energy efficiency. Technologies that enable smart grids, zero emissions buildings, and more efficient transport systems are central to efforts to combat climate change.</p> <p>IT energy-related 'smart' solutions have the ability to put consumers in command of their electricity use and pave the way for dramatic improvements in energy efficiency and use of renewable energy</p> <p>The level of disclosure of investment in emission reducing solutions is disappointing</p>	224	Civil Society Organization
			<p>Growing awareness of the environmental impact of infrastructure and equipment over the entire life cycle has raised demand for product designs that consider the use of chemicals in production, energy efficiency, and waste issues</p>	460	Financial Markets & Information Users
	Biodiversity and ecosystem protection	Development and decommissioning of infrastructure	EN7. Description of the major impacts on biodiversity associated with the organisation's activities and/or products and services in terrestrial, freshwater, and marine environments.	214*	Civil Society Organization



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			Commentary for Telecommunication Sector Supplement: Response to this indicator should take into account the impacts associated with the development and decommissioning of infrastructure. Examples of such impacts could include: laying cables and installing masts in or near in protected areas and managing wastes during the building of infrastructure.		
	Emissions to air	Data center	<p>Data center or computer centre (also datacenter) is a facility used to house computer systems and associated components, such as telecommunications and storage systems. It generally includes redundant or backup power supplies, redundant data communications connections, environmental controls (e.g., air conditioning, fire suppression) and security devices.</p> <p>Large data centers are industrial scale operations using as much electricity as a small town and sometimes are a significant source of air pollution in the form of diesel exhaust. Solutions to increase data efficiency can take various forms (one example is cloud computing) and each entails different environmental benefits/solutions.</p>	223	Civil Society Organization
			<p>Emissions to air</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greenhouse Gases 2. Acid Rain, Eutrophication and Smog Precursors 3. Dust and Particles 4. Ozone Depleting Substances 5. Volatile Organic Compounds 6. Metal emissions to air 	109	Mediating Institution



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	Emissions to air - GHG emissions	Telecommunication networks	<p>Contribution to climate change: positive contribution of products and impact of own operations through energy consumption by telecommunications networks</p> <p>* positive contribution of products (in terms of dematerialisation, journey substitution and increases in energy efficiency in other industries) and strategy to advance these effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data on energy consumption and CO2 emissions - strategy and measures to reduce overall energy consumption incl. reduction targets - measures and programmes for increasing the energy efficiency of telecommunication networks <p>In terms of dematerialisation, journey substitution and increases in energy efficiency in other industries, telecommunication products can make significant contributions to slowing the pace of climate change. On the other hand, CO2 emissions resulting from the high levels of energy consumed by telecommunications networks, constitute one of the sector's principal environmental impacts.</p>	397, 498	Financial Markets & Information Users
	Electronic waste (e-waste)	End-of-life product - Disposal, and take back of products for reuse and recycling	<p>Handling and preventing electronic waste</p> <p>Collaboration with suppliers for enhanced upgradeability/reusability/recyclability of telecommunication products. Promotion of industry-wide standards. Guidelines on the composition of IT products to increase their recyclability.</p>	397	Financial Markets & Information Users



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			<p>The issue of preventing electronic waste, as well as its takeback and recycling, affects both the IT industry and the telecommunications sector. For telecommunications companies, this includes offering financial incentives to induce customers to continue using their – still perfectly functional – old mobile phones instead of ordering new ones, when they renew their contracts, and offering to take back mobile phones and other telecommunication equipment free of charge in their shops or by post. Still-functional phones are then for the most part exported to developing countries, where they continue to be used. In future, the sector must make more of an effort to tackle the question of the extent to which it can create structures for taking back these mobile phones and thus also the preconditions for recycling them appropriately.</p> <p>NOTE: The issue of preventing electronic waste, as well as its takeback and recycling, affects both the IT industry and the telecommunications sector.</p>		
			<p>Management of electronic waste</p> <p>E-Waste streams and quantities Actions put in place to verify proper disposal End of life solutions Recycling goals What is being done to support ‘circular economy’ thinking. Building in interoperability and reusable components.</p> <p>The widespread use of electrical and electronic</p>	335, 471	Business



