What Data Shall Companies and Investors Report on Sustainability

Frank Bold

Frank Bold is a purpose-driven law firm using the power of business and non-profit approaches to solve social and environmental problems. The organisation initiated the Alliance for Corporate Transparency project, which has analysed the sustainability disclosures of the 1000 European large companies. We are changing the current practice of non-financial reporting and European legislation in cooperation with leading civil society organisations, progressive companies and other experts in the field.

Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation
Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive
Regulation on Taxonomy of Sustainable Activities

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Which companies need to disclose sustainability information?

→ Large publicly traded companies, banks and insurers (>500 employees) by virtue of the Non-Financial Reporting Directive "NFRD". The draft Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) presented by the European Commission in April 2021 to replace NFRD extends the scope to all large companies, and to all publicly traded companies, except of micro-companies.

→ Investors, including banks and insurers as regards their investment activities, and other financial market participants by virtue of the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation "SFDR".

These instruments are supplemented by the Taxonomy Regulation, which specifies what should be disclosed if sustainable activities are declared. It provides a standard for sustainable lending and investment, irrespective of the recipient entity’s size.

Where do the requirements come from?

The overview below summarises the requirements of the draft CSRD, the proposal for Sustainability Reporting Standard-Setting of the European Lab Project Task Force requested by the European Commission, and the already adopted standards for sustainability disclosure by investors (Regulatory Technical Standards for SFDR).

These requirements provide the basis for the corresponding sector-agnostic and sector-specific corporate sustainability reporting standards (CSRD standards), which are currently being developed and are intended to become applicable from 1st January 2023.

Which data is mandatory?

Data on principal adverse impacts:

→ **Mandatory**: Climate change indicators and some workforce indicators have to be disclosed

→ **If the company has material impacts**: Other environmental indicators

→ **According to the company’s judgement**: Additional entity-specific indicators

Strategy, policies, targets and due diligence disclosures for material topics must be disclosed, but it is up to the reporting entity to define their level of ambition.

Data on sustainable activities are mandatory only if the company decides to declare sustainable activities.

How should the information be presented?

Companies should disclose:

a) Overall strategy and targets explained by the assessment of risks and impacts

b) Impact indicators in historical comparison and details on policies to manage impacts and risks and to implement the strategy

Standards for disclosures by financial market participants (SFDR) and of sustainable activities (Taxonomy) provide a specific structure in which the information should be presented.
Summary of reporting specifications of the SFDR, NFRD/CSRD and Taxonomy

**STRATEGY & GOVERNANCE**

- **Overall business strategy**
  - High-level sustainability targets
  - Resilience of the business model
  - Adaptation of the business model and strategy to address material risks and impacts

- **Double materiality assessment**
  - Material sustainability risks and opportunities
  - Principal adverse sustainability impacts

- **Sustainability governance and organisation**
  - Board oversight
  - Access to expertise
  - Management responsibilities and incentives

Prescribed structure for the Financial Markets Participants* (FMP > 500 – mandatory, FMP < 500 – comply or explain):

- Principal adverse sustainability impacts of investments (as per indicators below) and actions taken
- Due diligence policies to identify and prioritise adverse impacts and their governance
- Engagement policies
- International standards adhered to
- Sustainable financial products: the extent to which they met their declared characteristics and their overall impacts (do no significant harm)

**IMPLEMENTATION AND INDICATORS**

### Climate

**Policy**
- Carbon emission reduction target and transition plan
- Risks (and opportunities) relevant for the short, medium and long-term
- Alignment with climate scenarios and public objectives to limit global warming to 1.5°C

**Impact indicators**
- GHG Scope 1 & 2
- GHG Scope 3 (from 2023)
- GHG intensity
- Share of nonrenewable energy consumption and production
- Energy consumption (high impact sectors only)

**Environment**

**Impact indicators or declaration of no significant impacts**
- Sites located in areas of high water stress
- Sites/operations in or near high-biodiversity value areas
- Water emissions (tonnes)
- Hazardous waste (tonnes)
- Water consumed, reclaimed, recycled and reused
- High-biodiversity risk activities, supply chains and commodities
- Non-recycled waste (tonnes)
- Emissions of pollutants (air, ozone, inorganic)
- Production of chemicals

