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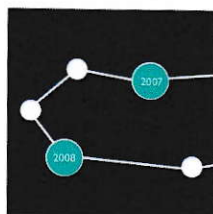
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GRI'S HISTORY

GRI was founded in Boston in 1997. Its roots lie in the US non-profit organizations the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES) and the Tellus Institute. Read all about GRI's organizational journey below.

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PRESENT DAY-2010

2016

In October 2016, GRI launched the first global standards for sustainability reporting. Developed by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), the GRI Standards enable all organizations to report publicly on their economic, environmental and social impacts – and show how they contribute towards sustainable development. The GRI Standards are also a trusted reference for policy makers and regulators, and have a modular structure so they can be kept up-to-date and relevant.

The GRI Standards include all the main concepts and disclosures from the GRI G4 Guidelines, enhanced with a more flexible structure, clearer requirements, and simpler language.

GRI also held its 5th Global Conference in 2016. Almost 1200 sustainability leaders and practitioners from 73 different countries gathered in Amsterdam to be inspired, spark new ideas and network, all with a common goal: to embrace the new era of corporate disclosure. Over 200 expert speakers from governments, NGOs, multi-nationals and innovative start-ups delivered engaging sessions and plenaries, providing a host of perspectives and approaches to sustainability issues and the future of corporate disclosure.

2015

GRI launched the G4 Exam in 2015, a 60 question, multiple choice examination enabling individuals to gain accreditation on their ability to use GRI's G4 Guidelines. The exam is available in more than 70 countries, and successful participants receive a certificate and their name listed on the GRI website for three years.

GRI launched the research publication *Defining Materiality: What Matters to Reporters and Investors (Part I)*, jointly produced with investment specialist RobecoSAM. The publication explores materiality from the reporter's perspective, utilizing data from two sectors of the economy: Technology Hardware & Equipment, and Banks & Diverse Financials.

Reporting 2025 was a key initiative launched. This 12-month project set out to discover the main issues which would be affecting companies' agendas, and consequently their public reports, by 2025. Thought leaders in various fields would be interviewed on subjects ranging from data technology to society and business development scenarios, and videos and analytical papers would be produced throughout the year to promote an international discussion.

GRI also held its first African regional conference in South Africa, bringing together hundreds of experts and providing a platform for enhancing the value of sustainability reporting and encouraging greater levels of corporate disclosure and accountability on the African continent.

2014

The GRI Content Index Service was launched, providing a verification service for the accuracy and alignment of the Content Index of G4-based reports and subsequently, the latest version of Taxonomy covering G4, G3.1 and G3 Guidelines was launched.

Ready to Report? – a publication aimed at SMEs considering whether sustainability reporting is relevant for them and if so, how to start the reporting process, was also released.

In December, the EU Directive on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large companies (amending the 2013 Accounting Directive), entered into force, further bolstering the demand for GRI's reporting framework.

GRI's reach in South America expanded further with the opening of a seventh Focal Point in Colombia.

Internally, the organization underwent a number of changes. Michael Meehan was appointed as the new Chief Executive, and shortly after, a new governance structure for the organization came into effect with the following key changes:

- The creation of an organizational firewall between standard-setting activities and all other organizational activities.
- Implementation of a separate governance structure for standard-setting, including the creation of a new Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), a Due Process Oversight Committee (DPOC), and an Independent Appointments Committee (IAC).
- An independent public funding base for standards activities was established, separate to that of other organizational activities.
- Greater transparency of all standards development processes was agreed upon.

2013

The fourth global GRI conference entitled, "Information – Integration – Innovation," took place gathering together 1,600 delegates from 69 countries.

Concurrently, GRI released the fourth generation of its Guidelines, G4, offering Reporting Principles, Standard Disclosures and an Implementation Manual for the preparation of sustainability reports by organizations of any size or sector.

G4 Online was launched a few months later, a free web-based tool presenting the complete content of the G4 Guidelines in a dynamic format for those already familiar with the Reporting Principles and Standard Disclosures of the G4 Guidelines.

GRI also joined forces with the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) to develop private sector guidance that would help companies enhance their sustainability management and reporting with a view to global sustainable development goals and targets. Launched by the UN Secretary-General at the UNGC Leaders Summit in 2013, the Post-2015 Business Engagement Architecture brought together these actors to affirm their mutual collaboration in supporting and empowering business to take action on sustainable development.

