

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

NOVEMBER 2023

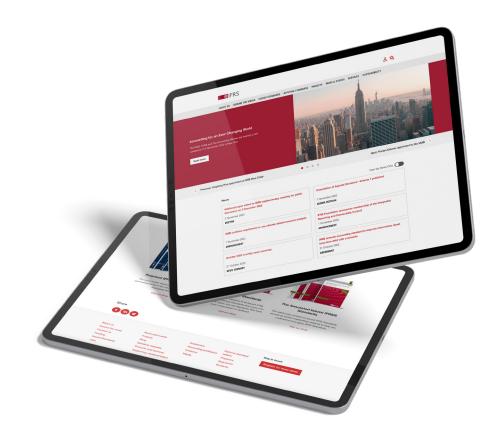
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About this report

This report provides an overview of progress made between COP 27 and COP 28 on IFRS Foundation capacity building initiatives to support use of IFRS[®] Sustainability Disclosure Standards. It also outlines the plan for the year ahead.

A list of abbreviations is provided in Appendix to this document.



Foreword



Considerable progress has been made in the sustainability disclosure area in the two years since the IFRS Foundation announced the creation of the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) at COP 26 in November 2021. In June 2023

the ISSB released the first two IFRS® Sustainability Disclosure Standards (ISSB Standards)—IFRS S1 General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainabilityrelated Financial Information and IFRS S2 Climaterelated Disclosures. The ISSB also consulted with stakeholders from May to September 2023, to inform its work plan for the next two years.

Sustainability-related matters are becoming an important aspect of investment decision-making worldwide. ISSB Standards are a response to strong market demand for decision-useful, comparable information and a truly global baseline for sustainability-related financial disclosures for capital markets.

Our work does not stop at standard-setting. We know from public consultation that supporting companies and other market participants around the world as they begin to implement ISSB Standards is essential to achieving the global baseline.

We have listened to feedback and are committed to building capacity in all relevant stakeholder groups to support the adoption and application of the ISSB Standards through:

- awareness-raising and stakeholder engagement, with emphasis on the Global South, ensuring ISSB Standards are truly global;
- provision of high-quality resources and educational material;
- training and engagement programmes tailored to our main audiences (for example, accountants and regulators); and
- a partnership approach, building a global community of collaborators to support and enhance market readiness for application of ISSB Standards.

We launched the Partnership Framework for

<u>Capacity Building</u> (partnership framework) at COP 27 in November 2022. We have since worked with a growing number of capacity building partners to reach global and regional audiences, as well as develop educational material and other resources. These and other relevant resources are available free of charge via a purpose-built knowledge hub.

We anticipate that the endorsement of ISSB Standards by the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) in July 2023 will serve as a catalyst in driving individual jurisdictions to adopt or build on the ISSB Standards. We aim to deliver tailored capacity building responses in jurisdictions that have shown they have active plans to adopt the ISSB's global baseline based on the needs they identify. In doing so, we expect to work with a growing body of national partners.

The capacity building programme's purpose is not to make stakeholders masters of corporate reporting using ISSB Standards. Instead, the programme aims to get stakeholders on the road towards adoption and implementation of ISSB Standards confident in their ability to successfully complete the journey ahead.

This means getting them to a level of proficiency that allows them to answer fundamental questions, such as: What does sustainability reporting look like? How do we get started? How do we do it? Who else is doing it, and how? The IFRS Foundation will also actively support the high-quality application of ISSB Standards (for example, through the creation of the Transition Implementation Group).

We acknowledge with thanks the important continuing support of our <u>capacity building partners</u>, who now number 35. Their contributions are, and will continue to be, crucial to delivering our capacity building aims.

We would also like to thank the organisations that have contributed funding to capacity building initiatives over the past year.

Jingdong Hua ISSB Vice-Chair

Achievements

Since COP 27, together with our capacity building partners and other supporters, we have:

Developed a body of **core capacity building resources**, including starter and transition guidance.

Created a **knowledge hub** providing open access to a wide range of resources. The <u>knowledge hub</u> contains **more than 100 useful resources**, provided by our capacity building partners and others, which complement IFRS Foundation supporting materials.