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			<p>equipment (EEE) has raised public awareness of its positive effects such as the reduction of the digital divide, but also of the negative environmental and health effects associated with the inefficient waste management of end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE or e-waste).</p> <p>There have been alarming reports of e-waste mismanagement in many countries, particularly in less developed nations and countries with economies in transition. E-waste is a significant contributor to the ICT industry's impact on the environment, and urgent global action to address this issue is essential if the industry is to fulfill its commitment to a sustainable future.</p> <p>Many electronic devices include heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic. If not handled properly, these can poison our environment and threaten the health of individuals and communities. E-waste contains a combination of reusable raw materials as well as toxic materials. The raw materials have value and can be reused to manufacture new products.</p> <p>The appropriate handling of e-waste can both prevent serious environmental damage and also recover valuable materials, especially for metals.</p>		
			Version 17, released in November 2011, of the Greenpeace Guide to Greener Electronics ranks companies	227	Civil Society Organization
			Moreover, take- back programs, greater modularity, and extended producer responsibility are becoming more	460	Financial Markets &



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			and more relevant.		Information Users
			Telecommunication Sector Specific Commentary to 3.16: The rapid development of telecommunications products and services adds importance to initiatives that address: design, future take-back, reuse, recycling, and compatibility. Particular relevance would be in the area of, for example: - Providing information about take-back schemes and environmentally preferable disposal channels.	214*	Civil Society Organization
			Waste Scope I: Total waste in tonnes Waste Scope II: Percentage of waste which is recycled	153	Financial Markets & Information Users
Social	Labor management relations	Strikes and/or lock-outs	Employee turnover costs chosen as pricing factor. Despite a general decrease in labour strikes across selective EU states (median -14.3% 2000-08), 1.9% ⁵⁶ of EU27 workers were still involved in labour disputes in 2007, which resulted in lost corporate productivity (37 working days lost per 1,000 workers). Fluctuations around historical turnover rates result from various sources, a major one being labour strikes, which signal employee dissatisfaction that could result in employees' departures.	521	Business
	Labor conditions	Workforce turnover and restructuring	Employee turnover costs estimated at EUR 11,448 per employee. High labour turnover represents a loss of knowledge and skills while threatening a company's ability to meet business objectives. According to recent surveys, a majority of turnover is voluntarily, with total implied costs estimated at 26.9% of median gross salary	521	Business



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			based on a 5Y average, which translates into EUR 11,448 per EU27 affected employee in 2010E.		
			<p>Employees of former public operators have been exposed to profound changes as a result of the rapid regulatory and technological shifts in this sector. In 2009, the number of employee suicides in France Telecom shed light on the lack of appropriate human resources management in the context of heavy restructurings. The reputational fall-out was significant among the French public. Responsible management of restructuring and maintaining sound dialogue with employees is critical in a sector that continues to undergo significant market changes.</p>	479	Business
			<p>* Intangibles-related key value drivers/KPIs of an organisation operating in the above industry - Substantively influence the assessments and decisions of stakeholders and managers</p> <p>Sustainability reporting may include more information on some basic industry KVDs/KPIs, because they are critical measures linked to the fundamental resources and processes for an organisation's value creation capacity over time. KVDs/KPIs generally represent or are connected to an organisation's intangibles.</p> <p>The identification, measurement and illustration of the most important KVDs/KPIs for this sector is considered</p>	598	Business



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			central to a better understanding of the value creation capacity of an organisation over the medium-long term. Staff turnover rate among employees, sale teams, high potential employees		
	Occupational health and safety	Operational field personnel	IO3: Practices to ensure health and safety of field personnel involved in the installation, operation and maintenance of masts, base stations, laying cables and other outside plant. Related health and safety issues include working at heights, electric shock, exposure to EMF and radio frequency fields, and exposure to hazardous chemicals.	214*	Civil Society Organization
	Customer health and safety management	Products and services use	PR1: Description of policy for preserving customer health and safety during use of reporting organisation's products and services, and extent to which this policy is visibly stated and applied, as well as description of procedures/programmes to address this issue, including monitoring systems and results of monitoring. Explain rationale for any use of multiple standards in marketing and sales of products. Commentary for Telecommunication Sector Supplement for PR1: Examples of procedures/programmes to address customer health and safety during the use of telecommunication products and services. This includes: - Risk associated with the use of mobile telephones while driving - Information and assistance to prevent and report on theft of consumer products	214*	Civil Society Organization



