

# **ESG REPORT 2024 CENTER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND EXCELLENCE**

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## **A Message from the President**

### **Commitment to Sustainability**

“At CSE genuine leadership is measured by deeds, not declarations. Sustainability informs every facet of our business and culture, and we pursue a greener future through innovative solutions, strategic initiatives, and active staff involvement.

We recognize that progress is a shared responsibility. That’s why we educate and empower our employees, customers, and the broader community—delivering workshops, offering distinctive training in 90 countries, and providing specialized ESG consulting services—to foster sustainable practices inside and beyond our organization.

Accountability is central to our approach. We establish clear sustainability targets and report on them with full transparency. Our sustainability reports openly discuss our successes, the challenges we face, and the road ahead, underscoring our commitment to continuous improvement.

As we look ahead to our 20th anniversary next year, we are pleased to inform our stakeholders that our initiatives—Certification of Sustainability Professionals and C-Suite Executives, and hands-on integration of sustainability—had a direct influence on organizations representing more than 15% of global GDP, delivering a truly tangible impact.”



**Nikos Avlonas**  
*President CSE*

# WHO WE ARE

## THE NATURE OF OUR BUSINESS

Center for Sustainability and Excellence (CSE) is a premier boutique firm with a worldwide presence, dedicated to amplifying social, economic, and environmental impact. For the past 20 years, we have empowered professionals to advance their careers through certified on-site, online, and group training programs, while guiding FORTUNE 500 companies and other forward-thinking organizations to thrive via our specialized consulting services.

Accredited by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), Green America, and AA1000—and recognized as a GRI Certified training provider and stakeholder—CSE has trained and coached more than 10,000 professionals across five continents. Our curricula span certified corporate social responsibility, carbon footprint analysis, life-cycle assessment, and climate-change leadership.

Our services and web tools help businesses and leaders navigate and meet evolving international frameworks, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA), ISO 26000 guidelines, and other local or global standards.

Clients such as General Motors, Resolute FP, T-Mobile, ABM, Oracle, Nordstrom, Danaos, Pfizer, Walmart, the World Bank, Lloyds Banking Group, Portillo's, Mercedes-Benz, EFG, Shell, Baker Hughes, ZAIN, Whole Foods, and Buckman partner with us to embed sustainable values into their ethics, cultures, and strategic priorities.

Our international team of specialists delivers advanced services that create stakeholder value across operational and organizational frameworks. By shaping sustainability trends worldwide, CSE enables organizations and institutions to generate positive impact through a comprehensive suite of services.

### CSE WORLDWIDE ACTIVITIES

Operating around the globe, we spearhead projects, conferences, workshops, and other ESG and sustainability initiatives that inspire lasting change

With main offices in North America and Europe, CSE has worldwide activities in countries such as Canada, USA, Mexico, Chile, Great Britain, Luxemburg, Austria, Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Latvia, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Dominican Republic, China.

Since 2007, CSE has championed sustainability within business circles by hosting roundtables that gather thought leaders and distinguished speakers from the public and private sectors—as well as academia—to tackle fundamental sustainability issues and spark innovation. These events have taken place in New York, Atlanta, Washington, Brussels, Athens, Dubai, London, Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore.



## Our History

Cse is **founded** and begins its mission in sustainability and ESG consulting.  
Delivered **the first sustainability report for Lloyds**, which was awarded by CSR Organizations.

2005

2006

Successfully completed our **first external assurance** for sustainability reporting.

2008

Introducing **CMI - accredited training programs** across Europe.  
**Carbon Neutral Certificate**

2010

Strategic Partnership with the **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)**.  
Opened offices in **Chicago** and entered **US Market**.

2015

Developed a **pioneering e-learning platform** to scale sustainability training globally.

2018

Received international **recognition in Silicon Valley for innovation in sustainability training** and measurable impact.

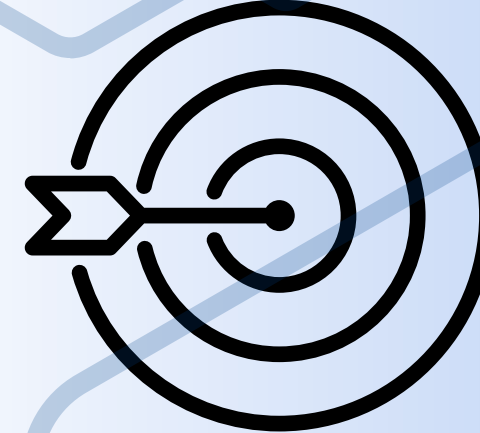
2024

Hosted the first **World Sustainability Leadership Forum** at **One World Trade Center**



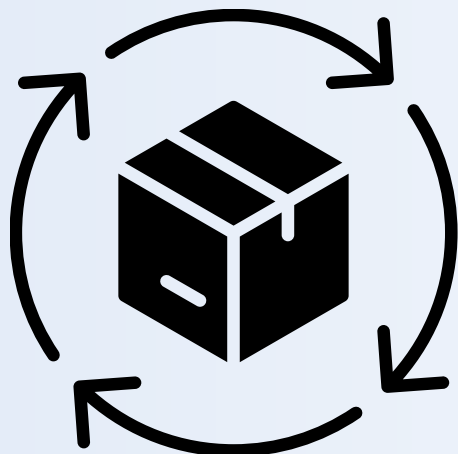
## Vision

CSE is a pioneering, award-winning organization in sustainability, empowering companies and professionals worldwide through certified training programs and specialized ESG, Net Zero, and climate-resilience consulting services. Since 2005, we have educated businesses of every size across the globe with our multi-award-winning training programs and proprietary research methods and tools, ensuring seamless, effective integration of sustainability across industries.



## Mission

We are committed to advancing sustainability globally by advising and educating organizations, institutions, and governments to rethink business models and adopt strategies that generate positive impact and high stakeholder value.



## Supply Chain

Because of the nature of our work, we rely on external suppliers only for office materials, IT support, conference venues, and marketing, favoring local providers whenever possible. For our global activities, we collaborate with external partners who must adhere to our Stakeholder Code of Conduct on sustainability.