Built relationships with 35 partners, many of whom are actively exploring capacity building opportunities with and through their own networks.

Rolled out **training programmes** to identified stakeholder groups, including companies, accountants and securities regulators.

Raised awareness of how ISSB Standards fit into the reporting ecosystem and of market capacity building requirements. We have participated in a range of global and regional events (for example, roundtables and panels at the World Congress of Accountants, the Africa Congress of Accountants, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Capital Markets Forum, World Bank's Accountability and Responsibility for Regional Economic Growth initiative (CReCER), London Climate Action Week, Climate Week NYC and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Regional Climate Weeks).

About the capacity building programme

The capacity building programme aims to build market readiness for adoption and implementation of ISSB Standards.

As such, it supports companies and other market participants around the world as they begin to implement ISSB Standards by providing high-quality resources and educational material, as well as tailored training, free of charge.

Our partnership approach is critical to the programme's success. We are building a global community of collaborators to support all stakeholders and improve market readiness for applying ISSB Standards, with emphasis on the Global South, to help ensure our Standards are truly global.

Aim and approach

Our aim is for market awareness, understanding and competency relating to ISSB Standards to be such that the Standards are widely acknowledged and increasingly applied as the global baseline for sustainability-related financial disclosures for capital market use, including in jurisdictions where application remains voluntary and in developing and emerging markets.

Achieving this aim will involve working, with the support of partners, in four main areas, or pillars:

- Pillar 1 education—ensuring companies have access to high-quality educational materials and other resources, via the dedicated knowledge hub;
- Pillar 2 advocacy and engagement—building awareness and driving adoption of ISSB Standards, tailoring our advocacy to stakeholder type, as well as geographical and thematic needs (for example, organising stakeholder engagement programmes and participating in strategic events);
- Pillar 3 financial (or 'technical') assistance providing resources to develop technical and management skills in particular jurisdictions, thereby supporting local adoption of ISSB Standards (for example, this assistance could be financial, consultancy or resource based, to facilitate the preparation, financing and execution of specific projects to drive implementation); and
- Pillar 4 local ownership and policy instruments guiding behaviour towards local ownership and adoption including lowering barriers to entry (for example, by providing translations of educational materials).

Objectives

The objectives of the capacity building programme are to:

- provide market participants with a solid basic understanding of ISSB Standards;
- expedite the inclusion of market participants in the process to develop and implement ISSB Standards; and
- provide market participants worldwide with access to resources relating to ISSB Standards.

How will the IFRS Foundation achieve the objectives?

We will draw on skills and resources available within the IFRS Foundation and work closely with partners to achieve the objectives of the capacity building programme.

The partnership framework

The partnership framework launched by the IFRS Foundation at COP 27 in November 2022 is a vital part of our overarching capacity building programme. The partnership framework is designed to support companies, investors and other capital market stakeholders as they prepare to use ISSB Standards. It will operate to November 2027.

The partnership framework involves partners applying their specialist knowledge to understand and respond to the capacity building needs of different stakeholder communities. We also envisage that the partnership framework will support implementation in all economic settings, but with particular consideration for the circumstances of developing and emerging economies.

The number of partners has risen from 28 on day one to 35 as at the end of November 2023. The partnership comprises public and private organisations, including governments, multilaterals, standard-setters, professional bodies, shared interest initiatives (including report preparers and investors), leading professional services firms, academic institutions and philanthropic entities. Most partners have a global or a regional remit.

To cover the needs of diverse stakeholder communities, the composition of—and additions to—the community of partners will be driven by continuous assessment of potential gaps between stakeholder requirements and partner expertise and geographical coverage.

About the capacity building programme (continued)

Activity focus

The partnership framework has identified three cross-cutting workstreams and three main interventions that together provide the basis for identifying the priority areas on which to focus for all four pillars of activity (Figure 1).