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	Customer privacy	Personal information management	<p>Modern technologies like the internet have given rise to a communications revolution, but for search engine providers that handle enormous amounts of private data, this poses challenges in relation to the right to privacy.</p>	66	Mediating Institution
	Customer privacy	Personal information management	<p>PRIVACY: Article 12 of the UDHR states that “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.”</p> <p>Many ICT companies hold significant amounts of personal information about users (e.g. call records, caller locations, payment details) and are required to allow “lawful intercept” (e.g. real time surveillance, or the provision of analysis and evidence) for law enforcement agencies. Providing assistance to law enforcement agencies can have positive consequences for human rights (e.g. when information is used to tackle violent crime) or negative consequences for human rights (e.g. when information is used in a human rights violation by government). Therefore it is important that companies describe their policies and processes to assist law enforcement agencies, and describe their approach in high risk markets. This can also include important data about scale and response - e.g. number of requests received, % complied with - and accompanying narrative.</p> <p>We live in an age where more and more of our personal</p>	14, 200	Mediating Institution



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			<p>information is held on our behalf by companies (e.g. cloud computing) or where the use of common ICT services results in companies necessarily holding vast amounts of personal information. This is massively increasing the significance of privacy as a human right - but also the responsible or irresponsible stewardship of this personal information can have a material impact on other human rights, such as security of person, especially in the context of company relationship with law enforcement agencies in high risk markets. This makes privacy material to stakeholders (it's their right to privacy) and to business (since being a trusted host of data is important market positioning).</p> <p>The existing GRI Guidelines do not reference privacy in the list of potentially relevant human rights, which is a massive omission given that privacy is a human right. While privacy does have a disclosure item in the "product responsibility" section, this only covers the security aspect of privacy (i.e. whether there are any security breaches) and not the human rights issue of how personal information is shared with law enforcement agencies, especially in high risk locations. In addition, it is worth noting that Privacy is generally applicable, rather than specific to ICT companies, given the amount of personal information all types of company hold these days (think retail, banking, travel, etc)</p>		
			Materiality analysis confirmed the importance for Telefonica of aspects such as data protection and Green	501	Business



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			<p>ICT.</p> <p>GRI indicators, corporate policies, best practices, targets, etc.</p> <p>Materiality analysis confirmed the importance for Telefonica of aspects such as privacy and data protection, safe use of the Internet by children and young people, and Green ICT. These issues have been pointed out by both stakeholders and Business Strategy departments in the last five years constantly.</p>		
			<p>The impact of the ICT on human rights has been well documented in the supply chain with regards to manufacturing, but we are increasingly seeing impacts on freedom of expression and privacy by companies in telecommunications and internet services.</p> <p>As ICTs are increasingly part of our every day lives, companies must assess and report on their impact on freedom of expression and privacy and report accordingly. Companies often face complex dilemmas in fulfilling the corporate responsibility to respect these rights as they often demand nuanced understanding of the rights themselves and the local context in which a company operates. Transparency and reporting of these dilemmas is important, especially the amount of requests companies receive to block, remove or filter content, deactivate accounts or suspend services. Companies must also be clear on their policies of collecting, storing and sharing user data to avoid</p>	63, 257	Mediating Institution



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			<p>violating the right to privacy.</p> <p>Technology often develops faster than laws can be enacted to regulate and companies are often left to their own devices to assess the legality of a government request and their own action. There is a lack of accountability in the ICT sector, which reporting could improve. ICT companies want to know what "good" behaviour looks like and are crying out for structured, sector specific reporting mechanisms which reflect challenging human rights such as freedom of expression and privacy.</p> <p>ICTs have had an enormously positive impact on human rights, incorporating the full spectrum of economic and social, civil and political rights. However, companies face increasing challenges in dealing with dilemmas around the impacts of FOE and privacy as technology develops and penetration increases. The events of the Arab Spring highlighted the role companies have played, both in enabling and restricting communications at critical moments. The disconnection of telecommunication and internet services during the revolution in Egypt was unprecedented in its scale, but governments often turn to private companies to suspend ICT services during times of protest or elections. There are increased concerns over privacy as more personal information is collected, stored and shared by private companies. There has been increased surveillance in both democratic and non-democratic countries, which has raised questions over the 'dual use' capabilities of</p>		



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			software and its misuse, which can violate FOE and privacy. As more individuals turn to the internet to express their views, the State's relationship with dissidents has come to the fore, but this time involving the private sector, whose technologies are being used to disseminate information as well as to identify and persecute dissidents.		
			<p>Data protection</p> <p>Sound and transparent guidelines on data protection. Measures to establish data security.</p> <p>As far as the needs of customers are concerned, there are numerous issues which are of relevance to telecommunications companies (for example youth protection, narrowing the digital divide, complaint management and responsible marketing). The handling of data, however, is of particularly prominent importance in view of the potential reputational risks. The telecommunications industry, more than almost any other sector, has access to highly-sensitive customer data, the effective protection of which is a key requirement of a company acting responsibly.</p>	397	Financial Markets & Information Users
			<p>Commentary for Telecommunication Sector Supplement for PR3 (Description of reporting organization's policy, procedures/management systems, and compliance mechanisms for consumer privacy. Identify geographic areas covered by policy.):</p> <p>In a telecommunications context, this includes policies and programmes for data protection. Examples are the</p>	214*	Civil Society Organization



