Item 02 – Exposure draft of Universal Standards: GRI 101, 102, and 103

Annex 2 – GRI Sector Program information sheet

For GSSB information

Date	6 May 2020
Meeting	20 May 2020
Project	Sector Program/Universal Standards
Description	To help reviewers understand references to GRI Sector Standards included in exposure draft of Universal Standards, it is proposed to publish the following information sheet as an accompaniment to the other public comment materials.
	If an exposure draft of the Sector Standard for oil and gas is released prior to the end of the public comment period for Universal Standards, this information sheet will be superseded.

Public comment on the GRI Universal Standards

Information sheet on GRI Sector Program

The exposure draft of the revised GRI Universal Standards is available for public comment from 11 June 2020 to 9 September 2020. Because the exposure draft of the Universal Standards (*GRI 101: Using the GRI Standards*, *GRI 102: About the Organization*, and *GRI 103: Material Topics*) reference the forthcoming GRI Sector Standards (Sector Standards), this document serves to summarize the concept and the proposed structure of the Sector Standards. It is meant to assist in understanding how the Sector Standards will work in conjunction with the revised Universal Standards.

The first two pilot Sector Standards are currently under development. It is expected that the Sector Standard for oil and gas will be released for public comment in quarter 3 of 2020.

Background

Sustainability reporting using the GRI Standards enables an organization to publicly disclose its most significant impacts and how it manages these impacts. However, reporting by individual organizations has been inconsistent in addressing a sector's key challenges and impacts. Possible reasons for this include lack of clarity on a sector's most significant impacts and inconsistent application of the principles for defining report content in the existing *GRI 101: Foundation 2016*.

The Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB) initiated the [Sector Program](#) to develop standards that are specific to certain sectors. Sector Standards will identify and describe one or more sectors' most significant impacts from a sustainable development perspective. The Sector Standards are intended to focus sustainability reporting on the impacts that matter most, as well as reflect stakeholder expectations for a sector's sustainability reporting.

Sector Standards will:
- Describe the sustainability context for a sector;
- Outline topics that are likely material for a reporting organization in the sector based on the sector's most significant impacts; and
- List appropriate disclosures to report on those topics.

In this way, the Sector Standards will clarify the reporting that is expected of organizations in a given sector and assist them in identifying material topics and what to report for each material topic.

Sector Standards are developed by a multi-stakeholder expert working group following the GSSB [Due Process Protocol](#).

33 Using the Sector Standards

34 To identify material topics

35 *GRI 101: Using the GRI Standards* requires that a reporting organization use Sector Standard(s) that
36 apply to its sector(s) to identify material topics, where these are available.

37 A Sector Standard describes topics that have been identified as likely material for organizations in a
38 given sector. It explains why the topic might be material, outlining significant impacts and how these
39 impacts occur in the sector as well as drawing on authoritative instruments and other supporting
40 references.

41 When an applicable Sector Standard is available, an organization needs to determine whether the
42 topics listed are material for the organization.

43 Sector Standards are not intended to substitute an organization's own process for identifying
44 material topics. Not all topics listed in a Sector Standard will be material for all organizations in a
45 given sector. Also, topics that are material for an organization due to other factors (e.g., the
46 organization's geographic location) might not be represented in a Sector Standard. An organization is
47 therefore still required to identify its own material topics according to its own circumstances.

48 To identify appropriate disclosures

49 If an organization identifies a topic in an applicable Sector Standard as material, the Sector Standard
50 will also assist an organization in determining what to report for that topic.

51 *GRI 101: Using the GRI Standards* requires that an organization report appropriate disclosures on each
52 material topic. A Sector Standard includes a list of disclosures identified as appropriate for reporting
53 on a topic by an organization in the sector. This list includes appropriate disclosures from GRI Topic
54 Standards (Topic Standards). If the Topic Standards do not provide disclosures that sufficiently
55 capture the impacts associated with a sector, additional appropriate disclosures and sector-specific
56 guidance might also be listed.

