

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT ASSURANCE

Gain stakeholders' trust and enhance your company's reputation.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

In recent years, corporate environmental and social responsibility has risen to the forefront of company concerns. Increases in Corporate Responsibility (CR) investment, more scrutiny of corporate governance and a greater demand for transparency now means that Corporate Responsibility and Sustainable Development issues have gained a firm place on the agenda of Boards and senior management worldwide. New legislation and voluntary standards are continually introduced to ensure companies are made accountable for their impact on the environment and society at large. Openly communicating this accountability to stakeholders can build trust and support, but only if the stakeholders are confident the shared information is a true reflection of the company's social, environmental and ethical performance.

SOLUTION

Working with an independent body provides an objective view of your sustainability reporting and reassures stakeholders that the information is accurate and free of bias. Beyond verifying report data, independent assurance also ensures that the right kind of information is communicated. As each company's sustainability strategy is unique, Bureau Veritas Certification delivers personalized and robust assurance solutions that reflect each client's individual needs. The result is legitimate and credible sustainability reporting, which enables internal and external stakeholders to confidently make informed judgments, decisions and actions.

WHY CHOOSE BUREAU VERITAS?

- **Independent assurance is part of our core business:** We are one of the largest global non-financial audit and certification bodies. Since our company's founding in 1828, we continue to uphold our reputation as a reliable, independent and trustworthy assurance partner.
- **We are recognized as a sustainability reporting assurance best-practice provider:** Organizations such as AccountAbility, Verdantix and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) have commended our work.
- **Our methodology incorporates recognized best practices:** We constantly review and adapt our internal protocols to align with existing standards and current best practices, including the AA1000 Assurance Standard (2008), the GRI Reporting Guidelines (2006) and the ISAE3000 standard for auditing of non-financial information.
- **Our assignments generate innovation, learning and performance improvement:** We offer a combination of independent, impartial advice (through our structured assurance services portfolio), plus a flexible, tailored approach unique to each project and dependent on emerging standards and marketplace demands. For each assignment, we challenge our client's sustainability strategy/performance, strengthen its risk management and value creation, and help it become more strategic and visionary.



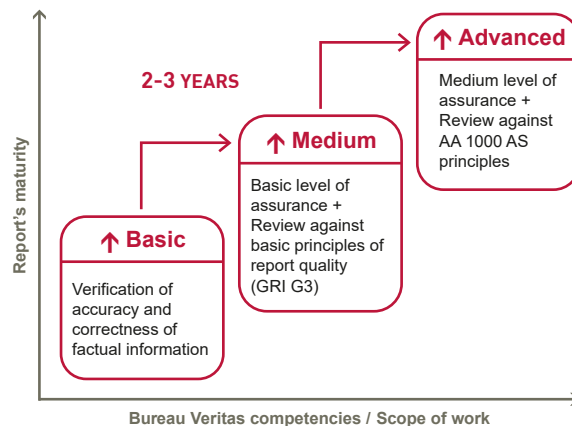
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OUR APPROACH

Bureau Veritas Certification provides a portfolio of assurance solutions that can be tailored to its clients' unique reporting needs.

We have combined our experience with leading reporting companies and best practices to develop three original levels of assurance:

- **Basic Verification** focuses on the accuracy of information reported by the client. This methodology applies a 'limited assurance' while still helping organizations demonstrate transparency and accountability.
- **Medium Assurance** assesses the broader quality of information through a 'reasonable assurance' approach, including its accuracy but also looking at other established parameters, such as accessibility, balance, clarity, comparability, reliability and timeliness.
- **Advanced Assurance** addresses the same objectives as for Basic and Medium levels above, but also evaluates the overall content of a sustainability report against main accountability principles of Materiality, Responsiveness and Stakeholder Inclusivity, offering the different assurance level and type as per the new AA1000 Assurance Standard. This entails an additional assessment of the reporting organization's underlying management systems, processes and competencies. It is designed to ensure that reporting companies are addressing material issues and concerns to key stakeholders and are adequately responding to these.



CASE STUDY

Nestlé S.A.

Bureau Veritas was commissioned to provide assurance over Nestlé's global sustainability report. This consolidated other risk-based assurance carried out for the client previously. The report tackles issues of concern to many key stakeholders of the world's biggest food and nutrition company, including obesity, marketing of infant formula products, water management, and packaging and agricultural supply chain. Our assurance was comprehensive in its coverage and also included a rigorous review of safety, health and environment data and systems at 18 of the group's factories in 13 different countries.

FAQ

What are the benefits of reporting?

For organizations the main benefits are: identification and management of key risks and opportunities, enhanced reputation among stakeholders, improved brand value, customer attractiveness, competitiveness and market position, employee attraction and retention.

What are the standards for the Assurance of Sustainability Reports?

There are a variety of standards used to inform this work. For the development of its ASR methodology, Bureau Veritas Certification has considered and incorporated several applicable standards and best practices guidance, including:

- International Standard on Assurance Engagements 3000 (ISAE 3000)
- Global Reporting Initiative G3 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines (GRI G3), AccountAbility's Assurance Standard (AA1000 AS, 2008)