## Code of Conduct

To safeguard service and product quality, CSE adopted a Stakeholder Code of Conduct in 2015. By signing this code, all internal and external stakeholders commit to upholding human rights, fair working conditions and labor standards, environmental and societal responsibility, and anti-corruption principles. Complementing this, our Green Office Policy—established in 2006—focuses on reducing waste through recycling, lowering direct and indirect CO<sub>2</sub> emissions via energy-saving measures, and offsetting any remaining emissions.



## CSE International Awards

### CSE's ESG Program Wins Gold at Education Leaders Awards 2024

CSE's flagship training initiative, the Certified Sustainability (ESG) Practitioner Program, received the prestigious Gold Award in the Educational Programs category at the Education Leaders Awards 2024. Held on July 1st at the National Insurance Conference Center and organized by BOUSSIAS Events, the ceremony recognized outstanding contributions to education in the digital era. The award underscores the program's innovative approach to ESG education and its growing influence in shaping sustainable leadership and corporate practices across industries.



## Nikos Avlonas receives AHEPA award for advancing sustainability across the globe

On November 29, 2024, Nikos Avlonas, President of the Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE), was honored by the renowned Greek-American organization AHEPA for his outstanding contribution to the promotion and implementation of sustainable development in the United States and over 30 other countries. The award was presented during a special ceremony in Athens, attended by members of the Greek government and prominent figures from the Greek-American community, including Christos Karapiperis, Governor of AHEPA Hellas, and Savvas Tsivikos, Supreme President of AHEPA. The ceremony was held under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, adding further prestige to this international recognition.














## ***The Primary Stakeholders of CSE and the main communication channels with them are as follows:***

### Stakeholders

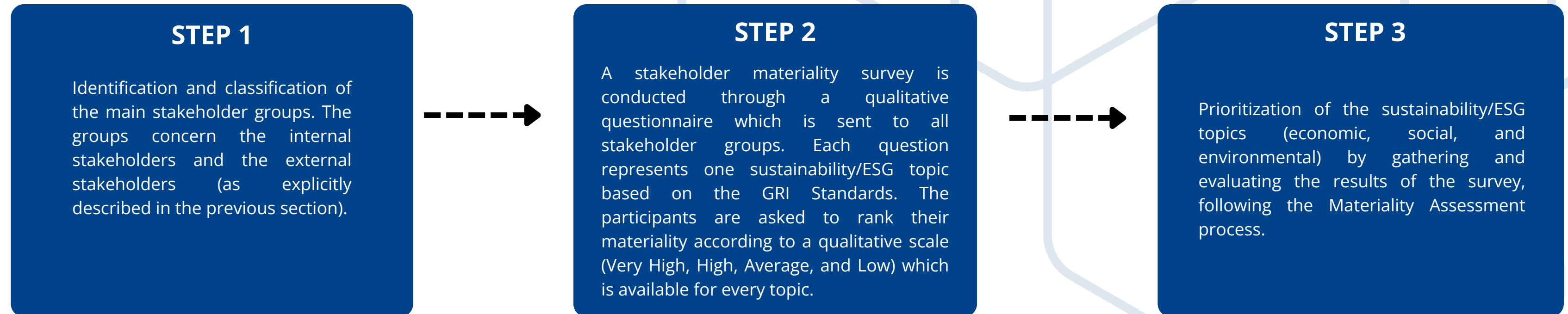
### Channels

	Employees	We support ongoing open communication between management and employees. Engagement also through monthly internal meetings with the team leaders as well as weekly meetings with each team. We host an annual staff gathering, regular team-building activities for each team and we hold employee satisfaction surveys on an annual basis.
	Affiliates	Communication with affiliates is standardized via weekly or ad-hoc meetings according to project requirements
	Suppliers	Due to the nature of our business which requires outsourcing of IT and marketing services, we communicate with our suppliers on a regular basis mainly with on-site visits to CSE premises or with ad-hoc meetings on a project basis.
	Partner Organizations	We engage through ad-hoc meetings, through participation in high-level meetings and projects, as well as in the formation of joint action plans.
	Media	Given that Media affects the company's sustainability via the promotion of our brand image, while it is the primary tool for showcasing CSE competencies and best practices, CSE communicates through CSE corporate website and social media accounts, via press releases and through our participation in discussions.
	Clients	Communication with our clients is of vital importance to CSE. Upon project completion, a satisfaction survey is sent to each client to rate the experience with CSE.
	Community	We communicate through our corporate website and social media accounts and through our participation in discussions/ dialogue in sustainability forums.
	-Local Community (Location of CSE Premises) -International Community: Countries in which CSE carries on activities	

## Our Material Issues

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) highlights the Materiality Principle, which focuses on the economic, social, and environmental issues that most influence—and are influenced by—an organization's operations. Aligned with this principle, CSE regularly conducts qualitative online surveys to engage key stakeholders and capture their views on the topics that matter most. Stakeholders respond to targeted questions about CSE's performance across the economic, social, and environmental areas defined by the GRI Standards.

## Methodology for Identification of Material Issues







## Material Issues

The process of Materiality Assessment revealed the following 8 material issues or topics of Very High Importance:

- Data safety/cybersecurity
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Energy Consumption and Efficiency
- Customer satisfaction
- Training and Employee Well-being
- Best use of technology
- Anti-corruption
- Governance.

## CSE ESG Consulting Services– Strategies with an impact

With the world's largest network of sustainability professionals, CSE is a trusted partner to companies and organizations worldwide. Our services help clients enhance business performance, build brand loyalty, and foster innovation by embedding sustainability principles into their culture, operations, and products or services.

Organizations implement Sustainability as a form of corporate strategy to ensure they achieve engagement with all stakeholder groups, while at the same time being able to monitor the strategy, measure and assess the results and renovate areas for improvement.

We aim to support our clients to improve their business performance while having a positive social and environmental impact and innovate through the continuous integration of Sustainability & ESG principles into their mission, operations and supply chains.

## ESG Reporting and Rating Services

### **Sustainability Reporting Compliance based on ESRS, GRI, SASB, TCFD/CDP, Science-based targets, SDGs guidelines, S&P-CSA**

We help our clients create comprehensive sustainability and ESG report, in compliance with industry standards and best sector practices.

### **Double and Impact Materiality Assessment & Stakeholder Engagement**

We support our clients in undertaking a materiality survey with their key stakeholder groups and Management to identify top-priority topics to be included in their Sustainability (ESG) Reporting.

### **ESG Ratings improvement**

We offer organizations the tools (ISS tool) to integrate and identify risks, improving their overall ESG performance in important ESG Ratings such as CDP and CSA.