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			encryption and deletion of personal data, the production of telecommunications directories, and the delivery of other data management products and services.		
	Customer privacy and data protection	Mobile advertising (M-advertising)	<p>The amount of data that is captured, stored and transferred over ICT networks has grown in recent years. The industry bears significant responsibility, with data privacy lying at the core of customer concerns in relation to the possible storage or exchange of customers' electronic personal information, for marketing or even criminal purposes.</p> <p>The emergence of personalised and location-based m-advertising, unless carefully monitored, may become an extremely intrusive practice. The possibility of utilising personal and location information in order to create customised and personalised advertising messages can easily assemble detailed user profiles.</p> <p>Mobile marketing is expected to take off, as unlike email over the public internet, the carriers who police their own networks can set guidelines and best practices for the mobile media industry. While m-advertising can provide benefits to consumers, the privacy risks have to be considered, and appropriate data protection and privacy safeguards must be guaranteed by service providers.</p> <p>Although more extensive regulation is found in the European Union than in the US, there remains some important privacy issues and data protection concerns under the current data protection laws. The dynamics of the Information Age can lead to gaps between law and business practices within the digital world. To address</p>	479	Business



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			<p>the m-advertising issues, in March 2010 the EU issued a 'Proposal for a Privacy and Data Impact Assessment Framework for RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) Applications'.</p> <p>The recommendation is not binding legislation and instead encourages industry and company self-regulation. Apart from the ongoing work by the EU, this potential growth opportunity for telcos must be evaluated from an SRI perspective in relation to each company's ability to translate privacy issues into business practices.</p> <p>The key question to be answered is: when mobile phones are equipped with RFID to support the delivery of location-based services and mobile advertising, what consumer privacy protection is needed to ensure the level of consumer trust necessary and how can this best be achieved?</p>		
	Children and young people protection	Internet, mobile phones and other electronic media use	<p>Protection of children and minors from threats to which they may be exposed when on-line and in general when using ICT resources.</p> <p>Actions - mainly technical and educational - put in place aiming at preventing threats, aimed at children, parents and educators.</p> <p>The Internet, mobile phones and other electronic media provide children and young people with levels of access to information, culture, communication and entertainment impossible to imagine just 20 years ago. However the Internet and associated technologies have</p>	464, 520	Business



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			<p>made abusive images of children easier to create and distribute, and provide significant new opportunities for abusers to access and make contact with children and young people online. While ICTs have not created crimes involving sexual abuse and exploitation of children, they have enhanced the scale and potential of some old and familiar ones and opened the doors to violation of privacy, grooming, cyberbullying and other threats against which young generations must be protected,</p> <p>According to the findings of the EU Kids Online Survey - the pan-European study funded by the European Commissions' Safer Internet Programme in order to strengthen the evidence base for policies regarding online safety - which looked at risks and safety on the internet from the perspective of children aged 9-16 and their parents, 93% of 9-16 year old users go online at least weekly (60% go online every day or almost every day). And the average age of first internet use is seven in Denmark and Sweden and eight in several Northern European countries. Across all countries, one third of 9-10 year olds who use the internet go online daily, this rising to 80% of 15-16 year olds. 59% of 9-16 year olds have a social networking profile and among social network users, 26% have public profiles.</p> <p>Although risk does not necessarily result in harm, as reported by children, these statistics are quite impressive and clearly show the importance of guidance and monitoring from parents and educators, as well as</p>		



