

# Public consultation on the revision of the non-financial reporting directive

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

## Introduction

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## Background information on the Non-Financial Reporting Directive

The [Non-Financial Reporting Directive – NFRD – \(Directive 2014/95/EU\)](#) is an amendment to the [Accounting Directive \(Directive 2013/34/EU\)](#). It requires certain large companies to include a non-financial statement as part of their annual public reporting obligations. Companies under the scope of the NFRD had to report according its provisions for the first time in 2018 (for financial year 2017).

The NFRD applies to large Public Interest Entities with more than 500 employees. In practice it includes large listed companies, and large banks and insurance companies (whether listed or not) – all providing they have more than 500 employees.

The NFRD identifies four sustainability issues (environment, social and employee issues, human rights, and bribery and corruption) and with respect to those issues it requires companies to disclose information about their business model, policies (including implemented due diligence processes), outcomes, risks and risk management, and KPIs relevant to the business. It does not introduce or require the use of a non-financial reporting standard or framework, nor does it impose detailed disclosure requirements such as lists of indicators per sector.

The NFRD requires companies to disclose information “to the extent necessary for an understanding of the development, performance, position and impact of [the company’s] activities.” This means companies should disclose not only how sustainability issues may affect the company, but also how the company affects society and the environment. This is the so-called double materiality perspective.

In 2017, as required by the Directive, the Commission published [non-binding guidelines for companies on how to report non-financial information](#). In June 2019, as part of the [Sustainable Finance Action Plan](#), the Commission published additional [guidelines on reporting climate-related information](#), which integrate the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.

## Current context

The non-financial information needs of users, in particular the investment community, are increasing very substantially and very quickly. The demand for better information from investee companies is driven partly by investors needing to better understand financial risks resulting from the sustainability crises we face, and partly by the growth in financial products that actively seek to address environmental and social problems. In addition, some forthcoming EU legislation, including the [regulation on sustainability disclosures in the financial services sector \(Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2088\)](#), and the [regulation on a classification system \(taxonomy\) of sustainable economic activities](#), can only fully meet their objectives if more and better non-financial information is available from investee companies. The taxonomy regulation will require companies under the scope of the NFRD to disclose certain indicators of the proportion of their activities that are classified as sustainable according to the taxonomy.

The feedback received in the online [public consultation on corporate reporting carried out in 2018](#) in the context of a fitness check that is currently being finalised by the Commission services, confirms that the non-financial information currently disclosed by companies does not adequately meet the needs of the intended users. The following problems have been identified:

1. There is inadequate publicly available information about how non-financial issues, and sustainability issues in particular, impact companies, and about how companies themselves impact society and the environment. In particular:
  - a. Reported non-financial information is not sufficiently comparable or reliable.
  - b. Companies do not report all non-financial information that users think is necessary, and many companies report information that users do not think is relevant.
  - c. Some companies from which investors and other users want non-financial information do not report such information.
  - d. It is hard for investors and other users to find non-financial information even when it is reported.
2. Companies incur unnecessary and avoidable costs related to reporting non-financial information. Companies face uncertainty and complexity when deciding what non-financial information to report, and how and where to report such information. In the case of some financial sector companies, this complexity may also arise from different disclosure requirements contained in different pieces of EU legislation. Companies are under pressure to respond to additional demands for non-financial information from sustainability rating agencies, data providers and civil society, irrespective of the information that they publish as a result of the NFRD.

In its [resolution on sustainable finance in May 2018](#), the European Parliament called for the further development of reporting requirements in the framework of the NFRD. In December 2019, in [its conclusions on the Capital Markets Union](#), the Council stressed the importance of reliable, comparable and relevant information on sustainability risks, opportunities and impacts, and called on the Commission to consider the development of a European non-financial reporting standard. In addition, [ESMA recently published a report on undue short-term pressure on corporations](#) where it recommends the Commission to amend the NFRD provisions.

In its [Communication on the European Green Deal](#), the Commission committed to review the Non-Financial Reporting Directive in 2020 as part of the strategy to strengthen the foundations for sustainable investment. Meeting the objectives of the European Green Deal will require additional investments across all sectors of the economy, the bulk of which will need to come from the private sector. In this sense review of the NFRD is part of the effort to scale up sustainable finance by improving transparency.

The European Green Deal also stressed that sustainability should be more broadly embedded into the corporate governance framework, as many companies still focus too much on short-term financial performance compared to their long-term development and sustainability aspects. As part of the [Sustainable Finance Action Plan](#), work is being undertaken to prepare a possible action in this area.

In addition, to ensure appropriate management of environmental risks and mitigation opportunities, and reduce related transaction costs, the Commission will also support businesses and other stakeholders in developing standardised natural capital accounting practices within the EU and internationally.

The services of the European Commission have published an [inception impact assessment on the Review of the Non-Financial Reporting Directive](#). It summarises the problem definition, possible policy options and likely impacts of this initiative.

## Objectives of this public consultation and links with other consultation activities

This public consultation aims to collect the views of stakeholders with regard to possible revisions to the provisions of the NFRD. The principal focus of this consultation is on the possible options for such revisions.

This public consultation builds on a number of recent consultation activities, including:

- An [online public consultation on corporate reporting in 2018](#), in the context of the fitness check on the EU framework for public reporting by companies. That consultation enabled the Commission to gather data and views on the problems that need to be addressed with regard to non-financial reporting. Problem analysis is therefore not a principal focus of the current consultation strategy.
- A [online targeted consultation on climate-related reporting in 2019](#), as part of the development of the new guidelines for companies on how to report climate-related information. In addition, the Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance organised a [call for feedback on its recommendations with regard to reporting climate-related information](#). The results of these consultation activities, although specific to the issue of climate, are also useful when considering non-financial reporting more generally.

This consultation is one element of a [broader consultation strategy in the context of the review of the NFRD](#). In addition to this open consultation, there will also be targeted surveys addressed to SMEs, and to companies currently under the scope of the NFRD. The targeted surveys will collect more detailed opinions and data from companies on certain issues, including costs related to non-financial reporting.

In addition, the services of the Commission will soon launch an open public consultation on a Renewed Sustainable Finance Strategy, seeking for stakeholders' views in other Sustainable Finance related issues, including questions related to sustainable corporate governance.

