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GRI Sector Program – Revised list of prioritized sectors

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Contents

Background.....	3
Revised sector list.....	3
Priority sectors.....	3
Annex I	5

Background

In February 2019, the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB) approved the GRI Sector Program (Sector Program) to improve clarity and consistency in sustainability reporting. The aim of the Sector Program is to develop GRI Sector Standards (Sector Standards) for 40 to 45 high-impact sectors.

Three Sector Standards, that will be cover the agriculture, fishing, oil and gas, and coal sectors are already underway.

The draft GSSB Work Program 2020-2022 proposed a total of 40 sectors categorised by four priorities groups. Following on from the exposure of the draft GSSB Work Program 2020-2022, consideration of other stakeholder suggestions and learnings from the pilot projects, the Standards Division has refined the proposed sectors covered by the Sector Program and is also proposing a priority list of sectors that should be the subject of projects next.

Revised sector list

The Standards Division proposes the 40 sectors listed in the Annex be considered by the Sector Program.

While most sectors remain unaltered, some have been modified in their scope, others have been merged and a small number of new ones have been added. The main objective of these changes is to accommodate as many potential reporters as possible, while maintaining internal cohesion inside each sector and keeping the total number of sectors within the original scope of the Program (40 to 45 sectors).

As agreed in February 2020, the sectors follow ‘common denominator’ names (e.g. mining, oil and gas, agriculture) that are intended to be recognizable to all stakeholders. The Standards Division will recommend a sector’s name and a key to link with established classification systems (GICS, ICB, and ISIC) in the relevant Project Proposal.

The list is presented now to assist in planning the activities of the Sector Program and to help communicating its objectives and engage with interested parties.

The 40 sectors, with a brief description of each one, is listed by priority group in the Annex. The list will be reviewed periodically to reflect feedback received from stakeholders, including potential changes in the names and scope of individual sectors and the addition of new ones. The final definition of each sector will be decided at the inception of the project, in consultation with stakeholders.

Priority sectors

Two pilot projects are currently under way, which cover the agriculture, fishing, oil, gas and coal sectors. The Standards Division is proposing a list of sectors to be prioritized next for the development of a Sector Standard.

The key criterion for prioritizing sectors is their sustainability impacts. This should reflect the seriousness of the impacts as well as the likelihood of their occurrence and take into account the

overall size of the sector, the sector's distribution around the world and the number of organizations from that sector that are in a position to use the GRI Standards.

Ranking sectors according to this criterion cannot be a completely objective exercise and the Standards Division has exercised its best judgement taking also into account the feedback received from stakeholders.

In the feedback received on the GSSB Work Program for 2020-22, two organizations expressed their preference to prioritize mining as the next sector standard, while food, construction, renewable energy, steel, construction materials, shipping, logistics and banking were each mentioned once.

Group 1: Basic Materials and Needs, comprises the sectors that were considered to have the largest sustainability impacts. The pilot projects were selected from this group.

A second criterion to define the order of sectors is the potential for exploiting synergies between them. For example, the Sector Standard for mining is expected to share many topics with oil, gas, and coal; food and beverages can build upon the knowledge and contacts developed under agriculture and fishing. The three standards in the financial services industry should be developed together.

Taking into account the criteria mentioned above, the Standards Division proposes the following sectors have Sector Standards development for them next:

1. Mining
2. Food
3. Textiles and apparel
4. Banking
5. Insurance
6. Asset management
7. Utilities
8. Renewable energy
9. Forestry
10. Metal processing

Sectors from the remaining groups will be prioritized in due course, following similar criteria.

Annex I

Table I. List of sectors

Sector	Description of activities
Group I: Basic materials and needs	
Oil and gas	Exploration and production of oil and gas; suppliers of equipment and services to oil and gas fields; storage and transportation; refining and marketing of oil and gas products.
Coal	Exploration and extraction of coal; suppliers of equipment and services to coal mines; storage and transportation; refining and marketing of coal products
Agriculture and fishing	Agriculture, animal husbandry, aquaculture and fishing. Including rubber but excluding hunting and forestry.
Mining	Exploration and extraction of minerals, except coal; suppliers of equipment and services to mining; storage and transportation; refining and marketing of minerals.
Food	Manufacturing of food, beverages and tobacco.
Textiles and apparel	Manufacturing of textiles, apparel, footwear and accessories.
Banking	Commercial and investment banks; consumer finance; savings institutions; mortgage finance; micro-finance institutions
Insurance	Life, non-life, reinsurance and pension funds.
Asset management	Asset management, custody, stock exchanges
Utilities	Electricity generation (except renewables), transmission and distribution; gas utilities and distributors; water utilities and services; waste management.
Renewable energy	Solar and wind project developers; biofuels producers; producers of fuel cells and industrial batteries.
Forestry	Forestry and logging, production of pulp and paper.
Metal processing	Steel and aluminum production.

Group 2: Industrial	
Construction materials	Production of cement, concrete, tiles, bricks, glass and other construction materials, except steel and timber.
Aerospace and defense	Manufacturing of aircrafts and weapons.
Automotive	Production of road vehicles and auto parts, retail and repair of road vehicles, car rental and leasing.
Construction	Construction of buildings, civil engineering and other construction activities
Chemicals	Manufacturing of chemical products, including plastics and fertilizers-
Machinery and equipment	Manufacturing of machines and equipment, including ships and trains. Can include all heavy industry not specified elsewhere.
Pharmaceuticals	Manufacturing of pharmaceuticals products; research and development of idem, biotechnology.
Electronics	Manufacturing and design of electronic products, including computers, mobile phones and their components; semiconductors.
Group 3: Transport, infrastructure and tourism	
Media and communication	Telecom operators, media companies, printing industry.
Software	Software and related services.
Real estate	Real estate developers and services associated.
Transportation infrastructure	Operation of roads, railways, ports, airports, etc.
Shipping	Transportation services by water.
Trucking	Transportation services by road.
Airlines	Passenger airlines.
Trading, distribution and logistics	Freight transportation by rail or plane, postal and other logistical services, storage services, trading services.
Packaging	Containers and packaging
Group 4: Other services and light manufacturing	
Educational services	Education services at all levels, including online education.

Household durables	Manufacturing of furniture, household appliances, toys, sporting goods and similar. Can include all light manufacturing not specified elsewhere.
Managed health care	Health care services, including veterinary.
Medical equipment and services	Manufacturing of medical supplies and equipment.
Retail	All retail services except automotive. Repair services.
Security services and correctional facilities	Provision of security services, management of correctional facilities.
Restaurants	Restaurants, bars and cafes; catering services.
Commercial services	Professional services, including lawyers, accountants, consultants, advertising and marketing; business process outsourcing.
Non-profit organizations	Non-governmental organizations, foundations, professional and civic associations, charities.