Item 01 – Draft summary of the GSSB meeting held on 15 May 2025

For GSSB approval

Date	20 May 2025
Meeting	15 May 2025
Description	This document presents the summary of the GSSB meeting held on 15 May 2025

Contents

1 Participants

2 Present:

Name	Constituency
Carol Adams	Chair
Jeff Robertson	Vice-Chair
Charles Cho	Civil society
Chulendra De Silva	Mediating institution
Yan Dong	Civil society
Zuzanna Muskat Gorska	Labor
Anne Lindsay	Labor
Tomoo Machiba	Mediating institution
Anna Nefedova	Mediating institution
Deborah Ng	Investment institution
Igazeuma Okoroba	Business enterprise
Felipe Martinez Rodriguez	Business enterprise
Galya Tsonkova	Business enterprise

3 Apologies:

Name	Constituency
Rebecca Coriat	Investment institution
Giulia Genuardi	Business enterprise

4 In attendance from GRI:

Name	Position
Bastian Buck	Chief Standards Officer
Harold Pauwels	Director Standards
Mario Abela	Director Standards
Gelkha Buitrago	Director Sector Standards
Gillian Balaban	Sr. Coordinator Governance Relations

5 List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full name
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
GSSB	Global Sustainability Standards Board
SD	Standards Division

6 Decisions and action items

7   The GSSB resolved to approve the following:

GSSB Decision	Item number
2025.16	01 – [Draft summary of the GSSB meeting held on 19-20 March 2025](#)

8   Action items for consideration are as follows:

Action items	
Session 1	Develop a consultation version of the new GSSB Work Program and evaluate the GSSB's anticipated workload for 2026.
Session 4	Further develop the jurisdictional adoption pathways for GRI Standards, focusing on ways to increase demand for impact reporting.
Session 5	Update the paper based on GSSB comments and use its content to support public understanding of the subject matter.

9 Session 1: Welcome to meeting

10 The Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB) Chair, Carol Adams (henceforth the Chair),

11 welcomed the GSSB. The Chair presented an overview of the meeting agenda. A quorum was

12 established, and the above items were presented to the GSSB for approval.

13 The Chair corrected the previous meeting's summary; lines 136 and 137 have been removed for

14 clarity.

15 Bastian Buck confirmed that *GRI 102* and *GRI 103* had been approved via electronic vote after the

16 March meeting. The final versions and the vote summary were shared for information only, as they

17 are now part of the formal documentation and relevant to the upcoming public consultation on the

18 project for Sector Standards alignment with recently updated Topic Standards.

19 It was noted that several action items will be finalized in the June and Q3 meetings. A new action item

20 was suggested to evaluate the GSSB's anticipated workload for next year, particularly as new

21 appointments are considered.

22 There was a brief on ongoing policy submissions, emphasizing GRI's position on regulatory

23 simplification while maintaining focus on significant impacts and alignment with global standards. A

24 recent meeting with European regulatory representatives reaffirmed the importance of double

25 materiality and standard alignment.

Session 2: GSSB Work Program 2026-2028 – Topic and Sector Standards

Chief of Standards, Bastian Buck, Director Standards, Harold Pauwels, and Gelkha Buitrago, Director Sector Standards, presented a first draft of the 2026-2028 Work Program considering ongoing and upcoming revisions of Topic and Sector Standards, future projects, and prioritization of resources.

The following points were raised by GSSB members and addressed as follows:

- The GSSB asked when the Universal Standards could be revised, while recognizing the importance of the Topic and Sector Standards revisions. The SD will determine the appropriate moment over the next three years and, where possible, combine it with other Standard updates. The SD will also consider the options currently available for jurisdictions to refer to the GRI Standards in their legislation and, building on that discussion, gather further input on revising the Universal Standards. From a conceptual perspective, there is currently no planned update to the principles underpinning the Universal Standards; therefore, the SD does not anticipate a revision similar to that of 2019-2021. However, it could still be a sizable project that addresses all three Universal Standards. It is proposed that this be discussed in the June meeting.
- The GSSB asked for details on how conflict-affected and high-risk areas (CAHRA) will be included in the update of *GRI 401: Security Practices 2016*. The SD wants to follow the advice in the reports from the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, the Red Cross, and previous speakers to the GSSB. The SD suggests incorporating CAHRA into the revision of *GRI 411: Rights of Indigenous People 2016* and *GRI 413: Local Communities 2016*. As many security issues are related to vulnerable groups, particularly local communities, the SD may integrate security practices and conflict areas into the revision work.
- The GSSB asked how resources are managed to develop and revise Topic and Sector Standards. The SD explained that the focus continues to be on revising and updating overdue Standards. The SD has built an internal team to work on all the Topic Standards, which limits the number of Standards that can be developed. In parallel, the SD established a Sector Standards team that has the capacity to handle its current workload, as well as the possibility to allocate resources differently for future sector-related work over the next three years. The SD noted the interrelation between Topic and Sector Standards, highlighting the importance of having a fully aligned portfolio. This will be achieved by the end of the next three-year work program, after which any revisions are expected to be incremental.
- The GSSB sought clarification on the digitization standard and whether GRI requires a dedicated artificial intelligence (AI) standard, noting that AI may be a cross-cutting issue. The SD confirmed that AI is under consideration following initial research, but advises deferring work on it due to other priorities in the coming years.

