



1 **Item 05 – GRI Topic Standard Project**
2 **for Biodiversity – Project proposal**
3 **For GSSB discussion and approval**

Date	30 June 2021
Meeting	1 July 2021
Project	GRI Topic Standard Project for Biodiversity – Project Proposal
Description	<p>This document sets out the draft project proposal to review the GRI 304: Biodiversity 2016. For GSSB discussion and approval to send to the GRI Board and Stakeholder Council for feedback.</p> <p>After feedback from the GRI Board and Stakeholder Council has been received and incorporated, the Standards Division will present the proposal to the GSSB for final approval, in accordance with the Due Process Protocol.</p> <p>Please note: this project proposal will be discussed during the GSSB meeting on 1 July 2021. Pending potential amendments based on the GSSB discussions, the project proposal will be submitted for approval through a documented electronic process as per the GSSB Terms of Reference after the GSSB meeting on 1 July 2021.</p>

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5 Project background

6 As part of the [GSSB Work Program 2020-2022](#), the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB)
7 has identified the review of GRI 304: Biodiversity 2016 as a priority project for commencement in
8 2021. Since the GRI disclosures on biodiversity were last revised in 2006, the issue of biodiversity
9 has received significant attention in the global sustainable development agenda.

10
11 Biodiversity features as a key theme in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both
12 governments and private sector organizations are being called upon to realize SDG 14 and SDG 15.
13 SDG14 is devoted to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources"¹. While
14 SDG 15 is devoted to "protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems,
15 sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt
16 biodiversity loss"².

17
18 The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
19 issued the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services in 2019³, highlighting
20 that biodiversity is declining in every region and issues an urgent call to halt and reverse the
21 unsustainable use of nature.

22
23 Over the past years, the United Nations have been working on the Convention on Biological Diversity,
24 a new global framework to reverse nature loss in the next decade. At the time of issuance of this
25 project proposal, parties to the convention are in ongoing negotiations of the post-2020 global
26 biodiversity framework with the aim to agree on the new convention at the upcoming meeting in
27 Kunming China in October 2020⁴. The Global Biodiversity Outlook 5⁵ and the zero draft⁶ issued by the
28 Convention on Biological Diversity form the basis of the ongoing deliberations.

29 Project objectives

30 The project aims to review the GRI 304: Biodiversity 2016 to represent internationally agreed best
31 practice and align with recent developments and the relevant authoritative intergovernmental
32 instruments in the field of biodiversity.

33
34 The revised Topic Standard enables an organization to publicly disclose its most significant impacts
35 on biodiversity and how the organization manages these impacts. This disclosure enhances
36 transparency on the organization's impacts and increases organizational accountability. The revised
37 Topic Standards will contain disclosures that allow an organization to report information about its
38 impacts consistently and credibly. In doing so, the global comparability and quality of reported
39 information on these impacts supports information users in making informed assessments and
40 decisions about the organization's impacts and contribution to sustainable development.

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>

² <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/biodiversity/>

³ IPBES, *Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, 2019.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>

⁴ <https://www.cbd.int/article/new-dates-cop15-october-2021>

⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/gbo5>

⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/article/zero-draft-update-august-2020>

41 The review includes but is not limited to the review of the current disclosures. The revised Topic
42 Standard can but does not necessarily have to build on the existing contents of the GRI 304:
43 Biodiversity 2016.

44 **Division of responsibilities**

45 A Technical Committee will be formed to provide technical advice for the development of the revised
46 Topic Standard.

47
48 The Standards Division will draft the Topic Standard, and the GSSB will have oversight and final
49 approval over the Topic Standard before its release.

50
51 The project will be conducted in accordance with the [GSSB Due Process Protocol](#).

52 **Timeline**

53 This project is envisioned to commence in September 2021. Table 1, on the following page, outlines
54 the anticipated project duration. The exact starting date and the predicted dates of other key
55 milestones will be confirmed during the GSSB meeting on 23 September 2021.

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Table 1: Estimated duration of Topic Standards Project for Biodiversity

Phase	~Duration (months)	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12	Month 13
Project commencement	1	█												
Recruitment of Technical Committee	2	█	█											
GSSB approval of Technical Committee	-		◆											
Content development by Technical Committee	4			█	█	█	█							
GSSB approval of exposure draft	1							◆						
Public comment period	3								█	█				
Analysis of public comments and revision of draft	3										█	█	█	
GSSB approval of final standard	1													◆
Total (months)	13													