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GRI Technical Committee on tax and payments to government

Terms of Reference

9 October 2017

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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 tax and payments to governments*, including its selection and appointment, commitments and project timeline.

Background

The Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB) identified *GRI 201: Economic Performance* as a priority standard for review in its [2017-2019 Work Program](#). The scope of this review was established with the specific aim to also consider new content related to taxes and payments to government. Following further discussion by the GSSB, it was decided to separate out the development of new disclosures on tax and payments to government, and to establish a dedicated Technical Committee (TC) to develop initial recommendations.

The aim of this work is to help promote greater transparency on a reporting organization's approach to taxes, including potential elements such as tax strategy, governance, and information on actual taxes paid or payments to governments.

This project could potentially lead to development of new disclosures on tax to include in existing GRI Standards (such as GRI 201), and/or a new dedicated Standard on tax and payments to governments.

The project will be carried out following the [GSSB's Due Process Protocol](#). In line with this protocol, a multi-stakeholder Technical Committee (hereafter 'TC') has been formed to develop draft recommendations on disclosures on tax and payments to government.

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.

The TC will be responsible for developing new disclosures on tax and payments to government, which will be considered by the GSSB for inclusion in the GRI Standards. In particular, the TC is tasked with developing recommendations on the following:

- the benefits and considerations of including tax disclosure within the universal GRI Standards (i.e., as an overarching disclosure for all companies), as new disclosures within existing economic standards, and/or as a new dedicated standard.
- specific recommended disclosures related to tax and payments to governments (including associated guidance and recommendations, where appropriate). These can include both baseline (i.e., required) disclosures and aspirational (recommended) disclosures.
- additional contextual information that may be required for users to accurately understand/analyze disclosure on tax and payments to government. This information could be contained already within other GRI Standards.
- opportunities to align the proposed disclosures on tax and payments to government with existing frameworks and methodologies for reporting on tax.

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 further.

The development of disclosures on tax and payments to government is to be carried out within the existing structure and template of the GRI topic-specific 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 disclosures aim to be applicable to organizations of any size, type, sector or geographic location; and that it reflects and supports best practice tax reporting, 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 tax and payments to government.

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.

Changes to other GRI Standards, or to the criteria for reporting in accordance with the GRI Standards, are not within the remit of the TC.

Technical Committee selection and appointment

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 are relevant knowledge and experience on tax reporting and disclosure.

In addition, the following criteria are 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, and
- the ability to participate in TC meetings held in English and provide written English feedback when requested.

These criteria have been considered by the GSSB in making a final decision on the 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, and
- work in the manner that aims to achieve consensus on the discussed topics.

TC members commit to attending one to two in-person meetings in Amsterdam of 1.5 days in length (excluding travel time) and between four and five teleconferences (each of 1.5 hours in length). Teleconferences are normally held between 1-3pm Central European Time (CET), so that TC 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' for estimated time commitments).

TC members volunteer their time. There is no fee or compensation associated with participation in the TC.

Project timeline

Most the TC's work is expected to be carried out between January – May 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.

An additional follow-up TC meeting is likely to be convened after the Public Comment Period on the draft disclosures, to review any key points of feedback received.

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 a 1.5 day 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, changes to the project scope or public comment feedback.

Milestone	Time Commitment	Potential Date
#1 TC Meeting (virtual)	1.5 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of preparatory materials	January 2018
#2 TC Meeting (virtual) , including review of documents	1.5 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of documents	February 2018
#3 TC Meeting (in-person)	14 hours (meeting) + 1 hour review of documents	March 2018
#4 TC Meeting (virtual) , including review of documents	1.5 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of documents	Late April – Early May 2018
#5 TC Meeting (virtual) , including review of documents	1.5 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of documents	Late May 2018
Expected public comment period	To be confirmed	(TBC)
Follow-up TC meeting (after public consultation)	1.5 hours meeting + 1.5 hours review of documents	(TBC)

The total time commitment is estimated at around 30 hours, excluding travel time for in-person meetings.

Technical Committee meetings

Technical Committee (TC) meetings are convened and chaired by the GRI 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 5 working days in advance of each meeting. Meeting summaries will be 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 are 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 where its members cannot reach consensus.

Upon request, TC members will be eligible for travel and accommodation reimbursement in accordance with GRI policies.

Project management

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

- preparing meeting agenda, meeting materials, and meeting summaries, for all TC meetings
- providing logistical support for in-person TC meetings and teleconferences
- producing working versions of draft disclosure content, based on TC input/ feedback
- conducting ad-hoc research and consultation, as needed
- maintaining an online collaboration platform for the TC work
- collecting and summarizing public inputs on the exposure draft
- managing all internal (with GSSB) and external communications about the project and its outcomes

The GRI 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.

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.