### **ESG Ratings Benchmarking & Risk Assessment**

We provide benchmarking services using leading ESG ratings (Sustainalytics, MSCI, CDP and others) covering company, sector and peer analysis.

## Assurance Services

With rising pressure from stakeholders and increasingly strict global regulations around Sustainability/ ESG reporting validity, accuracy and transparency issues, CSE has been offering premium services to provide external verification and assurance. Its services range from identifying material topics to meet stakeholders’ expectations and Report Assurance based on GRI and AA1000AS to External Verification to increase the credibility of Sustainability Reporting and the value of an organization’s initiatives, whether these involve the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), CDP, Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, or ISO26000, CSE provides external verification based on international best practices and in-depth expertise.

➤ **Sustainability /ESG Reporting External Assurance based on AA 1000 to increase validity, transparency and accuracy of information**

As AA1000 Licensed Assurance Providers we provide External Assurance services for our clients ESG Report and Carbon Emissions (Limited or Limited and Reasonable Assurance levels) based on ESRS (CSRD), GRI, SASB, TCFD, GHG protocol, SEC Climate Rule.

➤ **Carbon Reduction and Net Zero External Verification**

We undertake carbon measurements of our clients’ operations, buildings and products and verification of carbon footprint for the company’s activities and reduction strategy.

➤ **External Assurance on GRI & SASB guidelines**

We provide compliance to our clients’ sustainability reports with GRI, SASB and other standards.

➤ **Scope 3 Emissions External Assurance**

We offer assurance services on Life Cycle Assessments and Scope 3 emissions. tion, which is critical when publishing sustainability information or making claims.

## Climate Services

In a world that is rapidly warming up, and as a response to legal and social pressures, businesses need to develop innovative and cost-effective ways to limit their adverse effects on climate change. As organizations need to increase their level of engagement with their stakeholders, they must implement innovative sustainability programs that provide added value, while at the same time supporting the corporate sustainability strategy.

➤ **Scope 3, LCA (Life Cycle Assessments)**

We assist our clients to measure Scope 3 emissions and undertake life cycle assessments and certify your operations and products.

➤ **Net-Zero Planning**

We help organizations to set up practical Net-Zero Plans

➤ **Carbon Neutral Certification**

We offer carbon neutral certifications for our clients’ operations, buildings and products via high-quality carbon offsets and RECS via our partners. We also provide in-depth External Assurance for our clients’ Net Zero commitments.

➤ **SROI (Social Return on Investment)**

We assist companies in quantifying their Social Impact of their CSR and other initiatives and issue a Report with our unique tools and related guidelines, enabling them to make more impactful social contributions.

➤ **Climate Resilience**

We offer in-house training and a comprehensive evaluation of a company's ability to withstand and adapt to climate-related risks and impacts. The assessment identifies the gaps between the current state of the company's resilience and its desired level of resilience in the face of climate change.



## ESG & Net Zero Strategies - assisting organizations set their strategic plan for sustainability

## Tailor Made & Sector Specific Group Training Programs for Organizations

### ► Impact Materiality & Double Materiality Assessment

Undertaking Gap Analysis and Double Materiality Assessment using GRI, ESRS and other guidelines by combining best practices and e-tools that save time and resources for identification of Material issues.

### ► ESG Strategy & Goals

Supporting companies to define their own Sustainability -ESG and Net Zero goals or their brand enhancement, as well as creating strategic and practical planning guides to achieve their goals quickly and setting Scorecards, KPIs and metrics for measuring your ESG progress

### ► Supply chain mapping and assessment

### ► Sector benchmarking

We deliver a wide array of tailor-made, sector-specific training programs—geared toward boards, C-suite executives, and staff—offered worldwide through both live and recorded courses, and we confer the “Recognized Sustainable Employer” designation.

- **SECTORS:** Energy, Finance, Food & Beverage, Retail, Pharmaceutical & Healthcare, Mining, Telecoms, Logistics & Shipping, Governmental Organizations & NGOs.



# Sector Specific Sustainability

For any company to build an effective, comprehensive sustainability strategy, it must first understand the unique characteristics of its sector.

Sectors that CSE provides guidance:



## CSE Training Services Certified Professional Development programs

Advanced certified education on ESG, Sustainability and Circular Economy for professionals who want to acquire cutting-edge knowledge, get a globally recognized certification and maximize their company's impact. CSE's programs are trusted by more than 10.000 Certified Sustainability Practitioners from over 90 countries all over the world.

### Certified Professional Development programs

#### Certified Sustainability (ESG) Practitioner Program

This challenging three-day digital sustainability ESG practitioner program offered by CSE in partnership with Western Washington University aims to give all the latest practical tools and resources required to implement or upscale corporate sustainability, improve ESG ratings to drive initiatives to the next level by generating value and creating successful ESG and Sustainability strategies. Available in Leadership and Advanced versions.

#### GRI Certified Standards Training Course

This highly interactive three-day digital GRI Professional Certification Program offered by CSE aims to give a crystal-clear approach of how to effectively manage a Sustainability ESG report in accordance with the NEW GRI Universal Standards, align the report with various reporting frameworks, identify the most important impact the participant has to deal with, improve stakeholder engagement, develop high-quality report content, and communicate with the investor's community.

### Group programs

CSE provides tailor-made group workshops to introduce Executive Board Members and Directors to the business case of Sustainability and its benefits for their stakeholders. It helps its clients to address their organization's specific requirements according to their sector and create a common understanding and internal alignment.

### Certified online courses

The Sustainability Academy is CSE's global initiative to offer affordable specialized online education in the fields of Sustainability, Climate Change, Circular Economy and Corporate Responsibility. The Sustainability Academy aims to help Sustainability and other professionals, such as entrepreneurs and graduates, update their knowledge, and keep up to date with current reporting standards and legislation, global trends and best cases.

Already, more than 25,000 learners from 90 countries including Sustainability professionals, graduates and entrepreneurs from various sectors have taken part in our certified trainings, while the goal is to train 50,000 professionals by 2025.





## CSE Training Services Certified Professional Development programs

### **Online Certificate on Sustainability (CSR) Reporting - Self-paced Recorded**

It provides information on Sustainability (ESG) Reporting Guidelines and takes you through the main issues of stakeholder mapping/engagement and materiality assessment. The content has been updated with the latest European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) and their structure. The course is accredited by CPD.

