



**GLOBAL STANDARDS FUND**

**Partner with the  
Global Standards Fund**  
to help businesses take  
responsibility for their impacts



The Global Standards Fund offers an opportunity for foundations, governments, private sector and individuals to participate in a coalition of like-minded funders who want to ensure that companies integrate sustainability in the core of their activities. Corporate transparency and understanding of impacts and related risks enable a sustainable future through improved decision making and stimulating accountable behavior.

Creating and maintaining standards is a time and resource intensive activity. The Fund will ensure continued updating of Standards, develop new Standards addressing new societal concerns and develop sector specific standards to ensure comparability.

## **GRI's purpose**

### **Why**

GRI exists to help organizations be transparent and take responsibility for their impacts so that we can create a sustainable future.

### **How**

We create the global common language for organizations to report their impacts. This enables informed dialogue and decision making around those impacts.

### **What**

- GRI is the global standard setter for impact reporting through an independent, multi-stakeholder process
- We maintain the world's most comprehensive set of sustainability reporting standards
- The GRI Standards are available as a free public good

## The Global Standards Fund safeguards that companies continue to have free access to the world's most comprehensive and up-to-date set of sustainability standards to report their impacts.

From climate change to biodiversity loss, growing inequality, modern slavery, the scarcity of resources such as water and the management of waste, our society and planet face the most significant challenges of all times. The task of building a sustainable future is a shared responsibility for us all. By doing business in a way that aligns their long-term commercial strategies with care for people and the planet, companies can play their part.

“Companies need to take responsibility for their impacts on the world. Sustainability reporting is the practice by which they disclose their significant economic, social and environmental impacts. It is therefore very encouraging to see a record number of companies around the world voluntarily choosing to disclose their sustainability impacts; with GRI as the global common language.

*Eric Hespenheide, GRI Chairman*

For companies to contribute to a sustainable future, they need to understand and manage their impacts in a way that is transparent, trusted and objective. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), an international nonprofit

organization headquartered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands with eight regional offices around the world, has been at the forefront of sustainability reporting since 1997. GRI created the global common language for organizations to transparently report their impacts. This reporting enables informed dialogue and decision making around those impacts and contributes to sustainable development.

Any organization – large or small, private or public, regardless of sector, location and reporting experience – can use the GRI Standards to disclose impacts in a standardized, comparable way. This means a car manufacturer in Japan can report on its energy consumption in a similar way to a mining company in Brazil or a retail firm in Europe. The GRI Standards enable consistent reporting, which helps organizations meet the needs of their stakeholders for comparable data.

Over the past 23 years the GRI Standards have become the world's most widely used and internationally accepted tool for corporate transparency. More than 10,000 companies around the world communicate their impacts using the GRI Standards.

## Transparency informs decision of all stakeholders

**Companies/reporting organizations** use sustainability reporting to measure, understand and communicate to external stakeholders how they impact the world around them. In addition, reporting informs internal decision making to understand impacts and related risks, catalyze change and help identify sustainable business models which can be profitable and contribute to sustainable development at the same time.

**Consumers** want to know that the products or services they buy, and use have been developed responsibly, under fair and decent working conditions and without harm to the environment.

**Civil Society** is concerned with sustainability and wants to understand how a company impacts people and planet, so it can hold companies accountable.

**Policymakers** are concerned with sustainability and how an economic transformation could tackle these issues, and are therefore introducing regulations, laws and other requirements to encourage companies to integrate sustainability into their business practice and reporting.

**Stock exchanges** around the world have started requiring listed companies to report on their impacts beyond the financial results as a means to protect investors and future proof their market.

**Investors**, including asset owners, pension funds and businesses are increasingly considering environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks when deciding which companies to invest in. Beyond risk management a growing group of investors expects their money to make a tangible contribution towards prosperity for people and the planet.

“ To achieve the transition to a sustainable economy we need future proofed, objective and regularly updated standards for measuring progress. The GRI Standards cover a wide range of topics – such as biodiversity, human rights, climate change, tax – that stimulate companies to improve, and help governments and civil society bring corporate behavior in line with a just and green economy. That is why I fully support the work of GRI.