GRI's sixth Focal Point in South Africa was launched.

The GRI Materiality Disclosures Service was introduced, a service provided to organizations to check whether the most critical disclosures in reports based on the G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines are located as stated and can be easily found by readers.

2012

GRI hosted its first Australian Conference in Melbourne in 2012, attracting 250 attendees from 11 different countries. In the same year, the GRI US Focal Point held two North American conferences, one in St Louis, Missouri, and one in Toronto, Canada.

A key conference dominating the year was the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. GRI held a number of side events during the conference and was part of the Green Economy Coalition and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Coalition led by Aviva Investors.

During Rio+20, a group of leading governments joined together in support of paragraph 47 of the Rio+20 outcome document 'The Future We Want'. Brazil, Denmark, France and South Africa formed the 'Group of Friends of Paragraph 47' to advance corporate sustainability reporting, and invited GRI and UNEP to support the group as its secretariat.

Three new Sector Supplements were produced: Oil and Gas, Media, and Event Organizers.

2011

GRI opened its fifth Focal Point in the USA.

The G3.1 Guidelines – an update and completion of G3, with expanded guidance on reporting gender, community and human rights-related performance was released.

GRI also released a linkage publication: *How Do the Global Reporting Initiative Reporting Guidelines Match with the Carbon Disclosure Project?*

Three new Sector Guidelines were also released: Mining and Metals, Airport Operators, Construction and Real Estate.

In its efforts to mainstream sustainability reporting, GRI launched its "Report or Explain" Campaign. The campaign provided a convening space for all those wishing to drive sustainability disclosure as a mainstream management and accountability tool. The Forum would track global initiatives and provide news about how organizations were pursuing their plans towards the goal of a widespread "report or explain" culture.

GRI's Sustainability Disclosure Database was launched in 2011, cataloging all GRI-based and non-GRI-based sustainability reports of which GRI is aware. The number of reports has grown phenomenally in the last few years and today stands at more than 24,000.

2010

This year saw the release of a number of publications: *GRI and ISO 26000: How to Use the GRI Guidelines in Combination with ISO 26000*, and *Carrots and Sticks – Promoting Transparency and Sustainability*.

GRI also released two new Sector Guidelines: Food Processing and NGO.

GRI's third Global Conference on Sustainability and Transparency: "Rethink – Rebuild – Report" took place attracting 1200 attendees from 77 different countries.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between GRI and the UN Global Compact was signed during the conference. As part of the MoU, GRI would integrate the Global Compact's 10 principles and issue areas centrally in the next iteration of its Sustainability Reporting Guidelines.

Concurrently, the Global Compact agreed to adopt the GRI Guidelines as the recommended reporting framework for companies to communicate on progress made.

GRI also expanded its regional reach by opening a fourth Focal Point in India.

2009–2000

2009

Services for GRI's users expanded to include software certification, in the form of the GRI Certified Software and Tools Program. The Program aims to ensure that GRI content in software and digital tools is being used accurately. After completing the certification process, GRI authorizes the use of its content in the software or digital tool and issues a Permission Letter authorizing the content for 12 months. Certified software and tools are listed in the GRI Certified Software and Tools Directory.

GRI also launched the Global Action Network for Transparency in the Supply Chain (GANTSCh) Program (later renamed Business Transparency Program – BTP). Originally supporting small and medium enterprises in their sustainability reporting, GANTSCh has now expanded in scope and builds sustainability reporting capacity for members of business and industry associations – helping to improve economic and sustainability performance in local and sectoral business groups.

GRI launched its Featured Reports service – a way of promoting organizations' sustainability reports to the GRI network and beyond.

A third Focal Point opened in China. GRI released a new Sector Guideline: Electric Utilities.

2008

GRI released its first Sector Guidelines for the Financial Services Sector. Sector Guidelines are intended to capture the unique sustainability issues that diverse industries face, and are compiled by multi-stakeholder working groups.

GRI's outreach expanded further when it formed an alliance with the Earth Charter – a declaration of fundamental ethical principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society. As part of the alliance, GRI published a document detailing the synergies between the G3 Guidelines and the Earth Charter: *The Earth Charter, GRI, and the Global Compact: Guidance to Users on the Synergies in Application*.

GRI also released its Learning Publications: *Pathways II*.

For those organizations considering reporting for the very first time, GRI released two further publications: *Starting Points I* and *Starting Points II*.