### **Online Diploma on Corporate Sustainability - Foundation Course -Self-paced Recorded**

It is a sustainability course designed for professionals who want to acquire the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge regarding social entrepreneurship and the B-Lab Certification. It takes you through the main characteristics and processes of becoming a social entrepreneur. The course is accredited by CPD.

### **Online Certificate on ESG Impact and Sustainable Investing - Self-paced Recorded**

It provides information on international standards related to ESG Performance and SRI. It gives useful insights on new legislation and guides you on how to report to Investors. The course is accredited by CPD.

### **Online Certificate on SASB & TCFD Reporting - Self-paced Recorded**

It is designed to help the participants acquire or enhance their competency to understand the requirements of the SASB Standards and the TCFD recommendations. It is focused on the acquisition of knowledge of applying the SASB Standards, as well as reporting on the organization's climate-related risks and opportunities based on the TCFD recommendations. The course has been updated with the recently issued ISSB Standards: IFRS S1 and IFRS S2. The course is accredited by CPD.

### **ESG for CFOs, IRs and Fund Managers - Self-paced Recorded**

ESG investing continues to evolve towards a global standard. The philosophy of this online certified course "ESG for CFOs, IRs and Fund Managers", especially designed for CFOs, IRs and Fund Managers, is to provide you an overview of ESG framework and explain how ESG is relevant to financial decisions. The course also provides key global initiatives, shaping sustainable finance.

### **Online Diploma on Social Entrepreneurship - Self-paced Recorded**

It is a certified course for professionals who want to acquire the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge regarding social entrepreneurship and the B-Lab Certification. It takes you through the main characteristics and processes of becoming a social entrepreneur.

### **Online Certificate on Carbon Reduction and Net Zero Strategies- Self-paced Recorded**

It is designed for Sustainability and Climate professionals who want to acquire the necessary practical skills to apply a carbon reduction strategy. The course provides practical information, case studies and best practices, along with information on International Standards relating to Carbon Reduction, Net Zero Strategies and Reporting, such as WRI GHG Protocol, Scope 1,2,3 CDP, Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), GRI. The course is accredited by CPD.



## CSE Training Services Certified Professional Development programs

### **Certified Climate Resilient Officer (CRO) - Self-paced Recorded**

It aims to equip professionals with all the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate Climate Risk into Strategic Planning. Additionally, it provides insight on the potential financial risks of climate change for Corporations and Cities. The course will also help you understand the methods for assessing these risks and the importance of Climate Risk Disclosure in sustainability reporting, complying with the latest carbon-related standards and frameworks, such as ISO 14091, WBCSD, GHG Protocol or SBTi. Through the Certified Climate Resilient Officer Course, you will explore case studies in this field from IKEA, GAP Inc. and cities such as Tokyo and Rotterdam.

### **Online Diploma on Sustainable Supply Chain Management - Self-paced Recorded**

It aims to equip professionals with all the necessary skills and knowledge to apply sustainable practices to supply chains. Additionally, it gives an insight on how to start a sustainable supply chain strategy, using appropriate criteria/platforms, and comply with key ESG Ratings and Reporting Standards requirements, supporting the transparency of supply chains. This Sustainable Supply Chain Management course will also help you understand critical related concepts and trends, such as circular economy, sustainable packaging, scope 3 and net zero emissions. The course is accredited by CPD.

### **Online Certificate on Green (Sustainable) Marketing - Self-paced Recorded**

It provides an overview of key issues and challenges involved in green marketing. It is designed to provide you with the necessary skills to implement a successful marketing strategy and branding according to the latest sustainability frameworks and standards. The course will also help you identify and combat greenwashing through real case examples from a variety of sectors and best practices. The course is accredited by CPD.

### **Online Certificate on Circular Economy - Self-paced Recorded**

Circular economy offers new ways to create a more sustainable economic growth model. The philosophy of the Online Certificate on Circular Economy is to provide you with a step-by-step introduction to circular economy, circular economy guidelines and initiatives from Europe, North America and the rest of the world, all the latest tools and legislative development and offers unique knowledge in a practical manner. The course is accredited by CPD.

### **Introduction to Social Impact Assessment and SROI - Course - Self-paced Recorded**

A certified online course for Sustainability professionals who want to acquire the necessary practical tools and knowledge to calculate the social impact of an organization's activities. The Introduction to Social Impact Assessment and SROI will guide you through identifying the inputs, outputs and outcomes of your Sustainability activities and it will help you understand Social Return on Investment. The course is accredited by CPD.

### **Online Certificate on CSRD & ESRS Standards- Course - Self-paced Recorded**

The course is designed for sustainability professionals and corporate executives seeking to deepen their expertise in the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). This course equips you with essential knowledge and skills to navigate and comply with the CSRD & ESRS. The course is accredited by CPD.

## Accreditations & Partnerships of Sustainability Academy

The Centre for Sustainability and Excellence (CSE) is a globally acclaimed leader in professional sustainability training and coaching and was among the first to anticipate and meet the surging demand for advanced, certified education in the field. CSE, as the owner and developer of the Sustainability Academy, is:

- Global Training Partner of GRI (Global Reporting Initiative)
- CPD Accredited Training Provider
- CMI Recognized Training Program Provider
- Certified Consultant by Accountability (for consulting Services on Sustainability)
- Member of PRI (Principles of Responsible Investment).



## Strategic memberships and partnerships

### Strategic Partnerships Reinforce CSE's Global Impact in 2024

In 2024 the Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) solidified its global influence through a robust network of long-standing strategic partnerships with some of the most reputable organizations in sustainability, ESG, and responsible business. These include collaborations with GRI (Global Reporting Initiative)—renewed as an official training partner—CMI (Chartered Management Institute), FirstClimate, World Benchmarking Alliance, Western Washington University, PRI (Principles for Responsible Investment), SASB, CSRHub, Water Revolution Foundation, and Business in the Community.

CSE also maintained key affiliations with AA1000, CPD, Green America, Chicago Build, The Business Council for Sustainable Energy, and 3BL Media, which continue to amplify its visibility and impact across diverse sectors and geographies.

In a major development for 2024, CSE entered new partnerships with Moody's and GREEN.org, expanding its engagement in ESG data, risk analytics, and green innovation. These alliances further demonstrate CSE's commitment to advancing sustainability literacy, transparency, and corporate accountability worldwide.