**Good practice examples**

- Policy, risks, outcomes
  - Energy 1, Energy 2, Finance
- Science-based targets
  - Energy, Resource Transformation, Apparel & Textile
- Scope 3 GHG emissions
  - Energy, Finance, Food & Beverages

**Financial Market Participants**
- Above information related to investment, lending or insurance activities

**Financial Market Participants**
- Share of investments in companies with the above impacts/tonnes per investment
- Share of investments in companies with the above impacts/tonnes per investment

**Sustainable activities**

**Alignment with EU Taxonomy**
- Classification of activities
- Compliance with technical screening criteria
  - a) Threshold
  - b) No significant harm
- Demonstration of due diligence
- Economic indicators
  - Commentary on changes and accounting policy
  - i) Proportion of turnover
  - ii) CAPEX
  - iii) OPEX

**Good practice examples**

- Energy, Finance

**Overall business strategy**
- High-level sustainability targets
- Resilience of the business model
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**Double materiality assessment**
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- Principal adverse sustainability impacts

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**Regulatory Technical Standards** provide several additional indicators, which are not presented here because they do not meet criteria of relevance, reliability and measurability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Market Participants</th>
<th>Financial Market Participants (in addition to the above)</th>
<th>Financial Market Participants</th>
<th>Financial Market Participants (one of the following criteria)**</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| ➔ above information related to investment, lending or insurance activities | ➔ details of adherence with international due diligence standards | ➔ gender pay gap and board gender balance average across investee companies | ➔ weighted average in investee companies of:
| ➔ financial products disclosures (pre-contractual and on the website) | ➔ details of due diligence application to sustainable financial products to ensure no severe adverse impacts | ➔ share of investment in investee companies that:
| ➔ the manner in which sustainability risks are integrated into their investment decisions | ➔ share of investment in investee companies that:
| ➔ the results of the assessment of the likely impacts of sustainability risks on the returns of the financial products they make available | ➔ are lacking a due diligence process
| Explanation whether the financial product (from 2022) | ➔ have been involved in violations of the UNGC or OECD Guidelines
| ➔ intends to make any sustainable investments | ➔ manufacture or sell controversial weapons
| ➔ a description of the environmental or social characteristics or the sustainable investment objective and if they are being met | ➔ anti-corruption and anti-bribery laws by investee companies
| ➔ whether an index has been designated as a reference benchmark, and details | ➔ numbers of convictions and amount of fines for violations of anti-corruption and anti-bribery laws by investee companies
| ➔ for carbon reduction, adherence to the goals of the Paris Agreement | ➔ general risks analysis
| ➔ investment strategy to attain the sustainability characteristics | ➔ anti-corruption programme
| ➔ asset allocation | ➔ whistleblowing system and results
| ➔ whether principal adverse impacts are taken into account | ➔ information on beneficial ownership and controlled entities
| ➔ reference to details available online (methodologies and data) | ➔ policy on political activities

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* Financial Markets Participants means:
  (a) an insurance undertaking which makes available an insurance-based investment product (IBIP);
  (b) an investment firm which provides portfolio management;
  (c) an institution for occupational retirement provision (IORP);
  (d) a manufacturer of a pension product;
  (e) an alternative investment fund manager (AIFM);
  (f) a pan-European personal pension product (PEPP) provider;
  (g) a manager of a qualifying venture capital fund registered in accordance with Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 345/2013;
  (h) a manager of a qualifying social entrepreneurship fund registered in accordance with Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 346/2013;
  (i) a management company of an undertaking for collective investment in transferable securities (UCITS management company);
  (j) a credit institution which provides portfolio management;

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Information flows for sustainable finance

**End beneficiaries**

**INVESTORS, BANKS AND INSURERS**

**PEOPLE AND PLANET**

**COMPANY**

**GREEN DEAL → SUSTAINABLE FINANCE STRATEGY**

500 billion EUR/year of additional investments

**EU FRAMEWORKS**

- Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation
- Taxonomy
- Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive + Sustainable Corporate Governance

**Annex:** An overview of insufficient reporting practices identified in EUKI 2020 research and subsequent enforcement activities can be found in the Enforcement activities, Summary report – EUKI Research 2020