Introduction

GRI 406: Non-discrimination

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Glossary

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About this Standard

Responsibility

This Standard is issued by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB). Any feedback on the GRI Standards can be submitted to standards@globalreporting.org for the consideration of the GSSB.

Scope

GRI 406: Non-discrimination sets out reporting requirements on the topic of non-discrimination. This Standard can be used by an organization of any size, type, sector or geographic location that wants to report on its impacts related to this topic.

Normative references

This Standard is to be used together with the most recent versions of the following documents:

GRI 101: Foundation
GRI 103: Management Approach
GRI Standards Glossary

In the text of this Standard, terms defined in the Glossary are underlined.

Effective date

This Standard is effective for reports or other materials published on or after 1 July 2018. Earlier adoption is encouraged.

Note: This document includes hyperlinks to other Standards. In most browsers, using 'ctrl' + click will open external links in a new browser window. After clicking on a link, use 'alt' + left arrow to return to the previous view.
A. Overview

This Standard is part of the set of GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards (GRI Standards). These Standards are designed to be used by organizations to report about their impacts on the economy, the environment, and society.

The GRI Standards are structured as a set of interrelated, modular standards. The full set can be downloaded at www.globalreporting.org/standards/.

There are three universal Standards that apply to every organization preparing a sustainability report:

GRI 101: Foundation
GRI 102: General Disclosures
GRI 103: Management Approach

GRI 101: Foundation is the starting point for using the GRI Standards. It has essential information on how to use and reference the Standards.

Figure 1
Overview of the set of GRI Standards

- **Universal Standards**
  - GRI 101: Foundation
    - Starting point for using the GRI Standards
  - GRI 102: General Disclosures
    - To report contextual information about an organization
  - GRI 103: Management Approach
    - To report the management approach for each material topic

- **Topic-specific Standards**
  - GRI 200: Economic
  - GRI 300: Environmental
  - GRI 400: Social
    - Select from these to report specific disclosures for each material topic

B. Using the GRI Standards and making claims

There are two basic approaches for using the GRI Standards. For each way of using the Standards there is a corresponding claim, or statement of use, which an organization is required to include in any published materials.

1. The GRI Standards can be used as a set to prepare a sustainability report that is in accordance with the Standards. There are two options for preparing a report in accordance (Core or Comprehensive), depending on the extent of disclosures included in the report.

   An organization preparing a report in accordance with the GRI Standards uses this Standard, GRI 406: Non-discrimination, if this is one of its material topics.

2. Selected GRI Standards, or parts of their content, can also be used to report specific information, without preparing a report in accordance with the Standards. Any published materials that use the GRI Standards in this way are to include a ‘GRI-referenced’ claim.

   See Section 3 of GRI 101: Foundation for more information on how to use the GRI Standards, and the specific claims that organizations are required to include in any published materials.
C. Requirements, recommendations and guidance

The GRI Standards include:

**Requirements.** These are mandatory instructions. In the text, requirements are presented in **bold font** and indicated with the word ‘shall’. Requirements are to be read in the context of recommendations and guidance; however, an organization is not required to comply with recommendations or guidance in order to claim that a report has been prepared in accordance with the Standards.

**Recommendations.** These are cases where a particular course of action is encouraged, but not required. In the text, the word ‘should’ indicates a recommendation.

**Guidance.** These sections include background information, explanations and examples to help organizations better understand the requirements.

An organization is required to comply with all applicable requirements in order to claim that its report has been prepared in accordance with the GRI Standards. See [GRI 101: Foundation](#) for more information.

D. Background context

In the context of the GRI Standards, the social dimension of sustainability concerns an organization’s impacts on the social systems within which it operates.

**GRI 406** addresses the topic of non-discrimination.

For the purpose of this Standard, discrimination is defined as the act and the result of treating people unequally by imposing unequal burdens or denying benefits, instead of treating each person fairly on the basis of individual merit. Discrimination can also include harassment. This is defined as a course of comments or actions that are unwelcome, or should reasonably be known to be unwelcome, to the person towards whom they are addressed.

An organization is expected to avoid discriminating against any person on any grounds, including avoiding discrimination against workers at work. It is also expected to avoid discriminating against customers with respect to the provision of products and services, or against any other stakeholder, including suppliers or business partners.

These concepts are covered in key instruments of the International Labour Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the United Nations (UN): see [References](#).
This Standard includes disclosures on the management approach and topic-specific disclosures. These are set out in the Standard as follows:

- Management approach disclosures (this section references GRI 103)
- Disclosure 406-1 Incidents of discrimination and corrective actions taken

### 1. Management approach disclosures

Management approach disclosures are a narrative explanation of how an organization manages a material topic, the associated impacts, and stakeholders’ reasonable expectations and interests. Any organization that claims its report has been prepared in accordance with the GRI Standards is required to report on its management approach for every material topic, as well as reporting topic-specific disclosures for those topics.