Priority activity focus		Interventions		
		Tailored jurisdictional engagement, notably in developing and emerging economies	Structured partnerships that use organisations with specialist expertise to build local expertise	Initiatives and champions across multi-stakeholder communities and jurisdictions that help translate ambition into action
	Raise awareness and advocate adoption of the ISSB Standards	 Provide tailored capacity building support in jurisdictions that are considering early adoption or extensive voluntary application P2 P4 	 Identify partners that are well placed to lead or support capacity building interactions with specific stakeholder communities P2 	 7. Encourage and support multi-stakeholder capacity building interactions, including at jurisdictional level, notably in the Global South P2 P3
Workstreams	Ensure that a broad range of voices, notably from the Global South, is reflected in the standard-setting process	 Encourage stakeholders to participate in developing ISSB Standards 	 5. Determine the most helpful and impactful capacity building interventions P2 P3 	 8. Exploit opportunities presented by multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions as catalysts for adoption of the global baseline P2 P3 P4
	Provide a globally accessible and freely available suite of resources to educate a broad range of stakeholders	 Proactively respond to interoperability challenges to enable early adoption or voluntary application 	 6. In response to identified requirements, agree actions with partners to secure widespread adoption of the global baseline P1 P2 	 9. Create and maintain infrastructure such as the knowledge hub that provides open access to resources supporting implementation of ISSB Standards P1

Figure 1-Workstreams and interventions used to identify the partnership framework's priority activity focus areas

2023 review—Getting started

Our focus since COP 27 has been on getting the programme started by:

- · raising awareness of important audiences;
- · beginning to build partner relationships;
- · identifying core resource requirements;
- developing resources to serve the needs of global and regional audiences; and
- developing the knowledge hub to allow stakeholders to access these resources.

We have made progress in the nine priority activity focus areas listed in Figure 1.

1. Provide tailored capacity building support in jurisdictions that are considering early adoption or extensive voluntary application.

Responding to specific jurisdictional requirements helps to expedite adoption and implementation of ISSB Standards.

For example, since COP 27 we have:

- been looking at practical ways to support jurisdictions in their adoption considerations and the development of adoption roadmaps, including capacity building requirements.
- enlisted the support of partner and other supporter organisations to prepare Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese (Simplified), French, Japanese, Korean and Spanish translations of our introductory webcasts on IFRS S1 and IFRS S2.
- published a Spanish translation of IFRS S1. We expect Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), French, Japanese, Korean, Romanian and Turkish translations of both IFRS S1 and IFRS S2 to be available in 2024, together with a Spanish translation of IFRS S2.

2. Encourage stakeholders to participate in developing ISSB Standards.

The process of developing ISSB Standards must be inclusive and informed by truly global perspectives, including from developing and emerging economies, if the Standards are to be of high quality and adoptable by all.

For example, since COP 27 we have:

 consulted stakeholders on agenda priorities and SASB methodology. Many partners have encouraged their networks to take an active interest in and contribute to the process. held a session with the Pan African Federation of Accountants (PAFA) at the Africa Congress of Accountants (Abidjan, May 2023) to encourage African professional accountancy organisations to participate in the agenda priority consultation.

3. Proactively respond to interoperability challenges to enable early adoption or voluntary application.

We must work with other standard-setters and reporting initiatives to ensure alignment between the ISSB Standards, with their focus on investor-useful disclosures, and other sustainability and/or climate change standards in use.

For example, since COP 27:

- we have worked closely with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to develop interoperability considerations when measuring and reporting Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions under GRI Standards and ISSB Standards, as part of the process to deepen the partnership and expedite collaboration between the two organisations. Our aim is to align ISSB Standards and GRI Standards, creating an interconnected approach for sustainability disclosures.
- GRI has announced the creation of a <u>Sustainability Innovation Lab</u> (SIL) in Singapore in coordination with the IFRS Foundation as a convening partner. The SIL will provide a collaborative space to research interoperability between GRI Standards and ISSB Standards.
- CDP and the IFRS Foundation have agreed to collaborate on:
 - o integrating IFRS S2 into CDP's questionnaires;
 - capitalising on existing CDP capacity building activities (for example, regional workshops and webinars); and
 - considering further engagements on Scope
 3 GHG emissions disclosures, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and capital markets (for trickle-down effects).
- the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)

has released research about company disclosures against sustainability standards, including insights on the use of various sustainability standards and/ or frameworks beyond the G20, focusing on the Global South, with data from three jurisdictions in Latin America, six in Africa and the Middle East, and four in the Asia-Pacific region.

