Item 02 – Stakeholder Council response to the GSSB’s Sector Standard Proposals and Proposal for Review of Universal Standards

For GSSB information

Date 12 March 2019
Meeting 25-26 March 2019
Description This document provides the Stakeholder Council response for the following proposals:
- GSSB’s Sector Standard Proposals
- Proposal for Review of Universal Standards
Stakeholder Council response to the GSSB’s Sector Standard Proposals and Proposal for Review of Universal Standards

March 2019
Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the GSSB’s Sector Standard Proposals and Proposal for Review of Universal Standards.

All members of the Stakeholder Council were invited to input by email. Their responses were collated, and a draft of this document circulated for further comment prior to finalisation.

This response is provided on the understanding that it will be made public in full rather than on a partial or edited basis.

Names of possible experts to involve in the process suggested by SC members have been provided separately and are not to be made public.

Overall comment
The Stakeholder Council find the proposals to be self-explanatory and easy to understand. We are of the view that these are priority sectors due to the significance of their impacts.

Oil and Gas Sector
The scope covers oil, gas and coal exploration and production. It is unclear from the title that coal is included and there is a query as to whether it fits with other activities covered such as oil and gas drilling, refining, transport. Consider including reference to materiality in lines 80-81 in the preceding objectives.

In Table 2, line 111 the Content development by Project Working Group is missing (see line 114).

Agriculture Sector
The scope covers activities such as fishing, crop production and livestock with very different impacts. Query whether fishing should be included and, if so, whether the standard should have a different title to reflect this.

In Table 2, line 111 the Content development by Project Working Group is missing.

Textiles and Apparel Sector
With respect to economic impacts, lines 39-45, note that the sector is very ‘mobile’ with companies moving production regularly to countries with lower costs.

With respect to the reference to ‘relevant issues’ in lines 55-57 when discussing the OECD, note that the OECD refers to them as ‘sector risks’.

Re line 62, we suggest specifically mentioning key voluntary reporting initiatives. There is no table with milestones.

We recommend engagement with the following organisations through the process:

• The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles (Initiative - Germany)
• Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile: Sociaal-Economische Raad (Initiative - Netherlands)
• OECD Pilot Alignment Assessment of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (Framework)
• Clean Clothes Campaign (NGO)
• Sustainable Apparel Coalition
• Ethical Trade Initiative
Universal Standards

Whilst there is agreement that human rights disclosures are key, there is not agreement to removing the human-related GRI specific standards and making human rights disclosures mandatory for all reporting organizations, regardless materiality. There is concern that this approach might be unclear and result in a decreased focus on human rights issues.

Carol Adams
Chair, GRI Stakeholder Council on behalf of the Stakeholder Council