**Paul Tang, MEP, Chair Subcommittee**  
on Tax matters

(launch of the Global Standards Fund, 2020)

**73%**  
of the largest 250  
companies in the  
world reporting on  
sustainability use  
GRI\*

**168**  
Policies in more  
than 67 countries  
and regions  
reference GRI\*\*

**10,000+**  
Companies  
publish a  
GRI report

**224,000**  
Downloads of the GRI  
Standards in 2020  
(11% increase  
over 2019)

**67%**  
of the largest 100  
companies in 52  
countries reporting  
on sustainability  
use GRI\*

\* Source: KPMG “The time has come”, December 2020

\*\* <https://www.carrotsandsticks.net/>





## GRI Standards

GRI plays a unique role in the global drive to create a sustainable future for all. Sustainability reporting enables transparency and helps markets function more efficiently, supporting better decisions that create sustainable benefits for everyone.

The standards help stakeholders hold organizations accountable for their impacts and initiate dialogue to drive corporate contribution to national and international sustainable development efforts.

GRI offers reporting organizations both a framework for reporting as well as reporting standards. The *GRI Standards* focus on the economic, environmental and social **impacts of the activities of a company, and hence its contributions – positive or negative – towards sustainable development**. It is the underlying assumption that if not already financially material at the time of reporting, these impacts can become financially material over time. Organizations can also use the Standards to report on their impacts and progress on the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**.

The GRI Standards include disclosures about the organization's specific context, such as its reporting practices, activities, products and services, its governance, and stakeholder engagement. In addition, the GRI Standards include 34 Topic Standards from anti-corruption to water, biodiversity to occupational health and safety, and going forward will also include Sector Standards for 40 sectors. Organizations select from among these topics to report on their significant impacts.

- For each topic, a combination of qualitative and quantitative disclosures enables organizations to report their impacts comprehensively, including how they manage these impacts.
- For each sector an overview of likely material topics will be made available.

Moreover, the GRI Standards are aligned with widely recognized international instruments for responsible business behavior, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the ILO conventions, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

“Sustainability reporting contributes to greater transparency and the GRI Standards will help to ensure our reporting is robust, clear and relevant to our stakeholders.

*Peter Blom, CEO of Triodos Bank  
(launch of the new Standards, 2016)*

They are also **compatible with a wide range of reporting frameworks** that may be combined in an organization’s sustainability report, such as the International Integrated Reporting Framework, the CDP questionnaires, the TCFD, the SASB industry standards and the B-Lab Business Impact Assessment.

In this respect GRI continuously collaborates with these additional standard setters as well as with other expert partners in the sustainability reporting market to develop linkage and alignment tools that make reporting easier for users. Furthermore, we work with those organizations and others to identify additional opportunities for harmonization so that sustainability reporting is globally relevant and produces high-quality, comparable data to power sustainable decisions.

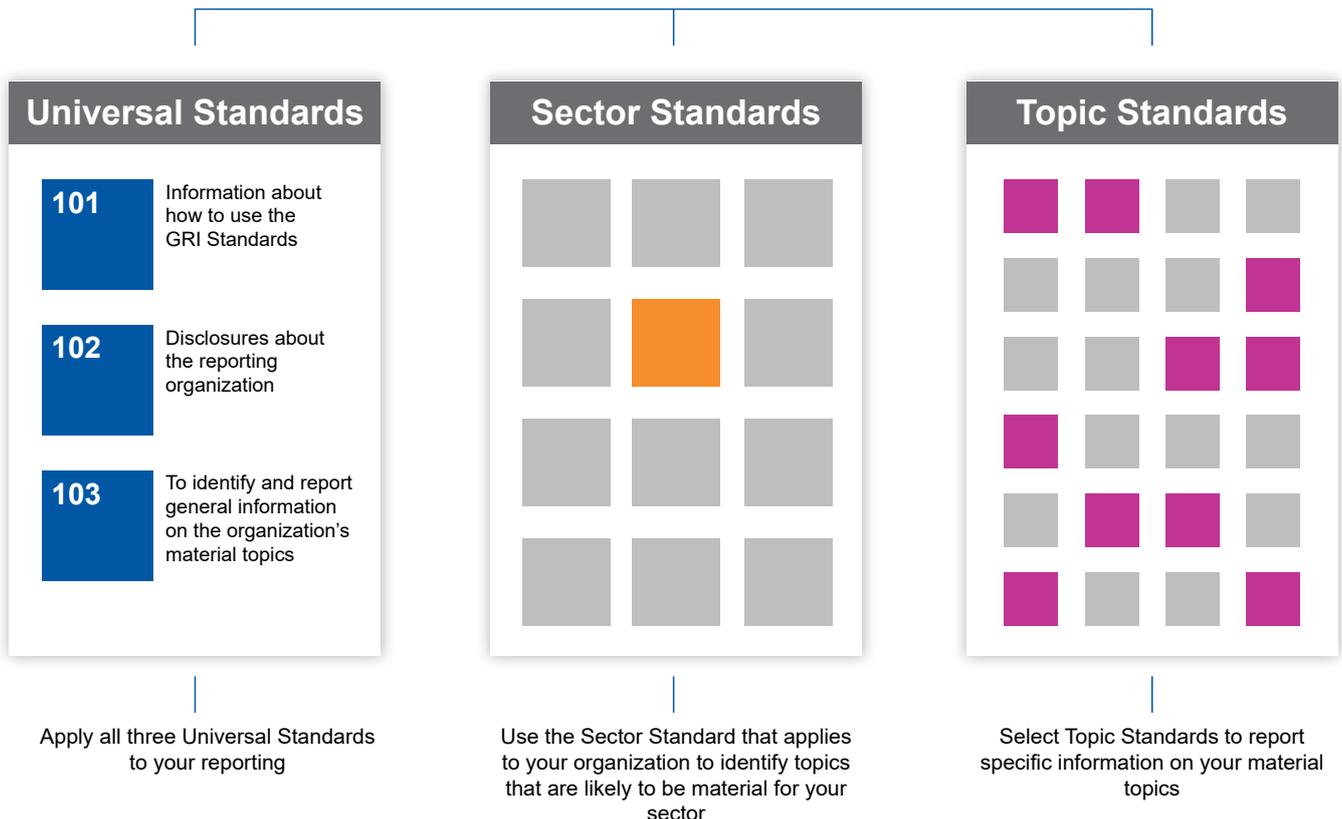
Supporting the Global Standards Fund will therefore also enable GRI to continue and expand this work with others and ensure global collaboration and stakeholder involvement in determining how transparency and disclosure enables a sustainable future for the planet.