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			the need of making available specific measures to manage the risks properly.		
			<p>Child online protection</p> <p>Policies and management processes.</p> <p>Breach of the code leads to violation of the following human rights: Universal declaration of human rights : articles 1, 2, 3 and 9 Convention on the rights of the child: articles 2, 3, 13, 16, 32, 34, 36</p>	334, 520	Mediating Institution
			<p>Materiality analysis confirmed the importance for Telefonica of aspects such as data protection and Green ICT.</p> <p>GRI indicators, corporate policies, best practices, targets, etc.</p> <p>Materiality analysis confirmed the importance for Telefonica of aspects such as privacy and data protection, safe use of the Internet by children and young people, and Green ICT. These issues have been pointed out by both stakeholders and Business Strategy departments in the last five years constantly.</p>	501	Business
	Management of access to content	Freedom of expression	The impact of the ICT on human rights has been well documented in the supply chain with regards to manufacturing, but we are increasingly seeing impacts on freedom of expression and privacy by companies in telecommunications and internet services.	63, 257	Mediating Institution



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			<p>As ICTs are increasingly part of our every day lives, companies must assess and report on their impact on freedom of expression and privacy and report accordingly. Companies often face complex dilemmas in fulfilling the corporate responsibility to respect these rights as they often demand nuanced understanding of the rights themselves and the local context in which a company operates. Transparency and reporting of these dilemmas is important, especially the amount of requests companies receive to block, remove or filter content, deactivate accounts or suspend services. Companies must also be clear on their policies of collecting, storing and sharing user data to avoid violating the right to privacy.</p> <p>Technology often develops faster than laws can be enacted to regulate and companies are often left to their own devices to assess the legality of a government request and their own action. There is a lack of accountability in the ICT sector, which reporting could improve. ICT companies want to know what "good" behaviour looks like and are crying out for structured, sector specific reporting mechanisms which reflect challenging human rights such as freedom of expression and privacy.</p> <p>ICTs have had an enormously positive impact on human rights, incorporating the full spectrum of economic and social, civil and political rights. However, companies face</p>		



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			<p>increasing challenges in dealing with dilemmas around the impacts of FOE and privacy as technology develops and penetration increases. The events of the Arab Spring highlighted the role companies have played, both in enabling and restricting communications at critical moments. The disconnection of telecommunication and internet services during the revolution in Egypt was unprecedented in its scale, but governments often turn to private companies to suspend ICT services during times of protest or elections. There are increased concerns over privacy as more personal information is collected, stored and shared by private companies. There has been increased surveillance in both democratic and non-democratic countries, which has raised questions over the 'dual use' capabilities of software and its misuse, which can violate FOE and privacy. As more individuals turn to the internet to express their views, the State's relationship with dissidents has come to the fore, but this time involving the private sector, whose technologies are being used to disseminate information as well as to identify and persecute dissidents.</p>		
			<p>FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: Article 19 of the UDHR states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”</p> <p>Internet companies come under significant pressure</p>	14, 200	Mediating Institution



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			<p>from governments to remove or block access to content generated by users. Similarly, telecommunications companies can come under significant pressure to restrict communications, especially during times of crisis, conflict or unrest. Methods requested can include the filtering or blocking of SMS messages or the suspension of mobile services. Therefore it is important that companies describe their policies and processes to assist law enforcement agencies, and describe their approach in high risk markets. This can also include important data about scale and response - e.g. number of take down requests received, % complied with - and accompanying narrative describing the response.</p> <p>We live in an age where the right to freedom of expression is increasingly taking place on private networks and mediated by private companies. In other words, the approaches taken by private companies to content restrictions can have a material impact on our ability to realize our human right to freedom of expression. This makes freedom of expression material to stakeholders (it's their right to freedom of expression) and to business (since being a trusted host of content is important market positioning).</p> <p>The existing GRI Guidelines do not reference freedom of expression in the list of potentially relevant human rights, which is a massive omission given that freedom is a human right - indeed, significant recent events (e.g. the Arab Spring) have been driven by the right to freedom of</p>		



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			expression. Unlike privacy, freedom of expression does not have a disclosure item in the "product responsibility" section of the GRI either - freedom of expression seems to be the forgotten human right!		
			<p>PA7: Policies and practices to manage human rights issues relating to access and use of telecommunications products and services. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in industry initiatives or individual initiatives related to Freedom of Expression • Legislation in different markets on registration, censorship, limiting access, • Interaction with governments on security issues for surveillance purposes • Interaction with national and local authorities and own initiatives to restrict criminal or potentially unethical content. • Protecting vulnerable groups such as children. <p>Explain how such policies and practices are adapted and applied in different countries.</p>	214*	Civil Society Organization
	Persons' access to tele-communication products and services		<p>Category: Providing Access</p> <p>The following indicators focus on providing connectivity with a special focus on rural or excluded communities to support of social equity in the use telecommunications as a catalyst to create widespread opportunities for sustainable development. However, it is recognized that access alone does not guarantee the ability of communities to take advantage opportunities afforded by technology to improve their quality of life or to lower environmental burdens.</p>	214*	Civil Society Organization



