GRI Technical Committee on Human Rights Disclosure

Terms of Reference

22 September 2017
Contents

Background........................................................................................................................................... 3
Technical Committee mandate .................................................................................................................. 3
Technical Committee composition ........................................................................................................... 5
Technical Committee selection criteria .................................................................................................... 6
Technical Committee commitments .......................................................................................................... 6
Project timeline and time commitment ................................................................................................. 7
Technical Committee meetings .............................................................................................................. 8
Project management ............................................................................................................................... 8
Public communications protocol ........................................................................................................... 9

Contact

Laura Espinach – Manager, Standards (Espinach@globalreporting.org)
Veronica Wachong – Coordinator, Standards (Wachong@globalreporting.org)

For more information, visit the project webpage and sign up here to receive regular updates.
Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference outline the mandate of the GRI Technical Committee on Human Rights Disclosure, including its selection and appointment, commitments and project timeline.

Background

The Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), GRI’s independent standard-setting body, has identified human rights as a priority area for reviewing the GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards. This review would potentially encompass multiple Standards (i.e., GRI 408: Child Labor, GRI 409: Forced or Compulsory Labor, and GRI 412: Human Rights Assessment, amongst others), and could result in merging or restructuring the Standards.

This review project will be carried out in two phases:

Phase 1 will be concerned with a conceptual review of the human rights contents in the GRI Standards, and overall alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Phase 2 will look at updating individual human rights topic Standards (e.g., GRI 408: Child Labor, GRI 409: Forced or Compulsory Labor), and developing new ones where needed.

The project will be carried out following the GSSB’s Due Process Protocol. In line with this protocol, a multi-stakeholder Technical Committee will be formed to develop draft recommendations for Phase 1 of this project.

See the project proposal for more information.

Technical Committee mandate

The overall work of the Technical Committee (TC) should be conducted in a way that supports sustainability reporting as promoted by the GRI Standards, that is – as an organization’s practice of reporting publicly on its economic, environmental, and/or social impacts, and hence its contributions – positive or negative – towards the goal of sustainable development.

The GRI Standards create the common language for organizations and stakeholders, with which the economic, environmental, and social impacts of organizations can be communicated and understood. They are designed to enhance the global comparability and quality of information on these impacts, thereby enabling greater transparency and accountability of organizations, and informed decision-making by internal and external stakeholders.
Scope of work

The TC will be responsible for reviewing the approach to human rights disclosure in the GRI Standards, for the consideration of the GSSB. In particular, the TC is tasked with developing recommendations on the following:

- The development of human rights-related disclosures in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

  These may, for example, take the form of ‘generic’ disclosures that an organization could use with any human rights topic. The TC should advise the GSSB on where these contents should sit within the existing GRI Standards structure (whether within the Universal Series, for example in GRI 103: Management Approach, or within the topic-specific Series, for example in GRI 412: Human Rights Assessment).

  This step will also consider the feasibility of developing minimum human rights disclosures for all organizations reporting in accordance with the GRI Standards (either within GRI 102: General Disclosures, or other suitable location) – to reflect the universal expectation that all businesses should respect human rights.

- Whether and how concepts contained in the UN Guiding Principles can also be expanded to other areas of the Standards.

  These concepts include due diligence and salience (prioritizing the most severe negative impacts), business relationships, as well as the situations in which responsibility is created by the relationship of an enterprise to adverse impacts (cause, contribute and directly linked to).

  This may include the development of a couple of mock-up options for the consideration of the GSSB.

- Which human rights topic Standards should be reviewed, and whether new ones should be created.

- A recommended approach for developing topic-specific disclosures (including consideration of the feasibility of, and need for, developing quantitative disclosures, as well as disclosures of actual impacts).

The TC will also be responsible for proposing to delete existing content, where applicable. This may be the case when content is considered to be outdated or not useful for reporting on an organization’s human rights impacts.

The TC may make recommendations to the GSSB for changes to other GRI Standards, as a result of their work.

The GSSB will review the draft content provided by the TC and, if considered necessary, may ask the TC to conduct further research and/or develop the draft recommendations further.
Additional considerations

The work of the TC is to be carried out within the existing structure and template of the GRI Standards, including preserving the hierarchy of requirements, recommendations, and guidance. The Standards Division will provide the TC with a template structure to refer to in developing recommendations.

The TC should ensure that the revised content is applicable to organizations of any size, type, sector or geographic location; and that it reflects and supports best practice human rights disclosure, while remaining accessible and practicable for a global user base.

The TC should aim to develop disclosures (and related methodologies) that are clear, consistent, and focused on the measurement and reporting of human rights impacts.

The TC should seek to revise content in line with key authoritative inter-governmental instruments (such as instruments of the UN, the ILO and the OECD) and consider the content of other business and human rights reporting frameworks, such as the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework.

The Standards Division will assist with drafting, and will style and edit the content, applying house rules for text and presentation. The TC will not be responsible for editing the stylistic and grammatical presentation of the deliverables. Such edits will be undertaken by the Standards Division to ensure consistency with existing GRI documents.

Technical Committee composition

The TC will aim to have at least one person drawn from each of the constituencies on which the membership of the GSSB is based: Business Enterprise (or reporters more generally), Civil Society, Investment Institutions, Labor, and Mediating Institutions. In addition, geographical, gender and cultural diversity will be considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Enterprise</th>
<th>a) an enterprise (other than a Mediating or Investment Institution) that has been established in order to generate a profit for the benefit of its investors or owners or, b) an organization representing the collective interests of those falling into category 'a'.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment Institution</td>
<td>an enterprise that is primarily concerned with the direct or indirect, long-term investment of funds in business – including, but not limited to, asset owners, asset managers, development banks, exchanges, ratings agencies and market information brokers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>an organization established independently of employers and governments to represent the interests of workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
<td>an organization established in order to promote or secure a public good relating to sustainability (environmental, social and governance) and that does not fall into any of the categories defined above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating Institution</td>
<td>an individual or organization that provides goods and/or services associated with the reporting process and derives benefit from doing so.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The TC will have up to 10 members. There can only be one representative per organization in the TC.
GSSB sponsor(s) – The GSSB will appoint one or more ‘sponsors’ from among its members. The GSSB sponsor(s) will (at a high-level) follow the progress of the TC and represent the work of the TC back to the GSSB.