The GRI Standards are a free public good and available in 11 languages.

“GRI’s Tax Standard marks an evolution in tax transparency and provides a much-needed and ambitious framework for corporate tax reporting.”

Fiona Reynolds, CEO of UN-PRI (2019)

### GRI Standards





## Developed through an independent, multi-stakeholder process

The GRI Standards are issued by the *Global Sustainability Standards Board* (GSSB), an independent operating entity of GRI. They are developed according to a formally defined due process overseen by the independent Due Process Oversight Committee (DPOC). Experts from different stakeholder groups across the world are involved in developing the GRI Standards using a consensus-seeking approach that builds on their diverse backgrounds and expertise. The GSSB also routinely conducts public comment periods to gather stakeholder feedback on draft Standards.

Transparency lies at the heart of the GSSB's work. All meetings of the GSSB and the documents discussed at these meetings, including drafts of Standards, are publicly accessible via the GRI website.

“*The GRI Standards will promote corporate transparency and help companies fight corruption.*”

*Cobus Swartz, CEO of  
Transparency International  
(launch of the new Standards, 2016)*

## Commitment to staying current

To maintain the status and relevance of the GRI Standards as the leading global sustainability standard, the standards need to reflect leading practice, international norms and reflect the global multi-stakeholder consensus at any moment in time. Therefore, the GSSB is committed to reviewing all existing GRI Standards every 4 years.

In addition, a comprehensive *Sector Program* is being implemented to complete the set of GRI Standards. And, finally, the GSSB aims to have 5 new topic-specific Standards under development concurrently to ensure that the

GRI Standards reflect the ongoing evolution of the sustainable development agenda, are responsive to stakeholder expectations and continue to promote the public interest. The formulation of globally applicable transparency expectations for societal issues like tax (GRI 207: Tax Standard) and GRI's efforts close the gaps between expectations set out in the SDGs and the GRI Standards are two recent examples of the evolution of the standards.

## Driving adoption and improving the quality of reporting

In support of its standard setting work, GRI engages in activities focused on ensuring that the Standards are widely used by organizations and interested stakeholders. In addition, it helps reporting organizations improve the quality of their reporting.

### Supporting reporting organizations

Producing a meaningful and comprehensive sustainability report based on the Standards requires a thorough understanding of the reporting process, the issues facing the world, and the organization's activities. Over the years GRI has developed a suite of support tools and activities to help both new and experienced reporting organizations improve their reports, and for reporting professionals to hone their skills. For example, over the past two decades GRI has trained more than 25,000 professionals. Since September 2020 professional training is provided through the GRI Academy. Some of the trainings and tools are freely available while others are paid for.