62   • The GSSB discussed the next steps in developing the draft Work Program. The SD outlined
63   how input from the GSSB, chairs of governance bodies, and the Stakeholder Council will be
64   incorporated in the coming months, including potential written contributions and participation
65   in GSSB meetings. Further details will be addressed in the private session.

Session 3: Adoption pathways for the GRI Standards

68   Mario Abela, Director Standards, presented a paper on the pathways towards jurisdictional adoption
69   of the GRI Standards. In response to the paper, the GSSB and SD had the following comments:

70   • The GSSB asked about the preferred adoption pathway of GRI staff. The SD clarified that the
71   paper aimed to demonstrate flexible adoption options across diverse jurisdictional needs,
72   rather than recommending a preferred approach. The GSSB and SD acknowledged that
73   flexibility is key to adoption, but the Standards are most effective when applied as a complete
74   package. Accordingly, there is scope to strengthen impact reporting as part of the adoption
75   pathways, specifically by revising lines 67-68 and 94-95.

76   • The GSSB highlighted the need to show that jurisdictions can progress from initial adoption,
77   like the Universal Standards, to integrating relevant Topic and Sector Standards, and called
78   for guidance to support this process.

79   • The GSSB suggested incorporating the prioritization of sectors as the greatest need for
80   impact reporting. The SD agreed, noting that a phased adoption approach, starting with
81   Universal, followed by Topic and Sector Standards, can support this approach.

82   • The GSSB raised concerns about jurisdictions softening impact disclosure requirements and
83   stressed the need for stronger stakeholder messaging to maintain demand for GRI Standard
84   adoption. In response, the GSSB requested a paper from the Management Board on how to
85   stimulate such demand. This could include positioning the Universal Standards as the
86   'adoption' starting point, which can enshrine the principles of double materiality and serve as
87   the basis for identifying significant impacts, in line with the GRI Standards.

88   • The SD and GSSB discussed the need to develop materials for regulators informed by
89   existing practices and tailored to different jurisdictional realities. The SD agreed to present
90   research data to illustrate current adoption practices and provide guidance on adoption, which
91   can be included as an annex to the requested paper.

92   • The paper requested by the GSSB will also involve GRI's policy team.

Session 4: The evolution of the corporate reporting system and the GRI Standards

Mario Abela, Director Standards, presented an updated paper on the evolution of the global reporting system. In response to the paper, the GSSB and SD had the following comments:

- The GSSB noted that the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) can be included in the list of standard setters in Table 1 and suggested that the table contrasts the distinct roles of the GSSB and ISSB in establishing double materiality, rather than implying a straightforward alignment.

- The GSSB also proposed that Line 16 could further describe how *GRI 3: Material Topics 2021* is a crucial tool for linking impacts with related risks and opportunities.

- The GSSB discussed how the global system can address both sustainable development and the sustainability of an organization. The SD responded that updating the paper with clearer characteristics between the GSSB and ISSB could help illustrate these differences. The GSSB and SD also agreed that a concise visual representation could support public understanding of the distinctions and interconnections between global reporting, where impact reporting complements risk and opportunity reporting.

- The GSSB highlighted trends in some countries where organizations are shifting from GRI to integrated reporting. The SD added that it could elaborate on the paper's 'connectivity' message and reinforce it by explaining how impact reporting informs better financial reporting. It is helpful to set this within the context of 'integrated reporting' as that has become an important feature of corporate reporting, particularly in Japan.

- The GSSB recommended further describing how key actors can include citizens in a respective line of text.

Session 5: Any other business and close of public sessions

No other business was raised, and the Chair closed the public meeting at 13.53 Central European Summer Time (CEST).