Technical Committee selection criteria

In line with the GSSB’s due process protocol, Technical Committee (TC) members are appointed by the GSSB. The principal criterion for selecting TC members shall be relevant knowledge and experience relating to business and human rights. This includes deep familiarity with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

In addition, the following criteria will be considered:

- Relevant knowledge of sustainability reporting
- Familiarity with the needs of users of sustainability reports
- Related experience with multi-stakeholder initiatives
- Understanding of and willingness to work in a consensus-based multi-stakeholder TC
- Ability to participate in TC meetings held in English and provide written English feedback when requested

These criteria will be considered by the GSSB in making a final decision on membership of the TC.

Technical Committee commitments

Technical Committee (TC) members are expected to:

- act in an individual capacity, exclusively in the public interest, and according to due process as defined in the Due Process Protocol
- review the materials provided by the Standards Division in advance of the online and in-person meetings, to be able to actively participate
- provide timely feedback on the documents distributed by the Standards Division
- work in the manner that aims at achieving consensus on the discussed topics

TC members commit to attending one to two in-person meetings in Amsterdam of 2 days (excluding travel time) and between four and five teleconferences (each of 1.5 hours in length). Teleconferences are normally held between 1:00-2:30pm Central European Time (CET), so that members in most time zones can join (although this can be adjusted due to the final geographical representation).

TC members also commit to plan sufficient time to prepare for meetings and review materials in order to meet the project deadlines (see ‘Project timeline and time commitment’ for estimated time commitments).
TC members volunteer their time. There is no fee or compensation associated with participation in the TC. Upon request, TC members will be eligible for travel and accommodation reimbursement for in-person meetings, in accordance with GRI policies.

Project timeline and time commitment

Most of the Technical Committee (TC)’s work is expected to be carried out between January and June 2018, through a series of one in-person meeting (in Amsterdam) and 4-5 virtual meetings. TC members will be expected to spend 1-2 hours between meetings reviewing and commenting on draft documents.

The table below outlines the high-level project timeline and expected time commitment from each TC member. See the Annex for a more detailed project timeline.

Availability to travel to Amsterdam for the in-person meeting in March 2018 is expected. Specific dates for virtual and in-person meetings will be defined based on the availability of TC members within the time frames indicated below. This timeline is subject to change due to, for example, TC members’ availability or changes to the project scope.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Time Commitment</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 TC Meeting (virtual)</td>
<td>2 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of preparatory materials</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 TC Meeting (in-person)</td>
<td>14 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of documents</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 TC Meeting (virtual)</td>
<td>1.5 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of documents</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 TC Meeting (virtual)</td>
<td>1.5 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of documents</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 TC Meeting (virtual)</td>
<td>1.5 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of documents</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible public comment period</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up TC Meeting (after public comment period)</td>
<td>1.5 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of documents</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One additional in-person meeting could be added to the schedule for May or June 2018, depending on the project progress and schedules of TC members.

The total time commitment is estimated at between 30-45 hours, excluding travel time for in-person meetings.
**Technical Committee meetings**

Technical Committee (TC) meetings are convened and chaired by the Standards Division.

TC meetings are not open to the public. The GSSB sponsor(s) may join the TC meetings.

Meeting agenda and materials will be typically circulated to the TC at least 10 working days in advance of each meeting. Meeting summaries will be normally circulated within 5 working days following the meetings.

TC meeting materials are confidential and shall not be distributed to anyone outside the TC without prior permission from the Standards Division.

The TC seeks to reach decisions by consensus. Where unanimity cannot be achieved, minority opinions will be documented for consideration by the GSSB. A TC should report to the GSSB and seek guidance whenever it requires further advice in order to advance the project or when its members cannot reach consensus.

**Project management**

The Standards Division is responsible for overall project management and implementation, according to due process. This includes:

- preparing meeting agendas, meeting materials, and meeting summaries, for all Technical Committee (TC) meetings
- providing logistical support for in-person TC meetings and teleconferences
- producing working versions of draft recommendations, based on TC input
- conducting ad-hoc research, as needed
- conducting an initial ‘fieldtest’ or expert roundtable before public comment, as needed
- maintaining an online collaboration platform for the TC work
- collecting and summarizing public inputs on the exposure draft(s)
- managing all internal (with GSSB) and external communications about the project and its outcomes

The Standards Division will supervise the formatting and production (as well as the stylistic and grammatical presentation) of the final deliverables. GRI will hold the copyright of the deliverables.
Public communications protocol

Public communication on issues related to the activities of the Technical Committee (TC) and the development of the GRI Standards is the responsibility of the GSSB. TC members may publicly express their personal opinions and views, but they may not speak on behalf of the TC, GSSB or GRI.

TC members are welcome to publicize their participation in the TC, and the activities of the TC, in channels such as press releases or on social media. TC members are asked to work with the GRI project lead to coordinate any such activity ahead of time together with the GRI communications team.

TC members are advised to use the following formulation when referring to their participation in this process:

“[name of member] has been appointed by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), GRI's independent standard setting body, to serve on a Technical Committee to help review the GRI human rights-related Standards.”

Annex. Project timeline 2017-2018

Note: This timeline is subject to change due to, for example, TC members’ availability or changes to the project scope.