### Enabling smart policy

GRI works with governments, international organizations, and capital markets to promote and advance sustainability disclosure as a universal practice. For example, since the beginning of 2020, GRI has been actively engaged in shaping the next iteration of Europe's Non-Financial Reporting Directive. Other illustrations are the work with the OECD on country-by-country tax reporting and the engagement with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) process to strengthen financial reporting to better capture the impacts of sustainability issues on a company's financial position.

Finally, GRI is deeply involved with the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. It works with other organizations on global initiatives, which focus on pressing challenges such as climate change, human rights abuse and corruption. The importance of this work is recognized by several governments that give GRI multi-year financial support to foster sustainable economic growth in developing countries.

### Collaboration

While GRI is internationally renowned as the global leader in sustainability reporting, the non-financial reporting landscape is becoming increasingly crowded. This development is both positive and negative. More initiatives bring greater recognition and understanding of the importance of disclosing non-financial information and changing business practices. However, the world of sustainability disclosures needs consistency, compatibility and in some cases convergence, and this will not happen if the multitude of different initiatives and standards act in a disjointed way.

As GRI, we believe strongly in a vision of a single, coherent global set of reporting standards. That is why we are pursuing collaboration with these other organizations. And not just with other standard setters such as IFRS, SASB, CDP and IIRC but also with leading civil society organizations - such as the Danish Institute for Human Rights and Tax Justice - and with progressive business organizations like the UN Global Compact, WBCSD and B-Lab.



## The Global Standards Fund

Maintaining the world's most comprehensive set of sustainability standards requires a significant investment of time and resources. Therefore, GRI has created the **Global Standards Fund** to safeguard that the GRI Standards continue to be available to all organizations and companies as a free global public good, which encourages responsible business practices, with respect to the climate and the environment, social issues and corporate governance.

The Global Standards Fund offers an **opportunity** for foundations, governments, private sector and individuals to participate in a coalition of like-minded funders who want to ensure that companies integrate sustainability in the core of their operations. Corporate transparency and understanding of risks enable a sustainable future through improved decision making and stimulating accountable behavior.

The Global Standards Fund meets the requirements of the GSSB Terms of Reference to ensure that the Standards are developed in line with the needs of companies and the global community, and free from any external influences.

### Global Standards Fund impact



### The fund supports three objectives:

1. The **continuous review and updating** of the existing GRI Standards to stay aligned with developing international norms and leading practice. For example, in May 2020, GRI 306: Waste 2020 was launched and in December 2019, *GRI 207: Tax 2019*, the world's first global standard for tax transparency. In 2018, GRI released *GRI 303: Water and Effluents 2018* and *GRI 403: Occupational Health and Safety 2018*. Currently, GRI is working on updating the *Universal Standards (GRI 101, GRI 102, GRI 103)*, including recent developments regarding responsible business conduct incorporating *Human Rights*; expected launch September 2021. Further upcoming work includes updates to the Biodiversity Standard.
2. The further development of the **Sector Program**, GRI's sector-specific standards to improve and focus reporting practice on the most material topics from a sustainable development perspective. The GRI Sector Program aims to focus on 40 high-impact sectors. In 2021 the first standard will be launched for the Oil and Gas sector, with the second and third standards for the Agriculture and Fisheries sector and the Coal sector respectively nearing completion.

The GSSB has grouped the sectors it will develop standards for by priority based on the severity of impacts of the sector on the world. These sectors align well with sectors included in OECD's Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains, the WBCSD sector roadmaps, the World Benchmarking Alliance benchmarks, and the International Finance Corporation's Industry Guidelines. Note that the order within a priority group is not yet determined, as it depends on the acceptance of project proposals by the GSSB.

Further changes and updates to the list are defined by the GSSB, the most updated list can be found on the [GRI website](#).

- **Priority Group 1** - Basic Materials and needs
  - **Priority Group 2** - Industrial
  - **Priority Group 3** - Transport, infrastructure and tourism
  - **Priority Group 4** - Other services and light manufacturing
3. Support **advocacy and communications** aimed at driving the use of the GRI Standards by both report issuers as well as stakeholders whose decisions are influenced by transparent information about an organization's impact. GRI works with governments, International Governmental Organizations and (financial) market regulators around the world to encourage sustainability reporting and make the reported information widely and freely available. In addition, GRI's communication programs and engagements, support reporting organizations and reporting professionals to become more proficient in and comfortable with transparency.