Therefore, this topic-specific Standard is designed to be used together with GRI 103: Management Approach in order to provide full disclosure of the organization’s impacts. GRI 103 specifies how to report on the management approach and what information to provide.

**Reporting requirements**

1.1 The reporting organization shall report its management approach for non-discrimination using **GRI 103: Management Approach**.
2. Topic-specific disclosures

Disclosure 406-1

Incidents of discrimination and corrective actions taken

Reporting requirements

The reporting organization shall report the following information:

a. Total number of incidents of discrimination during the reporting period.

b. Status of the incidents and actions taken with reference to the following:
   i. Incident reviewed by the organization;
   ii. Remediation plans being implemented;
   iii. Remediation plans that have been implemented, with results reviewed through routine internal management review processes;
   iv. Incident no longer subject to action.

2.1 When compiling the information specified in Disclosure 406-1, the reporting organization shall include incidents of discrimination on grounds of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin as defined by the ILO, or other relevant forms of discrimination involving internal and/or external stakeholders across operations in the reporting period.

Guidance

Guidance for Disclosure 406-1

In the context of this disclosure, an ‘incident’ refers to a legal action or complaint registered with the reporting organization or competent authorities through a formal process, or an instance of non-compliance identified by the organization through established procedures. Established procedures to identify instances of non-compliance can include management system audits, formal monitoring programs, or grievance mechanisms.

An incident is no longer subject to action if it is resolved, the case is completed, or no further action is required by the organization. For example, an incident for which no further action is required can include cases that were withdrawn or where the underlying circumstances that led to the incident no longer exist.

Background

According to ILO instruments, discrimination can occur on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, and social origin. Discrimination can also occur based on factors such as age, disability, migrant status, HIV and AIDS, gender, sexual orientation, genetic predisposition, and lifestyles, among others.¹

The presence and effective implementation of policies to avoid discrimination are a basic expectation of socially responsible conduct.

¹ Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), Report I(B) - Equality at work: The continuing challenge - Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 2011.
This Glossary includes definitions for terms used in this Standard, which apply when using this Standard. These definitions may contain terms that are further defined in the complete GRI Standards Glossary.

All defined terms are underlined. If a term is not defined in this Glossary or in the complete GRI Standards Glossary, definitions that are commonly used and understood apply.

**discrimination**

act and result of treating persons unequally by imposing unequal burdens or denying benefits instead of treating each person fairly on the basis of individual merit

**Note:** Discrimination can also include harassment, defined as a course of comments or actions that are unwelcome, or should reasonably be known to be unwelcome, to the person towards whom they are addressed.

**grievance mechanism**

system consisting of procedures, roles and rules for receiving complaints and providing remedy

**Note:** Effective grievance mechanisms are expected to be legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, transparent, rights-compatible, and a source of continuous learning. For operational-level mechanisms to be effective, they are expected to be based on engagement and dialogue. For a description of each of these criteria, see Guiding Principle 31 in the United Nations (UN), ‘Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework’, 2011.

**impact**

In the GRI Standards, unless otherwise stated, ‘impact’ refers to the effect an organization has on the economy, the environment, and/or society, which in turn can indicate its contribution (positive or negative) to sustainable development.

**Note 1:** In the GRI Standards, the term ‘impact’ can refer to positive, negative, actual, potential, direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, intended, or unintended impacts.

**Note 2:** Impacts on the economy, environment, and/or society can also be related to consequences for the organization itself. For example, an impact on the economy, environment, and/or society can lead to consequences for the organization’s business model, reputation, or ability to achieve its objectives.

**material topic**

topic that reflects a reporting organization’s significant economic, environmental and social impacts; or that substantively influences the assessments and decisions of stakeholders

**Note 1:** For more information on identifying a material topic, see the Reporting Principles for defining report content in GRI 101: Foundation.

**Note 2:** To prepare a report in accordance with the GRI Standards, an organization is required to report on its material topics.

**Note 3:** Material topics can include, but are not limited to, the topics covered by the GRI Standards in the 200, 300, and 400 series.
The following documents informed the development of this Standard and can be helpful for understanding and applying it.

**Authoritative intergovernmental instruments:**

Legal liability

This document, designed to promote sustainability reporting, has been developed by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB) through a unique multi-stakeholder consultative process involving representatives from organizations and report information users from around the world. While the GRI Board of Directors and GSSB encourage use of the GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards (GRI Standards) and related Interpretations by all organizations, the preparation and publication of reports based fully or partially on the GRI Standards and related Interpretations are the full responsibility of those producing them. Neither the GRI Board of Directors, GSSB nor Stichting Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) can assume responsibility for any consequences or damages resulting directly or indirectly from the use of the GRI Standards and related Interpretations in the preparation of reports, or the use of reports based on the GRI Standards and related Interpretations.

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