Alphabet soup of ESG reporting

Corporate citizenship professionals are confronted with a wide array of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting tools. Start off by differentiating between the big six below to help you manage your sustainability programs and be transparent about your company's impacts.

GRI
Global Reporting Initiative

LAUNCH YEAR 1997

Standards

ESG

Audience: Broad range of stakeholders

Purpose
Provides all organizations with standards for reporting material environmental, social, and economic performance and impacts, as well as organizational governance, to financial and other stakeholders.

Best for
Companies of any size, sector, or location

Information disclosed

General disclosures
such as governance, stakeholder engagement, and reporting practices

Economic
such as performance, market presence, and indirect economic impacts

Environmental
such as materials, energy, water, biodiversity, emissions, and waste impacts

Social
such as labor relations, health and safety, diversity, human rights, and community engagement

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Purpose
Collects and analyzes environmental information disclosed by corporations and governments to help drive all organizations to measure, manage, and reduce their environmental footprint.

Best for
Publicly listed companies and suppliers looking to manage and disclose environmental footprint

Information disclosed

Climate change impacts
including greenhouse gas emissions and energy data

Water impacts
including use efficiency, quality, and ecosystem management

Forest impacts
for companies that overlap with commercial agriculture.
Also includes special considerations for biodiversity impacts, risks, and opportunities within the mining sector.

CDP
Formerly Carbon Disclosure Project

LAUNCH YEAR 2002

Sustainability reporting tool

EG

Audience: Investors, procurement, policymakers

TCFD
Task Force on Climate-related Disclosures

LAUNCH YEAR 2017

Sustainability reporting tool

EG

Audience: Broad range of stakeholders

Purpose
Disclosure standards launched by the Financial Stability Board (FSB), premised on the assumptions that climate risk is a form of financial risk and that it is non-diversifiable.

Best for
Companies seeking to plan for and mitigate climate-related risks

Information disclosed

Governance
such as how, and by whom, climate-related risks are identified, assessed, and communicated

Strategy
including how a changing climate affects it, and your plans / financial implications if it does

Risk Management
risks to your people, operations, customers, and communities where you operate due to a changing climate, and how you will respond

Metrics and Targets
such as how you are calculating impacts or the results of your actions or inactions, and how you are reducing your climate impacts

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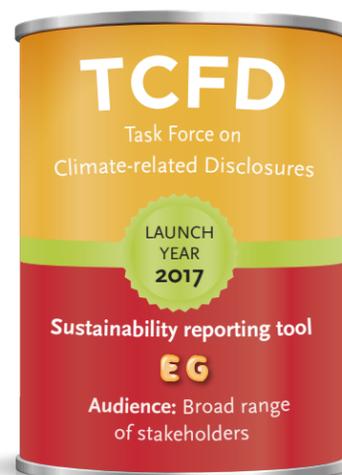
Purpose
The international IR Framework establishes the guiding principles that underpin the SASB standards. The SASB standards are derived from the IR Framework, such that SASB and IIRC are considering a merger to unify the two into one cohesive system of corporate reporting.

Information disclosed
SASB metrics to include within IR Framework:

Environmental impacts
such as GHG emissions; air quality; energy, water, and waste management; and ecological impacts

Social capital
such as human rights and community relations; consumer privacy and data security; product quality, safety, and access; and customer welfare

Human capital
such as labor practices; employee health, safety, and engagement; and diversity and inclusion

Business model resilience and innovation
such as product lifecycle and supply chain management; and physical climate change impacts

Leadership and governance
such as business ethics, legal and regulatory environment, and risk management

IR
International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC)

LAUNCH YEAR 2010

Framework

ESG

Audience: Investors, lenders

SASB
Sustainability Accounting Standards Board

LAUNCH YEAR 2012

Standards

ESG

Audience: Financial stakeholders

Using IR
Framework
guidance for how information is structured/presented and topics covered

Global

Industry-agnostic

Principles-based

High-level content elements

Drives connectivity of information

Using SASB
Standard
detailed requirements for reporting by topic and industry

United States only

Industry-specific

Metrics-based

Disclosure topics and metrics

Enables comparability of information

SDGs
Sustainable Development Goals

LAUNCH YEAR 2015

Sustainability reporting tool

ESG

Audience: Broad range of stakeholders

Purpose
The 17 goals, adopted by the U.N. as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provide a global blueprint to improve the lives and prospects of all people.

Best for
Companies with a global reach, especially those with cross-sector partnerships

Information disclosed
For each goal, there are sub-goals—or "targets"—and related indicators, all of which can be useful for tracking your company's progress. Learn more at **sdgcompass.org**.

ALIGNMENT BETWEEN REPORTING TOOLS

These frameworks, standards, and recommendations are not mutually exclusive: A 2018 study found that 97% of S&P 500 companies that publish a corporate citizenship report utilize multiple frameworks and standards.[1]

Take the BCCCC course, **Fundamentals of Sustainability Reporting**. Enroll now at **ccc.bc.edu/learning**.

1 Lukomnik, J. (2018). State of Integrated and Sustainability Reporting 2018. https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2018/12/03/state-of-integrated-and-sustainability-reporting-2018/#1

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