## Institutional Partnership & Sponsorship at the World Sustainability Leadership Summit 2024

The Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) was proud to welcome the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) as an institutional partner of the World Sustainability Leadership Summit 2024, held at the One World Trade Center in New York. As a leading voice in clean energy and climate policy, BCSE brought valuable expertise and momentum to the Summit's core themes of Net Zero transition, ESG strategy, and sustainable innovation



## CSE Partner of Responsible Business Europe 2024

The Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) was honored to be an official partner of Responsible Business Europe 2024, held on June 11–12 in London. Organized by Reuters Events, this flagship sustainability gathering brought together over 500 senior executives, policymakers, and ESG leaders to explore the evolving landscape of sustainability reporting, regulatory alignment, and corporate accountability. As a key partner, CSE contributed to the global dialogue on embedding ESG across business strategy and shared its 20 years of expertise in shaping impactful sustainability practices across sectors and regions.





## CSE Media Partner of Sustainability LIVE Net Zero

The Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) was honored to be a media partner of Sustainability LIVE Net Zero comes to the QEII, a premier event held as part of Sustainability LIVE on March 6–7 in London. This dynamic two-day series, hosted by BizClik, convened top sustainability and net zero leaders from across industries to tackle the complexities of carbon reduction, climate risk, and science-based target setting. As a key contributor, CSE brought forward its two decades of expertise in ESG strategy and corporate carbon management, empowering professionals with actionable insights to accelerate their net zero transitions and embed sustainability into core business operations.



## CSE Partner of the CR Index Awards 2024

The Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) was honored to once again serve as a strategic partner of the CR Index Awards 2024, held in Athens and organized by the Hellenic Network for Corporate Social Responsibility. Celebrating its 16th consecutive year, the CR Index remains the leading benchmark for evaluating corporate responsibility performance in Greece. As Vice President of the Corporate Responsibility Institute, CSE's founder Nikos Avlonas played a central role in highlighting the importance of measurable ESG practices and transparent sustainability reporting. CSE's longstanding partnership reflects its mission to elevate sustainability leadership and foster a culture of responsible business across the region.







# Human Rights

At CSE, we are dedicated to respecting and upholding human rights in every facet of our operations. Recognizing that these rights are universal, we strive to foster an inclusive, diverse, and ethical workplace

## CODE OF CONDUCT COMMITMENTS

CSE pledges to:

- Avoid discrimination based on gender, color, religion, culture, education, social status, ethnicity, national origin, or any other characteristic
- Treat everyone with respect, courtesy, honesty, and fairness
- Honor and value differing beliefs, cultures, and faiths
- Provide employee support mechanisms and safeguard individual privacy
- Ensure safe, healthy working conditions for employees and affiliates
- Offer fair compensation
- Maintain recruitment, promotion, and procurement processes that are fair, objective, impartial, and transparent. Recruitment follows a structured, phased procedure, with all shortlisted candidates reviewed by an independent third-party evaluator.

This policy applies to all employees, affiliates, suppliers, and partners.

## DIVERSITY & EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES - NON-DISCRIMINATION

CSE is committed to equal opportunity and fair treatment for all, irrespective of gender, religion, race, sexual orientation, or any other attribute. Discrimination or harassment of any kind is strictly prohibited.

CSE staff statistics for 2024 are as follows:

- Average age of employees: 38 years old,
- Total number of FTEs: 18 (excluding contractors and affiliates),
- Number of female employees: 85%,
- Women participation in leadership team: 90%,
- New hires: 5 hires within 2024,
- Employees with post-graduate studies (MSc, MBA, PhD): 80%.

Year	New hires
2023	3
2024	5

Table 1: New hires for years 2023-2024

It is worth noticing that all the above statistics remained approximately the same versus the previous year.

All CSE Employees are working full- or part-time and on a permanent basis, with access to social health security. In addition, all our employees receive regular performance and career development reviews at least on an annual basis, while an employee satisfaction survey is performed during their annual self-assessment process.



### Freedom of Association

We honor every employee's right to freely associate, join organizations of their choice, and engage in collective bargaining, in full accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

### Child Labor and Forced Labor

We categorically forbid child labor and any form of forced or compulsory labor—both within CSE and throughout our supply chain. We partner only with suppliers that share our commitment to human-rights standards and comply with all relevant laws.

### Health and Safety

CSE maintains a safe, healthy workplace for all team members. We follow all pertinent health-and-safety regulations, take proactive precautions, and provide training and resources to safeguard our people. As detailed in our official Health & Safety Policy, we will

- Provide safe, healthy working conditions to prevent work-related injuries and illnesses
- Ensure that every CSE-controlled site is safe for employees and visitors, with adequate welfare provisions
- Meet or exceed all local legal requirements, codes of practice, and safe-operating procedures
- Establish, maintain, and continually upgrade fire-safety systems, alarms, emergency lighting, evacuation plans, medical facilities, first-aid supplies, and personal protective equipment
- Supply clear information, instruction, and training so employees can protect their own health and safety—and that of others—during work; regular drills reinforce emergency procedures
- Encourage employees to identify and report hazards so we can keep improving safety.

### Privacy and Protection

We respect the confidentiality of all personal information entrusted to us. CSE handles data in strict compliance with applicable privacy laws and implements robust measures to protect individuals' privacy.

### Reporting Mechanisms

Our open-door policy invites employees to raise concerns or report any mistreatment, violations, or irregularities.

### Compliance and Review

We are committed to continuous improvement. This policy undergoes regular reviews to confirm its effectiveness and alignment with evolving laws and regulations.



## Labor Rights

CSE upholds internationally recognized labor rights, recognizing their essential role in employee well-being and community prosperity.

### Working hours and conditions

We comply with all legal requirements regarding working hours, overtime, and rest periods, while striving to ensure safe, healthy conditions that minimize workplace accidents.

### Compensation and Benefits

CSE offers fair, competitive pay in line with—or exceeding—minimum-wage laws. Our hybrid work model gives employees flexibility in when, where, and how they work, combining on-site and remote options for maximum productivity.

Decent work environment

We foster a workplace rooted in respect, fairness, and dignity. Discrimination, harassment, and abuse have no place at CSE. We embrace diversity, encourage open dialogue, and promote collaboration, recognizing that every voice contributes to our collective success.