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**Please note:** In order to ensure a fair and transparent consultation process **only responses received through our online questionnaire will be taken into account** and included in the report summarising the responses. Should you have a problem completing this questionnaire or if you require particular assistance, please contact [fisma-non-financial-reporting@ec.europa.eu](mailto:fisma-non-financial-reporting@ec.europa.eu).

More information:

- [on this consultation](#)
- [on the consultation document](#)
- [on the protection of personal data regime for this consultation](#)

# 1. Quality and scope of non-financial information to be disclosed

The feedback received from the [online public consultation on corporate reporting carried out in 2018](#) suggests that there are some significant problems regarding the non-financial information currently disclosed by companies pursuant to [Directive 2014/95/EU \("the Non-Financial Reporting Directive" or NFRD\)](#). Likewise, [ESMA's 2018 Activity Report](#) gathers evidence that shows there is significant room for improvement in the disclosure practices under the NFRD.

## Question 1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about possible problems with regard to non-financial reporting?

Please rate as follows:

1= totally disagree, 2= mostly disagree, 3= partially disagree and partially agree, 4= mostly agree, 5= totally agree

|  | 1<br>(totally disagree) | 2<br>(mostly disagree) | 3<br>(partially disagree and partially agree) | 4<br>(mostly agree)              | 5<br>(totally agree)             | Don't know / no opinion / not relevant |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| The lack of comparability of non-financial information reported by companies pursuant to the NFRD is a significant problem.      | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input type="radio"/>            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| The limited reliability of non-financial information reported by companies pursuant to the NFRD is a significant problem.        | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| Companies reporting pursuant to the NFRD do not disclose all relevant non-financial information needed by different user groups. | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input type="radio"/>            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |

Article 19a of the Accounting Directive (which was introduced into the Accounting Directive by the NFRD) currently requires companies to disclose information about four non-financial matters, if deemed material by the particular company:

- i. environment,
- ii. social and employee issues,

iii. human rights,

iv. bribery and corruption.

These correspond to the “sustainability factors” defined in Article 2(24) of Regulation (UE) 2019/2088 on sustainability-related disclosures in the financial services sector.

**Question 2. Do you consider that companies reporting pursuant to the NFRD should be required to disclose information about other non-financial matters in addition to those currently set-out in Article 19a?**

|                               | <b>Please specify which other non-financial matters (no more than 3):</b>  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Other non-financial matter #1 | All key operational performance matters that could affect the company's value creation. These are likely to be very specific to the sector or the entity reporting. In many cases it will include the intangibles covered by Q4 below. |
| Other non-financial matter #2 | Management's view of the current context in which the company is operating, for example economic conditions  |
| Other non-financial matter #3 | Scenario and sensitivity analysis for matters requiring estimates, including the impacts of climate change.  |

For each of the four non-financial matters identified in Article 19a of the Accounting Directive, and subject to the company's own materiality assessment, companies are required to disclose information about their business model, policies (including implemented due diligence processes), outcomes, risks and risk management (including risks linked to their business relationships), and key performance indicators (KPIs) relevant to the business.

**Question 3. Are there additional categories of non-financial information related to a company’s governance and management procedures, including related metrics where relevant, (for example, scenario analyses, targets, more forward-looking information, or how the company aims to contribute to society through its business activities) that companies should disclose in order to enable users of their reports to understand the development, performance, position and impacts of the company?**

|   | <b>Please specify which additional categories of non-financial information (no more than 3):</b> |
|---|--|
| Additional category of non-financial information #1 | . Targets and more forward-looking information   |
| Additional category of non-financial information #2 | .Strategy incorporating financial and non-financial factors                                      |
| Additional category of non-financial information #3 | Statement of responsibility for the report from the management                                   |



[Investment in intangible assets currently represents the majority of investment carried out by the private sector in advanced economies](#). There is a long-standing debate about the need for better reporting of intangible investments in company reports, including in relation to sustainability<sup>1</sup>. Irrespective of the potential future changes to accounting standards, it is likely to remain the case that a significant proportion of intangible assets will fail to meet the definition of an asset or the criteria for recognition as an intangible asset in the financial statements. The Accounting Directive currently makes no explicit reference to intangible assets in the Articles concerning the management report, other than the requirement to report about activities in the field of research and development in Article 19(2)(b).

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<sup>1</sup> The European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) is currently carrying out a [research project on this topic](#). The United Kingdom's Financial Reporting Council issued a [consultation document about business reporting of intangibles in 2019](#).

**Question 4. In light of the importance of intangibles in the economy, do you consider that companies should be required to disclose additional non-financial information regarding intangible assets or related factors (e.g. intellectual property, software, customer retention, human capital, etc.)?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

In addition to the provisions of the NFRD, several other EU legislative acts require disclosures of sustainability-related information for financial sector entities:

- The [Regulation on prudential requirements for credit institutions](#) requires certain banks to disclose ESG risks as of 28 June 2022.
- The [Regulation on sustainability related disclosures in the financial services sector](#) requires financial market participants to disclose their policies on the integration of sustainability risks in their investment decision-making process and the adverse impacts of investment decisions on sustainability factors, as of 10 March 2021.
- The [Regulation establishing a framework to facilitate sustainable investment \(the Sustainable Finance Taxonomy\)](#) creates new reporting obligations including for companies subject to the NFRD, starting in December 2021.

**Question 5. To what extent do you think that the current disclosure requirements of the NFRD ensure that investee companies report the information that financial sector companies will need to meet their new disclosure requirements?**

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ To some extent but not much
- ☒ To a reasonable extent
- ☐ To a very great extent
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

In order to ensure that the financial service sector can comply with the new disclosure requirements there might be scope for better aligning the information required to investees and the one financial sector entities need to report themselves, e.g. as regards sustainability impacts.

## Question 6. How do you find the interaction between different pieces of legislation?

You can provide as many answers as you want.

