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Title: GRI and Biodiversity

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a large multi-stakeholder network of thousands of experts, in dozens of countries worldwide. Who participate in GRI's working groups and governance bodies, use the GRI Guidelines to report, access information in GRI-based reports, or contribute to develop the Reporting Framework in other ways.

GRI vision is that non-financial reporting will become as common as financial reporting. Upwards of 1000 organizations around the world report using the GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines the G3- the world's de facto standard for reporting.

The G3 were developed in many multi-stakeholder working groups and received feedback from thousands around the world. In 2006 the G3 were released.

The G3 provide guidance on defining Report Content, Quality and Setting the Report Boundary. The G3's Profile Disclosures ask for standard company information like the Disclosures on Management Approach ask for a brief overview of the organisations management approach to listed aspects and Performance Indicators ask for concrete performance data on sustainability topics. Indicator protocols provide detailed reporting guidance for the performance indicators.

The Performance Indicators are categorized by Economic, Environmental and Social: Labor Practices, Human Rights, Society and Product Responsibility. In the Environmental Category five Performance indicators on Biodiversity can be found. Performance indicators EN11 to EN15 ask for companies to report on information on location and size of land owned in protected areas or areas of high biodiversity (EN11 core), descriptions of significant impacts of activities, products, and services habitats protected or restored (EN12 core), habitats protected or restored (EN13 additional), strategies for managing impacts on biodiversity (EN14 additional) and number of IUCN Red List species and national conservation list species (EN15 additional).

Each performance indicator is supported by an indicator protocol that describes in detail the relevance, compilation steps for report preparers, definitions, documentation and references.

Companies reporting on these indicators and indicator protocols aim to provide unbiased information that can be easily be compared. However, the report reader should keep in mind that the reported information should be placed in the context of the activities of the reporting organisation.

GRI did a quick search for G3 reports in five sectors and compared how much information on biodiversity these companies disclosed in their reports.

Food Processing companies, airports, retailers, mining companies, automotive companies and companies in the oil & gas sector obviously have different ways of reporting on the topic of biodiversity. GRI will present some general conclusions from this quick search.

GRI is developing a Sector Supplement for the Food Processing sector in cooperation with a multi-stakeholder Working Group. Ten food processing companies and ten stakeholder organisations work on a consensus basis to develop sector specific reporting guidance. We aim to have draft ready for public comments in Autumn this year, a second draft will be posted for comments in 2009 and by early 2010 we aim to finalize the Sector Supplement for the Food Processing sector.