57 If an organization determines that some disclosures listed in a Sector Standard for a material topic
58 do not adequately capture the impacts it has identified, the organization does not need to report
59 these disclosures. Rather, it only needs to report those disclosures that adequately capture the
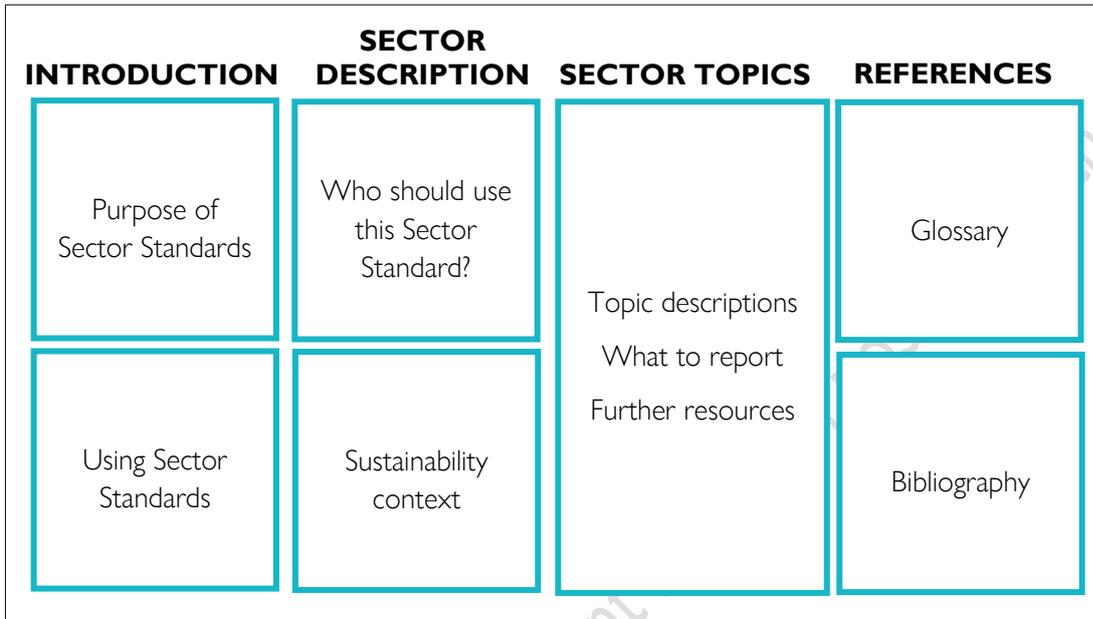60 impacts for its material topics.

61 It should be noted that, along with appropriate disclosures, an organization is also required to report
62 how it manages each material topic and related impacts using *GRI 103: Material Topics*.

63 An organization might need to use more than one Sector Standard to report its material topics,
64 depending on its activities.

Structure of Sector Standards

66 It is proposed that Sector Standards contain the sections depicted in Figure 1 and described below
67 it.

68 **Figure 1. Sections of a Sector Standard**

INTRODUCTION	SECTOR DESCRIPTION	SECTOR TOPICS	REFERENCES
Purpose of Sector Standards	Who should use this Sector Standard?	Topic descriptions What to report Further resources	Glossary
Using Sector Standards	Sustainability context		Bibliography

69

70 **Introduction:** These sections provide organizations background on the purpose of the Sector
71 Standards and instruct them on how they should be used in conjunction with other GRI Standards,
72 including the Universal Standards.

73 **Sector description:** These sections outline the types of organizations that should use the Sector
74 Standard. Included are an overview of sector-specific activities and business relationships as well as a
75 description of the sustainability context of the sector(s). This description is intended to help an
76 organization identify and report on its material topics and related impacts. It can also help
77 information users assess if an organization's reporting meets stakeholder expectations.

78 **Sector topics:** These sections describe topics that are likely material for a reporting organization in
79 a given sector(s) and that therefore might merit inclusion in their sustainability reporting.

80 Each topic description lists disclosures identified as appropriate for reporting on that topic by an
81 organization in a given sector(s). The description will assist an organization in determining what to
82 report for each material topic. This section specifies appropriate disclosures largely from Topic
83 Standards, but might also include additional appropriate disclosures and sector-specific guidance.

84 Each topic description also lists resources that can assist an organization with its sustainability
85 reporting.

86 **References:** These sections provide a list of defined terms that are used in the Sector Standard and
87 references that were used to develop the content of the Sector Standard.

88 What comes next

89 The Sector Program is currently in a pilot phase and has commenced pilot projects for the oil, gas,
90 and coal sectors and the agriculture and fishing sectors. The exposure draft of a Sector Standard for
91 oil and gas is expected to be released for public comment in quarter 3 of 2020.

92 If you would like more information about the Sector Program or an update on either of the pilot
93 projects, email sector@globalreporting.org.

94 Disclaimer

95 Information and descriptions provided in this information sheet are based on the work of pilot
96 projects for the GRI Sector Program. Its contents might change and is subject to the approval of the
97 GSSB and a public comment process.