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			<p>PA2: Policies and practices to overcome barriers for access and use of telecommunication products and services including: language, culture, illiteracy, and lack of education, income, disabilities, and age. Include an explanation of business models applied.</p> <p>PA3: Policies and practices to ensure availability and reliability of telecommunications products and services and quantify, where possible, for specified time periods and locations of down time.</p>		
	Electromagnetic radiation (EMR)	Adherence to ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) guidelines and standards	<p>IO4: Compliance with ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) standards on exposure to radiofrequency (RF) emissions from handsets</p> <p>IO5: Compliance with ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) guidelines on exposure to radiofrequency (RF) emissions from base stations.</p>	214*	Civil Society Organization
		Health risks from exposure to EMR from use of products and services	Additionally, there are increasing demands for reduced exposures to electromagnetic fields, although their long-term health impact remains difficult to assess.	460	Financial Markets & Information Users
			The potential health risk of EMR radiation from mobile phones and network base stations remains a contentious issue for the sector, even though the WHO (World Health Organisation) has concluded that serious health effects are unlikely. Yet increasingly, national authorities	479	Business



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
			(Austria, France, Germany, Sweden and Italy) have developed diverse legislation to limit maximum radiation absorption rates of handsets and limit vast exposure in high-density or sensitive (schools, hospitals) areas.		
			PR1: Description of policy for preserving customer health and safety during use of reporting organisation's products and services, and extent to which this policy is visibly stated and applied, as well as description of procedures/programmes to address this issue, including monitoring systems and results of monitoring. Explain rationale for any use of multiple standards in marketing and sales of products. Commentary for Telecommunication Sector Supplement for PR1: Examples of procedures/programmes to address customer health and safety during the use of telecommunication products and services. This includes: - Possible adverse health effects from exposure to EMF - Adverse occupational illnesses associated with teleworking	214*	Civil Society Organization
			Companies must proactively address potentially adverse health implications of electromagnetic fields resulting from wireless products	460	Financial Markets & Information Users
	Green IT	Low carbon equipment, networks and software	The 'enablement' potential of "smart" ICT based solutions – how the ICT sector enables other sectors of the economy and society at large to improve their efficiency and performance.	197, 198	Business



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
			<p>Environmental impact, in terms of GHG emissions generated and avoided (balance), due to specific ICT based solutions which integrate elements such as equipment, networks and software.</p> <p>Type of smart services/solutions implemented and made available to businesses, institutions and society such as cloud computing, healthcare delivery, educational delivery, travel substitution (e.g. audio/video conferencing), dematerialization (e.g. on-demand services), e-government, etc.</p> <p>It's about the role of ICT in driving the sustainable future and creating smart growth opportunities in a low-carbon economy, and as such is part of the core business of ICT companies that develop the integrated solutions mentioned above. It represents at the same time a challenge and a competitive advantage for the sector vs. other industry sectors.</p> <p>Measuring both the positive and negative impacts of ICT based solutions in terms of GHG emissions may not be easy. Existing methodologies, which were developed recently, provide good guidance but are quite complicated to use.</p> <p>However dematerialization alone, i.e. substituting or eliminating the need for an emissions-intensive product or process, has an abatement potential of 0.5 Gt CO₂eq by 2020, and the use of the services that make such dematerialization possible (e-commerce,</p>		



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
			telecommuting, audio- and video-conferencing, etc.), is constantly increasing with a direct impact on revenues for companies and savings for society and the environment.		
			<p>Materiality analysis confirmed the importance for Telefonica of aspects such as data protection and Green ICT.</p> <p>GRI indicators, corporate policies, best practices, targets, etc.</p> <p>Materiality analysis confirmed the importance for Telefonica of aspects such as privacy and data protection, safe use of the Internet by children and young people, and Green ICT. These issues have been pointed out by both stakeholders and Business Strategy departments in the last five years constantly.</p>	501	Business
	Product design	Environmental Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of products	<p>Environmental design needs to take into account the following factors: life cycle thinking aspects, material efficiency, energy efficiency, consumables and batteries, chemical and noise emissions, extension of product lifetime, end of life, hazardous substances/preparations, and product packaging.</p> <p>The objective is to minimise the environmental impact</p>	112	Business



