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 415: Public Policy sets out reporting requirements on the topic of public policy. 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.

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 415: Public Policy**, if this is one of its material topics.

Each topic Standard includes disclosures specific to that topic, and is designed to be used together with **GRI 103: Management Approach**, which is used to report the management approach for the topic.

**GRI 415: Public Policy** is a topic-specific GRI Standard in the 400 series (Social 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.

An organization then selects from the set of topic-specific GRI Standards for reporting on its material topics. These Standards are organized into three series: 200 (Economic topics), 300 (Environmental topics) and 400 (Social topics).

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 415** addresses the topic of public policy. This includes an organization’s participation in the development of public policy, through activities such as lobbying and making financial or in-kind contributions to political parties, politicians, or causes.

While an organization can positively support the public political process and encourage the development of public policy that benefits society at large, this can also bring risks associated with corruption, bribery, and undue influence, among others.

These concepts are covered in key instruments of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: see **References**.

The disclosures in this Standard can provide information about an organization’s impacts related to public policy, and how it manages them.
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 415-1 Political contributions

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 public policy using GRI 103: Management Approach.

Reporting recommendations

1.2 The reporting organization should report:
   1.2.1 the significant issues that are the focus of its participation in public policy development and lobbying;
   1.2.2 its stance on these issues, and any differences between its lobbying positions and any stated policies, goals, or other public positions.
2. Topic-specific disclosures

Disclosure 415-1
Political contributions

Reporting requirements

The reporting organization shall report the following information:

a. Total monetary value of financial and in-kind political contributions made directly and indirectly by the organization by country and recipient/beneficiary.

b. If applicable, how the monetary value of in-kind contributions was estimated.

Guidance

Background
The purpose of this disclosure is to identify an organization’s support for political causes. This disclosure can provide an indication of the extent to which an organization’s political contributions are in line with its stated policies, goals, or other public positions.

Direct or indirect contributions to political causes can also present corruption risks, because they can be used to exert undue influence on the political process. Many countries have legislation that limits the amount an organization can spend on political parties and candidates for campaigning purposes. If an organization channels contributions indirectly through intermediaries, such as lobbyists or organizations linked to political causes, it can improperly circumvent such legislation.
Glossary

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.

**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.

**indirect political contribution**

financial or in-kind support to political parties, their representatives, or candidates for office made through an intermediary organization such as a lobbyist or charity, or support given to an organization such as a think tank or trade association linked to or supporting particular political parties or causes

**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.

**political contribution**

financial or in-kind support given directly or indirectly to political parties, their elected representatives, or persons seeking political office

**Note 1:** Financial contributions can include donations, loans, sponsorships, retainers, or the purchase of tickets for fundraising events.

**Note 2:** In-kind contributions can include advertising, use of facilities, design and printing, donation of equipment, or the provision of board membership, employment or consultancy work for elected politicians or candidates for office.
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.

Copyright and trademark notice

This document is copyright-protected by Stichting Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The reproduction and distribution of this document for information and/or use in preparing a sustainability report is permitted without prior permission from GRI. However, neither this document nor any extract from it may be reproduced, stored, translated, or transferred in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopied, recorded, or otherwise) for any other purpose without prior written permission from GRI.

Global Reporting Initiative, GRI and logo, GSSB and logo, and GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards (GRI Standards) are trademarks of Stichting Global Reporting Initiative.

© 2018 GRI
All rights reserved.