- ☐ It works well
- ☐ There is an overlap
- ☒ There are gaps
- ☒ There is a need to streamline
- ☐ It does not work at all
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

## Question 7. In order to ensure better alignment of reporting obligations of investees and investors, should the legal provisions related to non-financial reporting define environmental matters on the basis of the six objectives set-out in the taxonomy regulation: (1) climate change mitigation; (2) climate change adaptation; (3) sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources; (4) transition to a circular economy (5) pollution prevention and control; (6) protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

## Please provide any comments or explanations to justify your answers to questions 1 to 7:

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

We would like to see a revision of the Directive that withdrew the articles 19 and 19A and replaced them with a new requirement for a comprehensive and high quality annual report that covered all material aspects of a company's business model, strategy, performance, position, risks and prospects integrating financial and non-financial aspects in a balanced and holistic explanation. This might be extended to replacing Article 20 and incorporating the key aspects of governance that should be reported.

Q4. Some intangibles are recognised assets in the financial statements, including those acquired and development costs, and there are disclosure requirements currently in Article 19 about research and development. These need to be expanded so the new management report should set out the nature of the intangible items that underpin its performance, the strategy for their development, the KPIs used to measure that development during the year, the relationship with amounts in the financial statements and the extent to which the intangibles are expected to benefit future years.

## 2. Standardisation

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*Note: in this section, the word "standard" is used for simplicity. This should not be read as a suggestion that all relevant reporting requirements must be specified in a single normative document. Rather, "standard" is merely used as a*

*shorthand that could encompass a consistent and comprehensive set of standards. Reporting standards define what information companies should report and how such information should be prepared and presented.*

A requirement that all companies falling within the scope of the NFRD report in accordance with a common non-financial reporting standard may help to address some of the problems identified in section 1 (comparability, reliability and relevance).

**Question 8. In your opinion, to what extent would a requirement on companies to apply a common standard for non-financial information resolve the problems identified?**

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ To some extent but not much
- ☐ To a reasonable extent
- ☒ To a very great extent
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 9. In your opinion, is it necessary that a standard applied by a company under the scope of the Non-Financial Reporting Directive should include sector-specific elements?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

A number of non-financial reporting frameworks and standards already exist. Some, including the standards of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the framework of the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC), and the standards of the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), aim to cover most or all relevant non-financial issues.

**Question 10. To what extent would the application of one of the following standards or frameworks, applied on its own, resolve the problems identified while also enabling companies to *comprehensively* meet the current disclosure requirements of the Non-Financial Reporting Directive, taking into account the double-materiality perspective (see section 3)?**

Please rate as follows:

1= not at all, 2= to some extent but not much, 3= to a reasonable extent, 4= to a very great extent

|  | 1<br>(not<br>at all)  | 2<br>(to<br>some<br>extent<br>but not<br>much) | 3<br>(to a<br>very<br>reasonable<br>extent) | 4<br>(to a<br>very<br>great<br>extent) | N.A.                  |
|--|-----------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| <a href="#">Global Reporting Initiative</a>                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input checked="" type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| <a href="#">Sustainability Accounting Standards Board</a>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input checked="" type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| <a href="#">International Integrated Reporting Framework</a> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input checked="" type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> |

**10.1 Do you consider that other standard(s) or framework(s), applied on their own, would resolve the problems identified while also enabling companies to *comprehensively* meet the current disclosure requirements of the NFRD?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

On 5 December 2019, the Economic and Financial Affairs Council adopted conclusions on deepening the Capital Markets Union, in which it invited the Commission to “consider the development of a European non-financial reporting standard **taking into account international initiatives**”.

Most existing frameworks and standards focus on individual or a limited set of non-financial issues. Examples include the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework (human rights), the questionnaires of the CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project), and the standards of the Climate Disclosure Standards Board (CDSB). Several approaches have also been developed at EU level in the environmental area, including the Organisation Environmental Footprint and reporting under the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).

**Question 11. If there were to be a common European non-financial reporting standard applied by companies under the scope of the NFRD, to what extent do you think it would be important that such a standard should incorporate the principles and content of the following existing standards and frameworks?**

Please rate as follows:

1= not at all, 2= to some extent but not much, 3= to a reasonable extent, 4= to a very great extent

|  | 1<br>(not<br>at all)  | 2<br>(to<br>some<br>extent<br>but not<br>much) | 3<br>(to a<br>very<br>reasonable<br>extent) | 4<br>(to a<br>very<br>great<br>extent) | N.A.                             |
|--|-----------------------|--|---|--|----------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Global Reporting Initiative</a>                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>            |
| <a href="#">Sustainability Accounting Standards Board</a>                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>            |
| <a href="#">International Integrated Reporting Framework</a>               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>            |
| <a href="#">Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures</a> (TCFD) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>            |
| <a href="#">UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework</a> (human rights)   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>            |
| <a href="#">CDP</a>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input checked="" type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/>            |
| <a href="#">Climate Disclosure Standards Board</a> (CDSB)                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>            |
| <a href="#">Organisation Environmental Footprint</a> (OEF)                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |
| <a href="#">Eco-Management and Audit Scheme</a> (EMAS)                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |

**11.1 Do you consider that the principles and content of other existing standard(s) or framework(s) should be incorporated in a potential common European non-financial reporting standard?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 12.** If your organisation *fully* applies any non-financial reporting standard or framework when reporting under the provisions of the NFRD, please indicate the recurring annual cost of applying that standard or framework (including costs of retrieving, analysing and reporting the information):

|                          | <b>Name of standard or framework (no more than 3):</b> | <b>Estimated cost of application per year, excluding any one-off start-up costs</b> |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Standard or framework #1 |  |   |
| Standard or framework #2 |  |   |
| Standard or framework #3 |  |   |



Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) often do not have the technical expertise nor resources necessary to prepare reports in accordance with state-of-the-art, sophisticated standards. This may imply that requiring SMEs to apply the same standards as large companies may be a disproportionate burden for SMEs.

At the same time, many SMEs are under increasing pressure to provide certain non-financial information to other businesses, in particular if they are suppliers of large companies. In addition, financial institutions are increasingly likely to request certain non-financial information from companies to whom they provide capital, including SMEs. In this respect, SMEs that do not provide non-financial information may experience a negative impact on their commercial opportunities as suppliers of larger companies or on their access to capital, and may not be able to benefit from new sustainable investment opportunities.