## Budget

The financial goal for the Global Standards Fund is to grow to an annual value of €8 million by 2023, which should then be continued at that level afterwards. A total of about 75% will be allocated to objectives 1 and 2, the continuous review and updating of the GRI Standards and the Sector Program. Following the successful completion in September in 2021 of the Oil and Gas sector standard, the next two standards for respectively the Agriculture and Fisheries sector and the Coal sector, are to be approved before the end of 2021. It will cost an estimated €14 million to complete the remaining 37 sectors (approximately € 350,000 per sector).

From the remaining 25% of the Fund, 17% will be allocated to the third objective, advocacy and adoption of the GRI Standards. This will facilitate the global rollout as well as the communication support and policy outreach aimed at increasing the adoption of the Standards. The 8% left is the overhead fee for the fund management, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and Global Standards Fund partner event organization.

### GSSB workplan 2020-2022

- Review and update of 10 standards per year
- Have 5 new topic standards under development concurrently
- Development of a full set of sector standards till 2024
- Implementation of a communication plan to support the launch and adoption of the updated and new standards
- Advocacy outreach to policy makers, market regulators and other stakeholders to mandate sustainability reporting based on GRI Standards and stimulate the use of the reported information in decision making

### Global Standards Fund budget planning 2021 - 2025

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Standards	1.202.000	2.106.000	3.509.000	3.587.000	3.669.000
Sector Standards	936.000	1.638.000	2.730.000	2.787.000	2.847.000
Communication & Advocacy	457.000	789.000	1.314.000	1.325.000	1.336.000
Overhead	204.000	353.000	600.000	618.000	636.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.799.000</b>	<b>4.886.000</b>	<b>8.153.000</b>	<b>8.317.000</b>	<b>8.488.000</b>



## Become a partner of the Global Standards Fund

Be part of a diverse group of funders, public and private, and support the Global Standards Fund. All the partners believe in GRI's mission, its multi-stakeholder process and the importance of accelerating the adoption of transparency through sustainability reporting to create a sustainable future, achieve the SDGs, and Climate Goals.

Your support to the Global Standards Fund ensures:

- **the continuous development and evolution of the GRI Standards,**
- **the GRI Standards as a free public good,**
- **safeguarding the independent, multi-stakeholder development of the GRI Standards, and**
- **global advocacy for the Standards.**

GRI welcomes all types of partners to contribute to the Global Standards Fund: foundations, governments, the private sector, and individuals. The Global Standards Fund was developed to ensure sufficient funding whilst protecting the independence of the standards setting process from undue influence or undermining the multi-stakeholder principle. There are two partnering options available:

### Global Standards Fund **Partner**

Contribution of at least 500,000 euros per year, for a minimum period of three years (or a comparable amount in a one-time payment).

### Global Standards Fund **Supporter**

Contribution of at least 200,000 euros per year, for a minimum period of three years (or a comparable amount in a one-time payment).



## Visibility and recognition

Partners and Supporters will be acknowledged for their generous backing of the Global Standards Fund on the GRI website and in Global Standards Fund related publications.

In collaboration with each partner or supporter additional co-branding and visibility opportunities including through joint advocacy activities will be identified to acknowledge their important role in maintaining the standards and addressing the individual needs of the Partners or Supporters.

## Staying current and networking

Partners and Supporters will be kept informed about the developments of the GRI Standards, broader transparency trends as well as about the Fund, through an annual Global Standards Fund report and a biannual newsletter. In addition, GRI will organize an exclusive annual Global Standards Fund meeting to present and discuss progress, as well as engage with other Partners and Supporters, GRI senior executive staff, the GSSB and members of GRI's governance bodies. A dedicated GRI contact will be available for any additional queries.

The networking opportunities also includes a complimentary membership of the *GRI Community*, giving access to a network of more than 400 organizations across 35 industries from 66 countries.

GRI welcomes your support to the Global Standards Fund. The Fund is managed by GRI's Chief Development Officer and the Strategic Partnerships and Programs Team

For more information and to express your interest, please contact:

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Director Corporate & Stakeholder Engagement  
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## GRI's funders

Since the creation of GRI in 1997 many organizations and funders have supported GRI. Recent funders include:

- Alcoa Foundation, USA
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia
- Department for International Development (DfID), United Kingdom
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Germany
- Fundación ONCE, Spain
- International Organisation of Employers (IOE), Switzerland
- Integrated Reporting Foundation, United Kingdom
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
- Ministry for Foreign Trade and Development, The Netherlands
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), USA
- State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Switzerland
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Sweden
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), Switzerland



## GLOBAL STANDARDS FUND

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