# Employee Trainings

Excellence depends on continuous learning. CSE equips employees with ongoing training—both our own sustainability courses and the latest software, applications, and workplace-technology programs—to sharpen skills, boost performance, and streamline operations. In addition, all new employees get induction courses and free online training based on their responsibilities. In 2024 the average training hours / employee was increased by more than 37%, reaching 110h / employee within the year.

<u>Year</u>	Average training hours / employee
2022	60
2023	80
2024	110

Table 2: Average training hours per employee for years 2022-2024





## Employees Volunteering Initiatives

At CSE, creating societal value—and keeping our people actively engaged through voluntary initiatives—is a key strategic priority. As part of its ongoing commitment to social responsibility, the Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) partnered with Humanity for a special CSR volunteering initiative during the 2024 holiday season. Held on December 16 at Humanity premises, the Christmas CSR Workshop brought together CSE staff and volunteers to craft handmade ornaments and festive charms. These creations were donated to the Humanity Greece Christmas Bazaar and distributed as holiday gifts to families supported by the organization's registry. The initiative highlighted CSE's hands-on approach to community engagement and its dedication to supporting vulnerable groups through meaningful and creative action.



## Employees Bonding

### New Year's Vasilopita Celebration

Every January, CSE brings its teams together to celebrate the New Year with the traditional cutting of the Vasilopita (Greek New Year's cake). This cherished custom marks a joyful start to the year, offering a moment of unity and positive energy across the organization. The celebration also includes a symbolic coin hidden in the cake, bringing good luck to the team member who finds it.

### Regulatory Compliance

As part of its commitment to cultivating a strong internal culture, CSE organizes annual or semi-annual departmental dinners, where each team gathers with their manager in a relaxed setting outside the office. These informal gatherings serve to strengthen interpersonal relationships, enhance collaboration, and foster a sense of belonging within each department.



## Responsibility on ESG awareness

Since 2005, we have proudly been at the forefront of ESG responsibility, educating not only our clients but also ESG market leaders at large on the latest developments across the field.

**Within 2024, CSE has hosted several events to raise awareness regarding ESG critical issues and market trends:**

ESG & NET-ZERO Challenges & Opportunities

CSE EXECUTIVE WORKSHOP on CSRD & ESRS

CSRD: How it impacts exports and financing

Webinar: ESG TRENDS The GROWING DEMAND FOR ESG

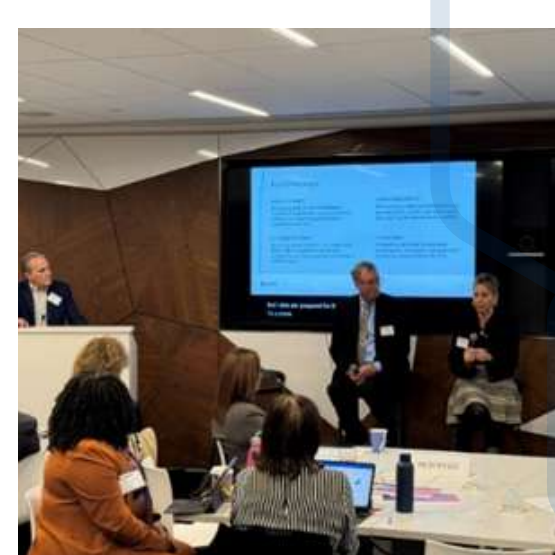
CHICAGO BUILD Sustainability In Construction Hub

PRACTITIONER'S annual ALUMNI event "Winning the ESG Race – Trends".



## Sustainability & ESG Leadership Summit 2024

As part of its ongoing commitment to promoting ESG awareness, the Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) organized the International ESG Leadership Conference 2024 in New York. Held at the One World Trade Center, the event convened more than 200 executives, policy experts, and sustainability professionals to explore critical topics such as ESG strategy, the CSRD framework, sustainable finance, and Net Zero pathways. The conference served as a key platform for knowledge-sharing and strengthening dialogue around sustainability leadership at a global level.



## AHEPA Conference: Collaborating for a Greener Tomorrow

Highlighting its strong ties with leading Greek American institutions, the Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) contributed to the AHEPA Hellas Conference “For a Greener Tomorrow” on April 9, 2024. Nikos Avlonas, President of CSE, participated as a keynote speaker, addressing the significance of climate resilience for Greece. The event brought together institutional stakeholders, academics, and civil society representatives, emphasizing AHEPA’s commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable progress.



## AHEPA Hellas: Volunteerism – Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainable Development (CSR & ESG)

Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) participated in the AHEPA Hellas Volunteerism Academy on April 20, 2024. The event, titled “Volunteerism – Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainable Development (CSR & ESG),” focused on the intersection of civic participation and corporate accountability. CSE contributed expertise on how structured volunteerism and CSR strategies can support broader sustainability goals, empowering both organizations and individuals to become agents of positive change.





## Kifissia Summit 2024

The Centre for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) was honored to participate as a Sponsor at the Kifissia Summit 2024, a premier event held at the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Kifissia. CSE's participation in this conference underscored its commitment to advancing the dialogue on sustainable development at both local and regional levels, promoting the importance of ESG practices and climate resilience in the strategies of modern organizations.

## CSE in Conference «Climate Challenges»

The Center for Sustainability and Excellence (CSE) actively participated in the conference "Climate Challenges: Today's Challenges for Climate Change," organized by the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (EPPF) on November 25, 2024. Through its contribution, CSE highlighted the latest developments and approaches to climate adaptation, emphasizing the role of businesses, education, and citizens in building a sustainable and resilient society.





## AUEB: 9th Annual Conference on Sustainable Development

Nikos Avlonas, President of the Center for Sustainability and Excellence (CSE), participated in the 9th Annual Conference on Sustainable Development organized by the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB). His contribution focused on the integration of ESG criteria into corporate strategy and reporting, underlining the need for practical tools and education to support companies in their sustainable transformation.



## Webinar: ESRS (CSRD) Compliance in 3 Steps

CSE hosted an exclusive webinar titled "ESRS (CSRD) Compliance in 3 Steps", providing practical guidance to professionals seeking to align with the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). The session offered a step-by-step approach, highlighting key compliance challenges, methodologies, and tools to streamline reporting processes. The webinar attracted strong interest from corporate sustainability teams, consultants, and ESG officers aiming to stay ahead of regulatory developments.