**Question 13. In your opinion, would it be useful for there to be a simplified standard and/or reporting format for SMEs?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 14. To what extent do you think that a simplified standard for SMEs would be an effective means of limiting the burden on SMEs arising from information demands they may receive from other companies, including financial institutions?**

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ To some extent but not much
- ☒ To a reasonable extent
- ☐ To a very great extent
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 15. If the EU were to develop a simplified standard for SMEs, do you think that the use of such a simplified standard by SMEs should be mandatory or voluntary?**

- ☐ Mandatory
- ☒ Voluntary
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

In the responses to the [Commission's public consultation on public corporate reporting carried out in 2018](#), just over half of the respondents believed that integrated reporting could contribute to a more efficient allocation of capital and agreed that the EU should encourage integrated reporting.

**Question 16. In light of these responses, to what extent do you agree that the body responsible for developing a European non-financial reporting standard should also have expertise in the field of financial reporting in order to ensure “connectivity” or integration between financial and non-financial information?**

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ To some extent but not much
- ☐ To a reasonable extent

- ☒ To a very great extent
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 17. The key stakeholder groups with an interest in and contributing to the elaboration of financial reporting standards have historically been investors, preparers of financial reports (companies) and auditors / a c c o u n t a n t s .**

**To what extent to do you think that these groups should also be involved in the process of developing a European non-financial reporting standard?**

Please rate as follows:

1= not at all, 2= to some extent but not much, 3= to a reasonable extent, 4= to a very great extent

|                      | 1<br>(not<br>at all)  | 2<br>(to<br>some<br>extent<br>but not<br>much) | 3<br>(to a<br>very<br>reasonable<br>extent) | 4<br>(to a<br>very<br>great<br>extent) | N.A.                  |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| Investors            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/> |
| Preparers            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/> |
| Auditors/accountants | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/> |

**Question 18. In addition to the stakeholders referred to in the previous question, to what extent to do you consider that the following stakeholders should be involved in the process of developing a European non-financial reporting standard?**

Please rate as follows:  
 1= not at all, 2= to some extent but not much, 3= to a reasonable extent, 4= to a very great extent

|                                    | 1<br><br>(not<br>at all) | 2<br><br>(to<br>some<br>extent<br>but not<br>much) | 3<br><br>(to a<br>very<br>reasonable<br>extent) | 4<br><br>(to a<br>very<br>great<br>extent) | N.A.                  |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| Civil society representatives/NGOs | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>                              | <input checked="" type="radio"/>                | <input type="radio"/>                      | <input type="radio"/> |
| Academics                          | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>                              | <input checked="" type="radio"/>                | <input type="radio"/>                      | <input type="radio"/> |

**18.1 Do you consider that other stakeholder(s) should be involved in the process of developing a European non-financial reporting standard?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

18.2 Please specify which other stakeholder(s) you consider should be involved in the process of developing a European non-financial reporting standard and to what extent:

Please rate as follows:  
1= not at all, 2= to some extent but not much, 3= to a reasonable extent, 4= to a very great extent

|                      | Name of other stakeholder (no more than 3):                             | Please rate from 1 to 4 as explained above (please use digits only) |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Other stakeholder #1 | Representative of employee interests                                    | 2   |
| Other stakeholder #2 | Representatives of SMEs if a separate SME standard were to be developed | 3   |
| Other stakeholder #3 | Experts (scientists etc.) on the measurements of different areas        | 3   |

**Question 19. To what extent should the following European public bodies or authorities be involved in the process of developing a European non-financial reporting standard?**

Please rate as follows:

1= not at all, 2= to some extent but not much, 3= to a reasonable extent, 4= to a very great extent

|  | 1<br>(not<br>at all)  | 2<br>(to<br>some<br>extent<br>but not<br>much) | 3<br>(to a<br>very<br>reasonable<br>extent) | 4<br>(to a<br>very<br>great<br>extent) | N.A.                  |
|--|-----------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| European Securities Markets Authority (ESMA)                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/> |
| European Banking Authority (EBA)                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input checked="" type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input checked="" type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| European Central Bank (ECB)                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/>               | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| European Environment Agency (EEA)                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input checked="" type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| Platform on Sustainable Finance                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                          | <input checked="" type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> |

**19.1 Do you consider that other European public body/ies or authority/ies should be involved in the process of developing a European non-financial reporting standard?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant



**19.2 Please specify which other European public body/ies or authority/ies you consider should be involved in the process of developing a European non-financial reporting standard and to what extent:**

Please rate as follows:  
1= not at all, 2= to some extent but not much, 3= to a reasonable extent, 4= to a very great extent

|  | <b>Name of other European public body or authority (no more than 3):</b> | <b>Please rate from 1 to 4 as explained above (please use digits only)</b> |
|--|--|--|
| Other European public body or authority #1 | EFRAG  | 4  |
| Other European public body or authority #2 |  |  |
| Other European public body or authority #3 |  |  |

National accounting standards-setters of several EU Member States are represented in the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG), which acts as the EU's voice and technical advisor in relation to financial reporting.

**Question 20. To what extent to do you consider that the following national authorities or bodies should be involved in the process of developing European non-financial reporting standards?**

Please rate as follows:  
1= not at all, 2= to some extent but not much, 3= to a reasonable extent, 4= to a very great extent

|                                       | 1<br><br>(not<br>at all) | 2<br><br>(to<br>some<br>extent<br>but not<br>much) | 3<br><br>(to a<br>very<br>reasonable<br>extent) | 4<br><br>(to a<br>very<br>great<br>extent) | N.A.                  |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| National accounting standards-setters | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>                              | <input checked="" type="radio"/>                | <input type="radio"/>                      | <input type="radio"/> |
| Environmental authorities             | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/>                              | <input checked="" type="radio"/>                | <input type="radio"/>                      | <input type="radio"/> |

## 20.1 Do you consider that other type of national authorities or bodies should be involved in the process of developing a European non-financial reporting standard?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

### Please provide any comments or explanations to justify your answers to questions 8 to 20:

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

We consider that the new EU legislation for the management report should provide the overall requirements for better corporate reporting (as noted in our comments under Section 1 above). This would be best supplemented by reporting standards that set out the reporting elements, guiding principles and more detailed requirements. We recommend requirements for an integrated annual management report covering financial and non-financial information. The existing International Integrated Reporting Framework which has been applied by many leading organisations should be a key source for the legislation and/or any framework standard.