- we have published a 'how to' guide on <u>Making the</u> transition from TCFD to ISSB.
- we have worked on the following resources relating to use of IFRS S1 and IFRS S2 with integrated reporting: (a) development of *How to apply the Integrated Reporting Framework with IFRS S1 and IFRS S2: A mapping tool;* and (b) update of, respectively, *Transition to integrated reporting: A guide to getting started* and *Frequently Asked Questions.*

4. Identify partners that are well placed to lead or support interactions with specific stakeholder communities.

An important aspect of the capacity building partnership is the ability to take advantage of partners' interactions with stakeholders in different jurisdictions and deliver capacity building resources and interventions at scale.

For example, since COP 27:

 from 28 'day one' partners at launch of the partnership framework at COP 27 in November 2022, the number of capacity building partners now stands at 35—many of whom have a global or regional focus and established stakeholder constituencies and networks.

5. Determine the most helpful and impactful capacity building interventions.

To be market led, capacity building activities must be rooted in an approach that is responsive to requirements identified by stakeholders from various locations and with varied perspectives.

For example, since COP 27:

 we have identified stakeholder knowledge gaps in various ways, including one-to-one meetings, multi-stakeholder interactions (for example, conferences, webinars and roundtables), and stakeholder and partner surveys. partner initiatives have included creation by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) of a virtual multi-sector global community to support accelerated adoption through collaboration and know-how on evolving best reporting practices and related resources.

6. In response to identified requirements, agree actions with partners to secure widespread adoption of the global baseline.

Continuing engagement with suitably qualified partners to evaluate and respond as appropriate to identified stakeholder needs is essential.

For example, since COP 27:

- we have developed a range of core resources for the knowledge hub including a quick start guide and Frequently Asked Questions linking to relevant topics and deliverables.
- the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) has developed, with IFRS Foundation input, video explainers of IFRS S1 and IFRS S2, which are hosted on the ACCA website.
- ACCA has also developed a guide to preparing for sustainability reporting, which examines requirements relating to implementing the ISSB Standards.
- Chartered Professional Accountants Canada has created Sustainability Reporting Alerts to help companies navigate the ISSB Standards.
- IFAC, PAFA and ACCA have committed to delivering capacity building resources to fill identified knowledge gaps, beginning in 2024. We continue to coordinate with partners on ways to fill other knowledge gaps.
- IFAC and the We Mean Business Coalition have released guidance for accountants and finance professionals on GHG reporting, developed in partnership with Accounting for Sustainability, the Global Accounting Alliance and WBCSD.
- we have worked with the UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative (UN SSE) to develop model guidance for stock exchanges on sustainability-related financial disclosure using ISSB Standards, which was announced at the World Investment Forum convened by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD; Abu Dhabi, October 2023).

- · we have also collaborated with UN SSE to develop training for securities' issuers via their academy, in conjunction with national stock exchanges. The training is designed to aid securities' issuers as they guide their markets on disclosing in accordance with ISSB Standards. Originally developed in collaboration with the Climate Disclosures Standard Board, based on Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) recommendations and extended to 24,000 participants, this training has now been updated to cover IFRS S1 and IFRS S2. It will earn participants four hours of Continuing Professional Development credits. This training was piloted during November 2023 with the Singapore Stock Exchange (virtual) and Euronext (Dublin).
- we have carried out capacity building training to familiarise participants with ISSB Standards and priorities for, among others:
 - approximately 50 Asian securities' regulators from 20 jurisdictions in collaboration with IOSCO (Kuala Lumpur, May 2023). This session followed similar training for African securities' regulators in Cairo in September 2022.
 - 342 participants at the ASEAN Capital Markets Forum (ACMF) meetings hosted by the Singapore Stock Exchange (Singapore, June 2023) and 127 participants at an event hosted by the Financial Services Authority, Indonesia (Jakarta, October 2023).
 - 114 participants in collaboration with PAFA during the African Conference of Accountants (Abidjan, May 2023) and 133 participants during PAFA sustainability week (Nairobi, October 2023).
 - 177 participants representing regulators and policymakers, plus 397 corporate representatives from 10 countries as part of the ACMF Chair's Meeting (Bali, October 2023).
 - approximately 120 participants in a session organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW; London, June 2023) and 613 participants for an ICAEW IFRS S1 webinar (virtual, November 2023).
 - 55 participants at the World Investment Forum/40th session of the International Standards of Accounting and Reporting organised by UNCTAD (Abu Dhabi, October 2023).