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
			throughout the life cycle of a product. ECMA-341 provides pragmatic guidelines on how to integrate environmental aspects in the product design and development processes. It covers, among other issues, energy and resource consumption, material content and selection, chemical and noise emissions, and end-of-life management.		
			Growing awareness of the environmental impact of infrastructure and equipment over the entire life cycle has raised demand for product designs that consider the use of chemicals in production, energy efficiency, and waste issues	460	Financial Markets & Information Users
			<p>3.16 Policies and systems managing upstream and downstream impacts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supply chain management as it pertains to outsourcing and supplier environment and social performance; and - Product and service stewardship initiatives. <p>Stewardship initiatives include efforts to improve product design to improve product design to minimise negative impacts associated with manufacturing, use and final disposal.</p> <p>Telecommunication Sector Specific Commentary to 3.16: The rapid development of telecommunications products and services adds importance to initiatives that address: design, future take-back, reuse, recycling, and compatibility. Particular relevance would be in the area of, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement in life cycle analyses and the application of 	214*	Civil Society Organization



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
			findings to improvements of telecommunication products.		
	Anti-trust and monopoly practices		SO6. Court decision regarding cases pertaining to anti-trust and monopoly regulations. Include penalties from regulatory authorities.	214*	Civil Society Organization
Other	Corporate governance	Executive Board compensation	Executive board compensation and ROE chosen as pricing factor. High profile securities fraud fines (USD 0.6bn, Goldman Sachs vs. SEC), record ESG related provisions (USD 20bn, BP oil spill) and questionable compensation schemes (18.7% of US TARP used for bonus payments) may suggest need for a general corporate governance review.	521	Business
		Gender participation on governance bodies	GOVERNANCE / EUROPE: boardroom lady boom: is it possible without quotas? On 22 June, the CapitalCom agency published its 2011 survey into the boardroom gender mix of CAC 40 companies, with fairly encouraging results: the proportion of women on the board has doubled in recent years, from 10.5% in 2009 to 20.8% in 2011. In January, the French parliament adopted legislation imposing quotas for the proportion of women on the board of major companies. Under the measures, the development of female board membership is mandatory and gradual: 20% for listed groups, public companies of an administrative, industrial and commercial nature by January 2014, rising to 40% by January 2017. The law also stipulates that companies with no women present on their board must appoint at least one within six months of it being on the statute books (voted on 13	389	Financial Markets & Information Users



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
			<p>January 2011). In France, some 2,000 companies are affected (the 650 largest listed firms and companies with more than 500 employees and those generating sales in excess of €50bn). In terms of sanctions for noncompliance, appointments that run counter to the parity principles are to be declared null and void and attendance fees are to be temporarily suspended.</p> <p>At the European level and at the instigation of the Vice-president of the European Commission, Viviane Reding, the European parliament will decide in March 2012 on whether to adopt common legislation on this matter (a mandatory proportion of women in decision-making positions of 30% in 2015 and 40% in 2020). This will depend on the level of improvement seen based on the selfregulation of European companies, in accordance with the equality initiative adopted by the European Commission in December 2010 and the European parliament resolution of 17 January 2008 calling for the Commission and member states to promote a balance between women and men on company boards, particularly where member states are shareholders.</p> <p>Europe as a whole illustrates the degree of hesitation between a soft-law approach and conventional legislation (quotas in this instance), but it is clear from the experience at national level that the second method tends to get much better results.</p>		
			* Intangibles-related key value drivers/KPIs of an organisation operating in the above industry	598	Business



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
			<p>- Substantively influence the assessments and decisions of stakeholders and managers</p> <p>Sustainability reporting may include more information on some basic industry KVDs/KPIs, because they are critical measures linked to the fundamental resources and processes for an organisation's value creation capacity over time.</p> <p>KVDs/KPIs generally represent or are connected to an organisation's intangibles.</p> <p>The identification, measurement and illustration of the most important KVDs/KPIs for this sector is considered central to a better understanding of the value creation capacity of an organisation over the medium-long term.</p> <p>Share of women in upper/top mgmt. (to attract female talents)</p>		
	Intellectual property rights		<p>The creation and use of intellectual property is a key facet for advancing the industry and its products. This process is dependent on a degree of cooperation in developing certain standards and protocols. The sharing of intellectual property, working in an open source environment, and participation in standardization has been an effective way of developing the telecommunication sector.</p> <p>TA5: Description of practices relating to intellectual property rights and open source technologies.</p>	214*	Civil Society Organization



