

Friday 4 May 2012

## **Media companies can now be more accountable and transparent, thanks to new guidance**

Editorial independence, a journalist's freedom of expression, and the responsibility a video game creator takes for influencing the mind of a player can now be reported by media companies, thanks to new guidance being launched today (Friday 4 May 2012) at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Press Freedom Day International conference. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)'s Sustainability Reporting Guidelines for media companies will help increase transparency and accountability in the media.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental element of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an important sustainability issue. Today's new guidance – GRI's Media Sector Supplement – will enable media companies to report their performance. This includes the role of freedom of expression in the company's values and operations, the effect of financial contributions from governments, and the way the company manages staff in areas where freedom of expression is limited.

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) produces a comprehensive sustainability reporting framework. The GRI Guidelines enable all organizations worldwide, of any size or sector, to report their economic, environmental and social performance. The Media Sector Supplement is a tailored version of the Guidelines, for organizations in the media sector. It enables media companies to be transparent about their activities and performance, and the effect their content has on the audience.

Ernst Ligteringen, Chief Executive of the Global Reporting Initiative, said: "As distributors of news and content, media companies can shape the way the public thinks about issues like climate change or labor conditions. Coverage bias resulting from ownership and advertising has arguably left the public largely unaware of the real consequences of the way we are living on this planet. It's time for media companies to join the thousands of other organizations that are reporting their sustainability performance and being accountable for their actions."

Media companies, including television, movie and video game creators, also have a responsibility for the impact and influence their content has on people. This impact and influence is referred to as the 'brainprint' of content.

GRI's new Media Sector Supplement will help media companies disclose their values, management approaches and performance related to content creation and dissemination, helping to determine their impact through the brainprint of content.

Ernst Ligteringen added: "The content of video games and television programs can affect attitudes, behaviors and public opinion. This gives media companies additional responsibilities towards society. It can be very difficult to determine the brainprint of an organization's content, and today's new guidance provides a framework for measuring performance in a way that contributes to determining impact."

Pascale Thumerelle, VP Sustainable Development at Vivendi, a member of the Media Sector Supplement Working Group, explained Vivendi's view of the guidance: "As soon as 2003, Vivendi innovated in defining its sustainable development policy and establishing three strategic challenges: protecting and empowering youth, promoting cultural diversity, and sharing knowledge. Being a founding member of the GRI Media Sector Supplement working group was a great opportunity to share our vision of a media organization's responsibility and our experience in reporting on our potential brainprint. The Media Sector Supplement will help us and our peers to improve and harmonize the reporting on our sector key challenges."

The Supplement was developed according to a multi-stakeholder process, with 23 experts from media companies and stakeholder institutions brought together in a Working Group to develop the guidance. The public provided feedback through two Public Comment Periods before the Supplement was finalized. The development was supported by Fundación Avina, Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano and Universidad Javeriana.

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Notes to Editors:

1. The Media Sector Supplement will be launched on 4 May 2012 at the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day International Conference. For details please visit <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/world-press-freedom-day/homepage/>

To learn more about sustainability reporting in the media sector, join GRI's online event on 9 May 2012.

Register for the Pacific conference at 8:00 am CET (9 May) <http://bit.ly/JkbYOs>

Register for the Atlantic conference at 4:00pm CET (9 May) <http://bit.ly/IWg0qq>

2. For a pre-embargo copy of the Media Sector Supplement, contact GRI. To download the Media Sector Supplement on or after 4 May 2012, visit the GRI website:

<https://www.globalreporting.org/reporting/sector-guidance/media/Pages/default.aspx>

3. About the Global Reporting Initiative

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) produces a comprehensive Sustainability Reporting Framework that is widely used around the world, to enable greater organizational transparency. The Framework, including the Reporting Guidelines, sets out the Principles and Indicators organizations can use to report their economic, environmental, and social performance. GRI is committed to continuously improving and increasing the use of the Guidelines, which are freely available to the public.

Website: [www.globalreporting.org](http://www.globalreporting.org)

4. Members of the Media Sector Supplement Working Group:

<b>Working Group Member</b>	<b>Organization name</b>
Wendy Arenas	Alisos
Joyce Barnathan	International Center for Journalists
Márcia Balisciano	Reed Elsevier
Erin Baudo	Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
Jo Confino	The Guardian
Michelle Crozier Yates	Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. & Time Warner Inc.
John Devitt	Transparency International
María Julia Díaz Ardaya	Grupo Clarín
Marci Eggers	The Nature Conservancy
Susana Gato	Grupo Antena 3
Hanna Harvima	UNI MEI
Barbara Kutscher	Bertelsmann
Mike McCluskey	Australian Broadcasting Corporation - Radio Australia
Jane Meacham	Sustainable Investments Institute
Svetlana Molchanova	Gazprom Media Holding
John Mukela	NSJ Trust
Isabel Ortega	Mediaset España
Bettina Peters	Global Forum for Media Development
Julia Ramkovitch	TNT Broadcasting Network
Veet Vivarta	ANDI - Communication and Rights
Sasa Vucinic	Media Development Loan Fund
Barbara Weill	Vivendi
Aidan White	Council of Global Unions