## Annual Sustainability Practitioners Event

CSE organized its Annual Sustainability Practitioners Event, bringing together certified professionals, alumni, and partners from its global network. The event served as a platform for sharing best practices, exploring emerging ESG trends, and strengthening collaboration among sustainability leaders. With interactive sessions and expert insights, the gathering reinforced CSE's ongoing commitment to building a strong, informed community of sustainability practitioners worldwide.



## Circularity24

As part of its active presence in major sustainability forums, CSE participated in **Circularity24**, the flagship circular economy conference hosted by GreenBiz Group in **Chicago, May 22-24, 2024**. The event brought together professionals and organizations committed to advancing circular models that promote equity, resilience, and environmental responsibility. CSE's involvement highlighted its support for systemic change and practical solutions that accelerate the global transition to a circular economy.





## GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) training in AUEB

In February 2024, the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), in collaboration with CSE, integrated official GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) training into its curriculum through the elective course “Global Sustainability Strategies & Reporting.” The training provided students with both conceptual and practical knowledge of the latest GRI standards, enhancing their competencies in sustainability reporting. Upon completion, participants received an official GRI certificate, reinforcing their qualifications for careers in ESG, CSR, and sustainability. This initiative is part of AUEB’s broader commitment to equipping future professionals with skills aligned with global sustainability and reporting frameworks.

## Participation in the UN Global Compact "Forward Faster" Event

Executives from the Center for Sustainability & Excellence (CSE) actively participated in the “Forward Faster” event organized by the UN Global Compact Network Greece, focusing on “Water Management as a Business Imperative.” The event highlighted the strategic importance of responsible water stewardship and its alignment with corporate sustainability and ESG goals. CSE’s presence underscored its commitment to supporting global dialogue and advancing responsible business practices in line with the SDG 6 targets on water.



**Global Compact**  
Network Greece





## Our Corporate Responsibility and Support to Young Entrepreneurs and Students

As part of CSE's 20-year anniversary celebration, we launched a two-fold Corporate Responsibility initiative in late 2024, designed to empower the next generation of sustainability leaders —both young entrepreneurs and students.

The first part focused on supporting innovative startups across the USA, Canada, and Europe. Through the Sustainability Academy, we offered \$60,000 worth of free professional training to 100 emerging startups in consulting, green technology, and environmental innovation—enabling them to embed sustainability into their core strategies and expand their positive impact.

**The second part**, titled “20 Years Celebration: Future Sustainability Leaders”, marked our commitment to youth and education. We introduced a €10,000 grant program, offering free online training to 50 Bachelor and MSc students through the Sustainability Academy. This initiative aimed to equip passionate young professionals with essential sustainability knowledge and inspire them to become impactful changemakers in their fields.

Together, these two initiatives reflect CSE's legacy of thought leadership and our enduring commitment to fostering a more sustainable future through education and opportunity



# Environment

## Environmental Stewardship

As a sustainability leader, CSE places environmental protection at the core of its business strategy. In line with our Code of Conduct, we pledge to:

- Initiate regular reporting on our own environmental and social performance—and encourage every stakeholder to do likewise
- Consult with stakeholders to develop joint environmental and social initiatives
- Act as educators on conservation and recycling, clearly communicating our objectives to stakeholders, clients, and suppliers
- Offset CO<sub>2</sub> emissions wherever feasible by supporting carbon-reduction and neutralization efforts
- Make purchasing decisions with heightened environmental awareness
- Factor environmental considerations into all business choices
- Collaborate respectfully with government, civil society, business, media, and international bodies—embracing diverse opinions and ideas
- Comply with the laws of every country in which we operate
- Oppose and report illegal activities such as bribery, fraud, theft, money laundering, or dealings in stolen goods
- Engage actively in community issues to support the societies where we work.

## Energy

We continually measure our CO<sub>2</sub> output and energy use covering both our premises and IT equipment to understand CSE’s carbon and energy footprint. Key actions include:

- Implementing office energy-efficiency measures
- Relying on cloud computing to reduce emissions and cut operating costs
- Committing to offset 100 % of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions in 2025, thereby achieving carbon-neutral status.

These measures have delivered stable CO<sub>2</sub> and energy-consumption performance over the past three years.

	kWh	CO2-e
2022	5,481	2.927
2023	5,528	2.952
2024	6,909	1.88

Table 3: Energy consumption for years 2022-2024





# Management Commitees

The CSE Management Committee evaluates initiatives, assesses risks and opportunities, and advances ESG practices, embedding sustainability into strategic decisions. The President sets strategic goals and oversees implementation.

Managerial role	Men	Women
CSE President	✓	
Head of Consulting Services		✓
Head of Operations		✓
Head of Training Services		✓
Head of Strategic Development		✓
Head of Corporate Communication and Events		✓

Figure 1: Managerial roles per gender for the year 2024

## Anti-Corruption

CSE conducts business with the highest integrity and ethics, recognizing that corruption erodes trust and impedes sustainable development. Our zero-tolerance stance applies to all employees, affiliates, suppliers, and partners. As detailed in our Code of Conduct, we will:

### ▶▶ Suppliers & Partners

- Honor contractual agreements
- Share relevant information for mutual growth
- Raise any concerns promptly and allow partners a timely response.

### ▶▶ Clients

- Fulfill all services and contractual obligations as promised
- Treat every customer as we ourselves expect to be treated.
- For consulting projects, we follow a strict four-eyes principle: every deliverable is cross-checked by an internal controller who rates and records the outcome. Each project concludes with a customer satisfaction survey for internal review.

### ▶▶ Media

- Respond quickly and directly, routing requests to the appropriate channel.
- Treat every media organization fairly and consistently, without bias.

### ▶▶ Private Data (GDPR) Policy

CSE's official Data Protection Policy—aligned with GDPR—ensures transparent, secure collection, processing, and storage of personal data. The policy maps data journeys from web forms, newsletter sign ups, and third-party sources through storage, transfer, and deletion.

## Technology and Cybersecurity

In 2024 CSE further upgraded its core IT systems to digitize all company processes.