Given the development of IFRS and other systems for the financial statements, the present gap is of generally accepted standardised reporting of non-financial information (NFR) which we would see as providing more detailed guidance within the framework. As much as possible we would like to see any NFR standards to be principle-based and generally applicable to the wide range of companies that will be involved. We recognise that there may be some elements that need to be sector-specific and so we have supported that possibility in Q9. For some of the non-financial issues the development of standards may currently be difficult. We consider that climate change is the most pressing of those issues for standardisation on the one hand and on the other arguably more amenable to standardisation. For those reasons we consider that it should be given priority.

The NFR standards should as far as possible be developed for use and acceptance on a global level, given the global basis of investment and the nature of many of the companies that will be in scope. This would mean co-operation and collaboration also on a global level. We have reservations about the NFR standard setter being European without an intention and plan that it develops into a global one.

In supporting a simplified version for SMEs we have in mind application to any company that is not within the scope of the new legislation as discussed in Section 7.

In discussing the different groups that should be involved with setting NFR standards, we recognise that involvement can come in different forms. The standards should be developed with a transparent due process allowing all parties to contribute their views. Bodies can be involved in consultative groups or on any supervisory body overseeing the direction and development of the standards. The responsibility for preparing the standards should be left to a body with a suitable range of expertise and experience but which may not be able to reflect all the interested stakeholders. If the NFR standard setter is to develop into a global one involvement and representation would have to involve parties outside Europe.

In Q17 investors would include analysts and credit rating agencies who are acting on their behalf.

### 3. Application of the principle of materiality

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The NFRD requires companies to disclose information “to the extent necessary for an understanding of the development, performance, position and impact of [the company’s] activities.” This materiality principle implies that companies reporting pursuant to the NFRD must disclose (i) how sustainability issues may affect the development, performance and position of the company; and (ii) how the company impacts society and the environment. This is the double-materiality perspective ([see also the Commission’s non-binding guidelines on reporting climate-related information, section 2.2, page 4](#)). The two “directions” of materiality are distinct although there can be feedbacks from one to the other. For example, a company that with severe impacts on the environment or society may incur reputational or legal risks that undermine its financial performance.

‘Material’ information is defined in Article 2(16) of the Accounting Directive as “the status of information where its omission or misstatement could reasonably be expected to influence decisions that users make on the basis of the financial statements of the undertaking. The materiality of individual items shall be assessed in the context of other similar items.” This definition is geared towards financial reporting, which is principally intended to serve the needs of investors and other creditors. By contrast, non-financial information serves the needs of a broader set of stakeholders, as it relates not only to the increasing impact of non-financial matters on the financial performance of the company, but also to its impacts on society and the environment. This may imply the need to provide an alternative definition of materiality for application in the context of non-financial reporting, or at least additional guidance on this issue.

**Question 21. Do you think that the definition of materiality set-out in Article 2 (16) of the Accounting Directive is relevant for the purposes of determining which information is necessary to understand a company’s development, performance and position?**

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ To some extent but not much
- ☒ To a reasonable extent
- ☐ To a very great extent
- ☐ Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 22. Do you think that the definition of materiality set-out in Article 2 (16) of the Accounting Directive is relevant for the purposes of determining which information is necessary to understand a company’s impacts on society and the environment?**

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ To some extent but not much
- ☒ To a reasonable extent
- ☐ To a very great extent
- ☐ Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 23. Is there is a need to clarify the concept of ‘material’ non-financial information?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

### Question 23.1 If you do think there is a need to clarify the concept of ‘material’ non-financial information, how would you suggest to do so?

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

We consider that the principle of the existing definition of materiality works in the context of both the financial statements and the annual management report. Information is material if its misstatement or omission could influence the decisions that users makes. The definition in Article 2 would, for the management report, need to be broadened beyond its reference to the financial statements and the users would have to be extended beyond investors and creditors and include society. Society should be defined in a general way without including the many special interest groups such as lobby groups and employees.

In our view the issues that are of significance to society are inevitably of significance to the company and those investors focused on long term financial sustainability. That sustainability depends, for example on consumer preference, employees’ objectives, corporate reputation, and the need for its commitments to wider sustainable development issues that impact current and future generations.

### Question 24. Should companies reporting under the NFRD be required to disclose their materiality assessment process?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don’t know / no opinion / not relevant

### Please provide any comments or explanations to justify your answers to questions 21 to 24:

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

## 4. Assurance

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The NFRD requires that the statutory auditor or audit firm checks whether the non-financial statement has been provided if a firm falls within the scope of the Directive.

Article 34 of the Accounting Directive requires that the financial statements are audited, and that the statutory auditor or audit firm express an opinion whether the management report (i) is consistent with the financial statements for the same financial year; and (ii) has been prepared in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. Article 34 of the Accounting Directive also requires the statutory auditor or audit firm to state whether it has identified material misstatements in the management report and to give an indication of the nature of such material misstatements. However, the non-financial statement published pursuant to the NFRD – whether contained in the management report

or a separate report – is explicitly excluded from the scope of Article 34 of the Accounting Directive. Consequently, the NFRD does not require any assurance of the content of the non-financial statement.

**Question 25. Given that non-financial information is increasingly important to investors and other users, are the current differences in the assurance requirements between financial and non-financial information justifiable and appropriate?**

- ☐ Not at all
- ☒ To some extent but not much
- ☐ To a reasonable extent
- ☐ To a very great extent
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 26. Should EU law impose stronger assurance requirements for non-financial information reported by companies falling within the scope of the NFRD?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

There are two types of assurance engagement a practitioner can perform:

- Reasonable assurance reduces the risk of the engagement to an acceptably low level in the given circumstances. The conclusion is usually provided in a positive form of expression and states an opinion on the measurement of the subject matter against previously defined criteria.
- Limited assurance engagements provide a lower level of assurance than the reasonable assurance engagements. The conclusion is usually provided in a negative form of expression by stating that no matter has been identified by the practitioner to conclude that the subject matter is materially misstated.