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
	Political accountability		<p>There are various measures of political accountability that can be measured (contributions, disclosure, board oversight).</p> <p>Note that this topic is applicable to more than the three industries noted. Essentially the political accountability practices of any company that is owned by public stockholders. Political contributions, the amount of disclosure and board oversight are among the data items that would be helpful in a sustainability report.</p> <p>In making investment decisions (especially for investors interested in socially responsible investing) it would be helpful to understand how a given company is exposed to political risk (i.e. are they backing the winning candidate, are they subject to potential retribution, why do they find it necessary to make political contributions, etc.).</p> <p>I have found the information I reference to be helpful in constructing investment portfolios that take into account this attribute of sustainability. Since it is not currently an established parameter in the socially responsible investment industry (www.ussif.org), adoption by the Global Reporting Initiative would go a long way in moving the topic of political accountability forward.</p>	394, 616	Financial Markets & Information Users
	Supplier screening	Environmental and labor issues	Environmental and labour/social issues in the supply chain	397, 406	Financial Markets &



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
		in the supply chain	<p>Promotion and monitoring of employment and environmental standards for suppliers. Improvement programmes undertaken in collaboration with suppliers. Efforts to eliminate hazardous substances from telecommunication products / comprehensive agreements with IT suppliers on the reduction of hazardous substances</p> <p>It is true of all the companies in the industry that their services cannot be used without using receiving equipment and that they therefore also represent a key element of the product package aimed at end customers, for example mobile phones as a component of mobile phone contracts or the provision of modems for internet customers. The employment conditions under which these products are manufactured and the environmental impact of their manufacture are therefore not solely the responsibility of the IT companies which produce them.</p>		Information Users
			<p>Sustainable procurement which integrates requirements, specifications and criteria that are compatible and in favour of the protection of the environment, of social progress and in support of economic development</p> <p>Risk identification process Supplier Relationship Management practices Specific initiatives carried out at individual level or in cooperation with other stakeholders (such as other enterprises involved in the process, NGOs, international</p>	333, 414	Business



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
			<p>organizations, etc.). Policy on conflict minerals. Results and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Due to its nature, an ICT supply chain includes several environmental impacts that have to be managed properly (i.e., wastes, use of hazardous materials, energy consumption, CO2 emissions, etc.). Such impacts can be managed adopting responsible procurement processes and practices, and establishing effective cooperation with suppliers.</p> <p>Furthermore hi-tech equipment (finished or parts/sub-assemblies) is normally sourced from countries where the cost of labour is lower and the basic CSR principles and labour standards may not be applied. Some of the minerals that are widely used in electronic equipment (Tantalum, Tin, Tungsten and Gold) are mined in conditions of armed conflict and human rights abuses, like in the DRC.</p> <p>It is part of companies' risk management to make sure that goods and services are sourced in a responsible manner. CSR risks can affect business continuity, reputation, revenues, stock value, compliance, etc. of an enterprise which in turn can have consequences across the whole value chain.</p> <p>Even a relatively small supply chain disruption caused by a localized event may have consequences across the global economic system, (WEF, 2008). Vulnerabilities to the supply chain are generally poorly understood and</p>		



Sustainability Category	Topic	Topic Specification (if available)	Explanation	Reference(s) ¹	Constituency
			<p>managed. Partly because the risks are obscured, as customers may be indirectly exposed to a global risk disruption through a complex range of sub- supplier arrangements.</p> <p>The objective of responsible enterprises is to create long-term value for their stakeholders by doing business in a sustainable way: sustainable procurement is one of the practices that can enable value creation.</p>		
			Environmental and social standards for suppliers are crucial issues as a large share of production is outsourced to emerging economies.	460	Financial Markets & Information Users
			A coalition of 34 Chinese environmental groups accuse global IT companies including Vodafone, BT and 27 others of not doing more to monitor the environmental impact of their manufacturing operations. The latest accusation is based on new investigation which traced a link between lead and cadmium contamination cases and the production of materials for mobile phone batteries and computer circuit boards for foreign companies.	479	Business
			<p>3.16 Policies and systems managing upstream and downstream impacts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supply chain management as it pertains to outsourcing and supplier environment and social performance; and - Product and service stewardship initiatives. <p>Stewardship initiatives include efforts to improve product design to improve product design to minimise negative impacts associated with manufacturing, use and final disposal.</p>	214*	Civil Society Organization



* GRI Sector Guidance – Pilot Version

¹All references can be found at <https://www.globalreporting.org/reporting/sector-guidance/Topics-Research/Pages/default.aspx>



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° Resource available on request and/or for a fee.