Moreover, recognizing stakeholder concern for data security we enhanced our comprehensive cybersecurity measures covering:

- **Local administrator rights**
- **Threat protection**
- **Peripheral control**
- **Application control**
- **Web control**
- **Advanced email protection.**





# Sustainability Goals

Sustainability drives everything we do. CSE is aligning its 2025 targets and investment plans with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and broader ESG criteria. A detailed plan—summarizing our 2025 commitments—guides our progress toward these objectives.

ESG Goals 2025	
ENVIRONMENTAL	Sustainable Development Goals
Energy	  
Become Net zero till 2025 (Scope 1 and 2)	
Strategic partnerships	
Build partnerships with well-established core players in the ESG field, to enhance sustainability offering to our clients.	
Environmental Management System	
Focus more on Scope 3 emissions monitoring and reduction.	

SOCIAL	Sustainable Development Goals
Employee Retention	   
Maintain annual employee retention rates above 80%.	
Perform annual employee satisfaction surveys and well-being activities.	
Training & Development	
Introduce Performance Management System.	
Ongoing monitoring of our people's career development and training.	
Equal opportunities	
Maintain multiage mix in CSE staff.	
Supporting Local Communities	
Maintain our strong social engagement.	
Encourage the spirit of volunteerism among the employees towards environmental and charity activities.	



GOVERNANCE	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>Data safety &amp; Cybersecurity</b> <p>Take out an insurance policy to limit potential cybersecurity risk.</p> <p>Get ISO 27000 Certification.</p>	<div> <div> 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE </div> <div> 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS </div> </div>
<b>Diversity</b> <p>Maintain a high % of women as Board Members and Executives.</p>	
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b> <p>Maintain customer satisfaction at 95% or above through our projects.</p>	
<b>Ethical Business Conduct</b> <p>Screening our significant suppliers to adhere to CSE Code of Ethics.</p>	
<b>Technology</b> <p>Work on the full digitalization of company's processes ensuring close control and prompt response promoting efficiency.</p>	



Statement of use	CSE has reported with reference to the GRI Standards for the
GRI 1 used	GRI 1: Foundation 2021
Applicable GRI Sector Standard(s)	There is no applicable sector standard.




GRI Standard	Disclosure	Location	Linkage with SDGs
GRI 2: General Disclosures 2021	2-1 Organization details	p. 4-5	
	2-2 Entities included in the organization's sustainability reporting	p. 4-5	
	2-3 Reporting period, frequency and contact point	p. 34	
	2-4 Restatements of information	There is no restated information	
	2-5 External assurance	The report has not been assured externally	
	2-6 Activities, value chain and other business relationships	p. 4-5	


Disclosure	Location	Linkage with SDGs
2-7 Employees	p. 21-22	 
2-8 Workers who are not employees	p. 21-22	
2-9 Governance structure and composition	p. 23	 
2-10 Nomination and selection of the highest governance body		 
2-11 Chair of the highest governance body	p. 23	

Disclosure	Location	Linkage with SDGs
2-12 Role of the highest governance body in overseeing the management of impacts	p. 23	
2-13 Delegation of responsibility for managing impacts	p. 23	
2-14 Role of the highest governance body in sustainability reporting	p. 23	
2-15 Conflicts of interest		
2-16 Communication of critical concerns	p. 23	

Disclosure	Location	Linkage with SDGs
2-17 Collective knowledge of the highest governance body	p. 23	
2-18 Evaluation of the performance of the highest governance body		
2-19 Remuneration policies	p. 21,23	
2-20 Process to determine remuneration		
2-21 Annual total compensation ratio	p. 3	



A Message from the President	Who we are	People	Environment	Governance	Sustainability Goals	GRI Index
Disclosure	Location	Linkage with SDGs				
2-22 Statement on sustainable development strategy	p. 3			GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-1 Process to determine material topics	p. 8
					3-2 List of material topics	p. 8
2-23 Policy commitments	p. 21			GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 32
2-24 Embedding policy commitments	p. 21-23, 31-32			GRI 205: Anti-corruption 2016	205-1 Operations assessed for risks related to corruption	p. 32
2-25 Processes to remediate negative impacts					205-2 Communication and training about anti-corruption policies and procedures	p. 32
2-26 Mechanisms for seeking advice and raising concerns	p. 21				205-3 Confirmed incidents of corruption and actions taken	
2-27 Compliance with laws and regulations	p. 21-23			GRI 3: Material topics	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 31
2-28 Membership associations	p. 17			GRI 302: Energy 2016		p. 31
2-29 Approach to stakeholder engagement	p. 8-9				302-1 Energy consumption within the organization	
2-30 Collective bargaining agreements	p. 21				302-2 Energy consumption outside of the organization	
					302-3 Energy intensity	
					302-4 Reduction of energy consumption	p. 31
					302-5 Reductions in energy requirements of products and services	
				GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 21-22
						45



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CENTER for SUSTAINABILITY and ETHICS

GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 21-22	
GRI 401: Employment 2016	401-1 New employee hires and employee turnover	p. 21-22	
	401-2 Benefits provided to full-time employees that are not provided to temporary or part-time employees	p. 21	
	401-3 Parental leave		
GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 21-23	
GRI 403: Occupational Health and Safety 2018	403-1 Occupational health and safety management system	p. 21-23	
	403-2 Hazard identification, risk assessment, and incident investigation	p. 21-23	
	403-3 Occupational health services	p. 21-23	
	403-4 Worker participation, consultation, and communication on occupational health and safety	p. 21-23	
	403-5 Worker training on occupational health and safety	p. 21-23	
	403-6 Promotion of worker health	p. 21-23	

	403-7 Prevention and mitigation of occupational health and safety impacts directly linked by business relationships	p. 21-23	
	403-8 Workers covered by an occupational health and safety management system	p. 21-23	
	403-9 Work-related injuries		
	403-10 Work-related ill health		
GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 24	
GRI 404: Training and Education 2016	404-1 Average hours of training per year per employee	p. 24	
	404-2 Programs for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programs	p. 24	
	404-3 Percentage of employees receiving regular performance and career development	p. 22	
GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 21-23	
GRI 405: Diversity and Equal Opportunity 2016	405-1 Diversity of governance bodies and employees	p. 21-23	
	405-2 Ratio of basic salary and remuneration of women to men		
Client Satisfaction			
GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 9, 32	
Best use of technology			
GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 32	
Data safety/cybersecurity			
GRI 3: Material topics 2021	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 42	46





ESG Net-Zero Climate Resilience