**Question 27. If EU law were to require assurance of non-financial information published pursuant to the NFRD, do you think that it should require a reasonable or limited assurance engagement on the non-financial information published?**

- ☐ Reasonable
- ☒ Limited
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 28. If EU law were to require assurance of non-financial information published pursuant to the NFRD, should the assurance provider assess the reporting company's materiality assessment process?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 29. If assurance of non-financial information was required by EU law, should the assurance provider be required to identify and publish the**

**key engagement risks, their response to these risks and any related key observations (if applicable)?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 30. If assurance of non-financial information was required by EU law, do you think that assurance engagements should be performed based on a common assurance standard?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 30.1 If you answered yes in reply to the previous question, please explain whether there is an existing assurance standard that could be used for this purpose or whether a new standard would need to be developed:**

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

ISAE3000 together with the IAASB's Non-authoritative guidance currently being developed. Experience with its wider application should guide the need for further developments.

**Question 31. Do you think that an assurance requirement for non-financial information is dependent on companies reporting against a specific non-financial reporting standard?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 32. Do you publish non-financial information that is assured?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Please provide any comments or explanations to justify your answers to questions 25 to 32:**

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.



Our explanations against each question where needed are as follows.

Q25. Our general view is that the current very different levels of assurance are not appropriate. It needs to be recognised, however, that the importance attached to NFR by investors and other stakeholders and expectations of assurance have been evolving and so current differences need to be seen in that context. We also note below that the levels of assurance that can be realistically provided differ between the financial statements and some other elements of annual reporting.

Q26. We agree that the levels of assurance over reports that will be within the scope of new legislation should be both stronger than currently and stronger compared to companies not within that scope. Assurance over reporting outside of the financial statements is increasing even where it is on a voluntary basis. For instance, our review of integrated reports from 48 leading companies showed that assurance beyond the audit of the financial statements has been increasing over a four year period and in 2019 was provided in 63% of cases. In our view EU legislation can now progress so that for those companies within scope, assurance over the NFR should be mandatory. <https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/Integrated-reporting-4.htm><https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/Integrated-reporting-4.htm>

Q27. If EU law will impose a requirement regarding assurance at this stage, it should be at a limited level. The law would then represent what is current common good practice. Companies should have an option to choose a reasonable level for some elements (for example some KPIs) or for the whole report. Realistically there will be many areas being reported on which the auditor is unlikely to be able to provide reasonable assurance. We expect at the outset NFR to create interpretation and practical challenges, for example relating to scope boundaries and/or scientific metric calculations, therefore resulting in significant estimates which impact the ability for the assurer to provide realistic reasonable assurance without significant draw on management representations or reliance on the use of experts (amongst whom there isn't yet consistency). To move to reasonable assurance at this stage is likely to incur very substantial extra costs for companies which might not be supported by the benefits. Over time as familiarity with NFR grows and assurance practice develops then reasonable assurance is likely to become more reliable hence a valuable option.

Q28. The description of the determination of materiality has an important influence over the content of a report, so should be part of the new EU requirements and subject to assurance.

Q29. The introduction of more explanation of the audit risks and issues should be applied to the assurance over NFR as this has been beneficial for the audits of financial statements see for example our report on Key Audit Matters <https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/technical-activities/technical-resources-search/2018/march/key-audit-matters.html>

Q30. A common assurance standard will enable consistency in the assurance process in the same way as intended for NFR.

Q31. Assurance standards and guidance are principles based and can therefore be applied to reports using different reporting frameworks and standards. For the EU however there should be a common reporting standard for NFR (see Q8).

## 5. Digitisation

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The EU has introduced a structured data standard, the European Single Electronic Format (ESEF) under the Transparency Directive. With effect from 1 January 2020 listed companies in the EU shall report their annual financial

reports in XHTML (audited financial statements, management report and issuer's responsibility statements). Additionally, if the consolidated financial statements are prepared in IFRS, the XHTML document should also be tagged using iXBRL elements specified in the ESEF taxonomy. This allows the information to be machine-readable. This is expected to produce a number of benefits, including cost saving for users of annual financial reports, greater speed, reliability and accuracy of data handling, improved analysis, and better quality of information and decision-making.

Additionally, the Commission is exploring opportunities to establish a single access point for public corporate information. In this respect, the Commission expects the High-level Forum on CMU to examine this topic and formulate recommendations from the Capital Markets angle in the coming months.

**Question 33. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding digitalisation of non-financial information?**

Please rate as follows:

1= totally disagree, 2= mostly disagree, 3= partially disagree and partially agree, 4= mostly agree, 5= totally agree

|  | 1<br>(totally disagree) | 2<br>(mostly disagree) | 3<br>(partially disagree and partially agree) | 4<br>(mostly agree)              | 5<br>(totally agree)  | Don't know / no opinion / not relevant |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| It would be useful to require the tagging of reports containing non-financial information to make them machine-readable. | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| The tagging of non-financial information would only be possible if reporting is done against standards.                  | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| All reports containing non-financial information should be available through a single access point.                      | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |

**Question 34. Do you think that the costs of introducing tagging of non-financial information would be proportionate to the benefits this would produce?**

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ To some extent but not much
- ☐ To a reasonable extent
- ☐ To a very great extent
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 35. Please provide any other comments you may have regarding the digitalisation of sustainability information:**

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

**Please provide any comments or explanations to justify your answers to questions 33 to 35:**

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

The extent of tagging is likely to be restricted to certain commonly required metrics or other specific items required by the NFR standards. This means that the benefits of such a system might also be restricted.

We would support the principle of making management reports available through a single access point. However we have some concerns that the single access point should not restrict the format and content of the management report.

## 6. Structure and location of non-financial information

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The default requirement of the NFRD is that companies under scope shall include their non-financial statement in their annual management report. However, the NFRD also allows Member States to allow companies to disclose the required non-financial information in a separate report under certain conditions, and most Member States took up that option when transposing the Directive. Companies can be allowed by national legislation to publish such a report up to six months after the balance sheet date.

The publication of non-financial information in a separate report has a number of consequences, including:

- separate reports that include non-financial information are out of the legal mandate of the national competent authorities, whose mandate over periodic reports is limited to the annual and semi-annual financial reports (which include the management report).
- separate reports that include non-financial information are not required to be filed in the Officially Appointed Mechanisms (OAMs) designated by Member States pursuant to Article 21(2) of the Transparency Directive.