GRI's regional reach also expanded with the opening of GRI's second Focal Point in Australia.

GRI's second Global Conference on Sustainability and Transparency entitled, "Sustainability Reporting Today: The Readers' Verdict," attracted over 1000 participants from 58 countries and 148 speakers.

GRI also set up its Certified Training Partner Program and GRI's first Certified Training Partner was established in Brazil. GRI Certified Training Partners provide training on GRI and how to use the GRI Guidelines, and conduct the training in the local language using local case studies and examples.

2007

A key focus for GRI has always been its publications. Educational and research and development publications are frequently produced by GRI, often in collaboration with academic institutions, global centers of excellence and other standard-setting bodies. 2007 saw the release of GRI's Learning Publication: *Pathways I*. This publication was intended to provide step-by-step guidance

for report makers and users of all levels and types. GRI also launched the UNGC GRI linkage document: *Making the Connection*. Its aim was to provide advice and support for linking GRI-based sustainability reporting with the annual Global Compact Communication on Progress.

Eager to start establishing a regional presence in key territories, GRI began setting up regional offices, known as Focal Points. The first Focal Point was launched this year in Brazil.

GRI also launched its Application Level Service, a new initiative provided to organizations to check that sustainability reports have the required set and number of disclosures to meet the organization's self-declared Application Level.

2006

Demand for GRI's sustainability reporting guidance was steadily growing, and this was further boosted by the launch of the third generation of Guidelines, G3. Over 3,000 experts from business, civil society and the labor movement participated in G3's development, highlighting the true multi-stakeholder approach at the heart of GRI's activities.

Concurrently, GRI launched its first XBRL Taxonomy for G3.

GRI's outreach was further strengthened by its very first Global Conference on Sustainability and Transparency, entitled "Reporting: A Measure of Sustainability". The conference, held in Amsterdam, attracted 1150 participants from 65 countries, representing business, financial markets, civil society, labor, government, assurance providers and municipalities. Roughly half of the participants were from Europe or North America, while 250 originated from 37 developing and emerging market countries. Speakers included former US Vice President, Al Gore.

Following the launch of G3 at the Global Conference, GRI began expanding its strategy and Reporting Framework, building powerful alliances. Formal partnerships were entered into with the United Nations Global Compact, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and others.

2005

The GRI Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was launched to assist GRI's Board and Secretariat in maintaining the overall quality and coherence of the GRI Framework by providing high-level technical advice and expertise.

2003

GRI launched its Organizational Stakeholders Program, enabling select organizations – GRI's core supporters – to put their name to GRI's mission, contribute their expertise, play an important governance role, and invest in GRI through annual financial contributions. The OS Program includes companies and organizations drawn from civil society, business, mediating institutions, academia, labor, public agencies and intergovernmental agencies.

2003 also saw the first appointment and initial meeting of the GRI Stakeholder Council (SC). The aim of the SC was to act as a formal stakeholder policy forum within the GRI governance structure, and advise the Board on strategic issues. The SC's key governance functions included appointing Board members and making recommendations on future policy, business planning and activity.

2002

GRI relocated to Amsterdam, the Netherlands and was formally inaugurated as a UNEP collaborating organization in the presence of then- UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Ernst Ligteringen was appointed GRI Chief Executive.

The second generation of the Guidelines, G2, was unveiled at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. GRI was referenced in the World Summit's Plan of Implementation.

2001

On the advice of the GRI Steering Committee, CERES formed GRI into a separate, independent non-profit institution.

2000

GRI launched the first version of the Guidelines, representing the first global framework for comprehensive sustainability reporting.

EARLY YEARS

1998

GRI established a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee to develop the organization's guidance. A pivotal mandate of the Steering Committee was to "do more than the environment." On this advice, the framework's scope was broadened to include social, economic, and governance issues. GRI's guidance became a Sustainability Reporting Framework, with the Reporting Guidelines at its heart.

1997

GRI was founded in Boston, USA. Its roots lie in the US non-profit organizations the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES) and the Tellus Institute. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was also involved in the establishment of GRI.

Former CERES Executive Director Dr. Robert Massie and acting Chief Executive Dr. Allen White pioneered a framework for environmental reporting in the early 1990s, and as a result, the Global Reporting Initiative project department was set up in 1997 in order to develop the framework. The aim was to create an accountability mechanism to ensure companies were following the CERES Principles for responsible environmental conduct. Investors were the framework's original target audience.

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