**Question 36. Other consequences may arise from the publication of the non-financial statement as part of a separate report. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:**

Please rate as follows:

1= not at all, 2= to some extent but not much, 3= to a reasonable extent, 4= to a very great extent

|  | 1<br>(not<br>at all)  | 2<br>(to<br>some<br>extent<br>but<br>not<br>much) | 3<br>(to a<br>very<br>reasonable<br>extent) | 4<br>(to a<br>very<br>great<br>extent) | N.<br>A.              |
|--|-----------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| The option to publish the non-financial statement as part of a separate report creates a significant problem because the non-financial information reported by companies is hard to find (e.g. it may increase search costs for investors, analysts, ratings agencies and data aggregators). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                             | <input checked="" type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| The publication of financial and non-financial information in different reports creates the perception that the information reported in the separate report is of secondary importance and does not necessarily have implications in the performance of the company.                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                             | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/> |

**Question 37. Do you believe that companies should be required to disclose all necessary non-financial information in the management report?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 38. If companies are allowed to publish the required non-financial information in a report that is separate from the management report, to what extent do you agree with the following approaches?**

Please rate as follows:

1= totally disagree, 2= mostly disagree, 3= partially disagree and partially agree, 4= mostly agree, 5= totally agree

|   | 1<br>(totally disagree) | 2<br>(mostly disagree) | 3<br>(partially disagree and partially agree) | 4<br>(mostly agree)   | 5<br>(totally agree)             | Don't know / no opinion / not relevant |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Legislation should be amended to ensure proper supervision of information published in separate reports.                    | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| Legislation should be amended to require companies to file the separate report with Officially Appointed Mechanisms (OAMs). | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| Legislation should be amended to ensure the same publication date for management report and the separate report.            | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |

**Question 38.1 Please provide any comments regarding the location of reported non-financial information:**

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

The management report, including the non-financial statement, aims to provide a company's stakeholders with the information necessary to understand the company's development, performance, position and impact. Some non-financial information is also reported in the corporate governance statement, which is also part of the management report.

**Question 39. Do you consider that the current segregation of non-financial information in separate non-financial and corporate governance statements within the management report provides for effective communication with users of company reports?**

- ☐ Not at all
- ☒ To some extent but not much
- ☐ To a reasonable extent
- ☐ To a very great extent
- ☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Please provide any comments or explanations to justify your answers to questions 36 to 39:**

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Q37. As noted in our response to Section 1 it is crucial that an overall management report is provided that gives a holistic picture of the business integrating performance in financial and non-financial terms. Such an integrated report will give more prominence to the important non-financial issues and add greater credibility to their reporting.

We do not support a separate non-financial statement referred to in Q38.

## 7. Personal scope (which companies should disclose)

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The NFRD currently applies to large Public-Interest Entities (PIEs) with more than 500 employees. In practice this means large companies with securities listed in EU regulated markets, large banks (whether listed or not) and large insurance companies (whether listed or not) – all provided that they have more than 500 employees.

The Accounting Directive defines large undertakings as those that exceed at least two of the three following criteria:

- a. balance sheet total: EUR 20 000 000;
- b. net turnover: EUR 40 000 000;
- c. average number of employees during the financial year: 250.



Some Member States have extended the personal scope of the NFRD by lowering the threshold to 250 employees, in effect capturing all large PIEs.

Companies that are a subsidiary of another company are exempt from the reporting requirements of the NFRD if their parent company publishes the necessary non-financial information at consolidated level in accordance with the NFRD.

There are a number of potential arguments to support the extension of the personal scope of the NFRD:

- Changes in the legislative framework: following the adoption of the Regulation on sustainability-related disclosure in the financial services sector and of the Taxonomy Regulation, investors may require non-financial information from a broader range of investees in order to comply with their own sustainability-related reporting requirements.
- Large unlisted companies can have significant impacts on society and the environment. There may therefore be no a priori reason to differentiate between listed and non-listed companies in this respect. In addition, the difference in treatment between listed and non-listed companies in this regard may serve as a disincentive for companies to become listed, and therefore undermine the attractiveness of capital markets.
- Exempting PIEs that are subsidiaries limits the information about impacts on society and the environment, thus undermining the ability of stakeholders of such exempted subsidiaries to hold them accountable for their impacts on society and the environment, especially at local and national level.

## Question 40. If the scope of the NFRD were to be broadened to other categories of PIEs, to what extent would you agree with the following approaches?

Please rate as follows:

1= totally disagree, 2= mostly disagree, 3= partially disagree and partially agree, 4= mostly agree, 5= totally agree

|   | 1<br>(totally disagree) | 2<br>(mostly disagree) | 3<br>(partially disagree and partially agree) | 4<br>(mostly agree)   | 5<br>(totally agree)             | Don't know / no opinion / not relevant |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Expand scope to include all EU companies with securities listed in regulated markets, regardless of their size.   | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| Expand scope to include all large public interest entities (aligning the size criteria with the definition of large undertakings set out in the Accounting Directive: 250 instead of 500 employee threshold). | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |

|   |                       |                                  |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Expand scope to include all public interest entities, regardless of their size. | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

**Question 41. If the scope of the NFRD were to be broadened to non-PIEs, to what extent would you agree with the following approaches?**

Please rate as follows:

1= totally disagree, 2= mostly disagree, 3= partially disagree and partially agree, 4= mostly agree, 5= totally agree

|   | 1<br>(totally disagree)          | 2<br>(mostly disagree)           | 3<br>(partially disagree and partially agree) | 4<br>(mostly agree)              | 5<br>(totally agree)  | Don't know / no opinion / not relevant |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Expand the scope to include large non-listed companies.   | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| Remove the exemption for companies that are subsidiaries of a parent company that reports non-financial information at group level in accordance with the NFRD. | <input type="radio"/>            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| Expand the scope to include large companies established in the EU but listed outside the EU.  | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| Expand the scope to include large companies not established in the EU that are listed in EU regulated markets.  | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |
| Expand scope to include all limited liability companies regardless of their size.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>                         | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                  |

**Question 42. If *non-listed* companies were required to disclose non-financial information, do you consider that there should be a specific competent authority in charge of supervising their compliance with that obligation?**

- ☒ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 42.1** If you consider that there should be a specific competent authority in charge of supervising non-listed companies' compliance with the obligation of disclosing non-financial information, please specify who in your opinion should carry out this task (National Competent Authorities, European Supervisory Authorities, other...) and how:

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

National Competent Authorities

Due to the nature of their activities, credit institutions and insurance undertakings have larger balance sheets than non-financial corporations. Hence, the vast majority of such institutions will exceed the balance sheet threshold in the definition of large undertakings set-out in the Accounting Directive. Moreover, the application of some public disclosure requirement of EU prudential regulation for credit institutions and insurance undertakings is defined based on various size thresholds.

For example:

- the [Regulation on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms](#) includes in its definition of large credit institutions those with a total value of assets equal to or greater than EUR 30 billion;
- the same Regulation defines small and non-complex institutions as those that have EUR 5 billion or less total assets;
- the [consultation paper published by EIOPA in October 2019 proposes to revise article 4 thresholds of Solvency II](#) (below which entities are excluded from the scope of Solvency II), doubling the thresholds related to the technical provisions (from EUR 25M provisions to EUR 50M) and allowing Member States to set the threshold referring to premium income between the current EUR 5M and until a maximum of EUR 25M.

**Question 43.** To what extent do you agree with the following statements relating to possible changes of the personal scope of the NFRD for financial institutions?

Please rate as follows:

1= totally disagree, 2= mostly disagree, 3= partially disagree and partially agree, 4= mostly agree, 5= totally agree

|  |  |  |   |  |  |              |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|--------------|
|  |  |  | 3 |  |  | Don't know / |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|--------------|

|  | 1<br>(totally disagree) | 2<br>(mostly disagree)           | (partially disagree and partially agree) | 4<br>(mostly agree)   | 5<br>(totally agree)  | no opinion / not relevant |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| The threshold criteria for determining which banks have to comply with the NFRD provisions should be different from those used by Non-Financial Corporates.                  | <input type="radio"/>   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>     |
| The threshold criteria for determining which insurance undertakings have to comply with the NFRD provisions should be different from those used by Non-Financial Corporates. | <input type="radio"/>   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>     |

**Please provide any comments or explanations to justify your answers to questions 40 to 43:**

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

Listed companies have responsibility to report to their investors and the amendments to the legislation we hope will provide better reporting to them (outside of the financial statements). All listed companies should therefore be within scope.

Large companies (whether listed or not) should generally be within scope given their impact on society in general. The size thresholds in the Directive are a crude measure of this and if for example the number of employees is very few then the disclosures on those issues may be immaterial and not required.

Not all PIEs are listed and so have responsibility to investors and some of those will be financial sector companies. Such PIEs as noted under Q5 above have separate regulations requiring relevant disclosures from them on key issues around their investments or loans for example and so need not be included in the scope of NFR reporting.

Where groups report on a consolidated basis there seems little justifiable demand from either investors or from society in general for reporting by the component subsidiaries that would outweigh the costs of the reporting.

The great majority of limited liability companies are micro-entities or small companies. The burden of preparation would be particularly onerous for these companies and the justifiable demand would not

outweigh the costs. We have under Q13 to 15 supported a voluntary reporting standard for companies not within the scope of this new legislation, including SMEs.

## 8. Simplification and reduction of administrative burdens for companies

**Question 44. Does your company publish non-financial information pursuant to the NFRD?**

- ☐ Yes  
☒ No  
☐ Don't know / no opinion / not relevant

**Question 44.2 Please state the total cost per year of any external services, excluding the cost of any assurance or audit services, that you contracted to assist your company to comply with the requirements of the Non-Financial Reporting Directive. Please provide your answer for reports published in 2019, covering financial year 2018.**

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

The majority of Member States have transposed the NFRD requirements into national legislation making very few changes to the wording of the legal provisions. Therefore, in the majority of the national legal frameworks, companies are required to comply with national legislation that is quite high level, not very prescriptive and do not require the use of any particular reporting standard.

**Question 45. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

Please rate as follows:

1= totally disagree, 2= mostly disagree, 3= partially disagree and partially agree, 4= mostly agree, 5= totally agree

|  | 1<br>(totally disagree) | 2<br>(mostly disagree) | 3<br>(partially disagree and partially agree) | 4<br>(mostly agree) | 5<br>(totally agree) | Don't know / no opinion / not relevant |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------|--|
|  |                         |                        |   |                     |                      |  |

|   |                       |                       |                       |                                  |                       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Companies reporting pursuant to the NFRD face uncertainty and complexity when deciding what non-financial information to report, and how and where to report such information.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Companies are under pressure to respond to individual demands for non-financial information from sustainability rating agencies, data providers and civil society, irrespective of the information that they publish as a result of the NFRD. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Companies reporting pursuant to the NFRD have difficulty in getting the information they need from business partners, including suppliers, in order to meet their disclosure requirements.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**Please provide any comments or explanations to justify your answers to questions 44 to 45:**

*5000 character(s) maximum*

including spaces and line breaks, i.e. stricter than the MS Word characters counting method.

## Additional information

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Should you wish to provide additional information (e.g. a position paper, report) or raise specific points not covered by the questionnaire, you can upload your additional document(s) here:

The maximum file size is 1 MB.

You can upload several files.

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

## Useful links

[More on the Transparency register \(http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do?locale=en\)](http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do?locale=en)

[More on this consultation \(https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/finance-consultations-2020-non-financial-reporting-directive\\_en\)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/finance-consultations-2020-non-financial-reporting-directive_en)

[Specific privacy statement \(https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/specific-privacy-statement\\_en\)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/specific-privacy-statement_en)

[Consultation document \(https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2020-non-financial-reporting-directive-consultation-document\\_en\)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2020-non-financial-reporting-directive-consultation-document_en)

[More on non-financial reporting \(https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/company-reporting-and-auditing/company-reporting/non-financial-reporting\\_en\)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/company-reporting-and-auditing/company-reporting/non-financial-reporting_en)

## Contact

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