7. Encourage and support multi-stakeholder capacity building interactions, including at jurisdictional level, notably in the Global South.

Continuing focus on interactions with broad stakeholder audiences is important, notably in developing and emerging economies, to increase awareness, understanding and capacity relating to ISSB Standards.

For example, since COP 27:

- we collaborated with ACCA, CDP and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to run a series of events focused on capacity building in China, which took place in Beijing during November 2023.
- we have discussed with United Nations Development Programme-Financial Centres for Sustainability (UNDP-FC4S) the prospects for a pilot initiative led by UNDP-FC4S to provide guidance on sustainability disclosure (including capacity building for IFRS S1 and IFRS S2) in some developing and emerging economies.
- the Global Steering Group for Impact Investment has launched a UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office funded initiative to improve collaboration with the IFRS Foundation and other partners on capacity building and engagement relating to sustainability disclosures, aiming to capture and report back on insights from the main stakeholders in selected developing and emerging markets. The initiative will run until April 2024.
- further to a collaboration agreement between the IFRS Foundation and PAFA, we have been exploring opportunities with PAFA to secure funding for it to begin effective capacity building relating to ISSB Standards throughout its Africa regional network of professional accountancy organisations. The funding is to help PAFA develop a strategy: (a) to promote and coordinate capacity building relating to sustainability-related financial disclosures for 125,000 accountants throughout Africa and explain proportionality mechanisms to African entities, including SMEs; (b) to create a centre of technical excellence, enabling a thorough African response to ISSB consultations; and (c) to enable PAFA to contribute to regulatory discussions, alongside other potential partners (for example, the African Financial Alliance on Climate Change and Financial Sector Deepening Africa).
- we have coordinated with global and regional capacity building partners to help fill common jurisdictional knowledge gaps.

- we have contributed to various sector-specific and strategic global or regional events, often with support from capacity building partners, including:
 - <u>COP 15 on Biodiversity</u> (Montreal, December 2022); Peruvian Public Sector Mission (London, April 2023); <u>CReCER</u>, convened by the World Bank in collaboration with IFAC (Sao Paulo, May 2023); African Development Bank (AfDB) annual meetings (Sharm El-Sheikh, May 2023); the ACMF–ISSB Joint Conference (Singapore, June 2023); the <u>World Investment Forum</u> convened by UNCTAD (Abu Dhabi, October 2023); <u>the World Standard Setters Conference 2023</u> (London, September 2023); and the <u>Regional Roundtable on Sustainable Finance for Europe</u> convened by the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI; Madrid, September 2023).
 - events with a focus on accounting, including: the World Congress of Accountants convened by IFAC (Mumbai, November 2022); the IFAC Accountancy Education Directors Forum (virtual, February 2023) and IFAC International Panel on Accountancy Education (virtual, March 2023); the Africa Congress of Accountants convened by PAFA (Abidjan, May 2023); and Climate Week Africa (Nairobi, September 2023) in collaboration with PAFA and the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK).
 - regional climate weeks:
 - London Climate Action Week 2023 (London, June–July 2023), including the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG)/ISSB launch of the ISSB Standards on the London Stock Exchange, the ICAEW Capacity Building Event on ISSB Standards and a UK Finance Session building knowledge on ISSB Standards;
 - <u>Africa Climate Week/Africa Climate Summit</u> <u>2023</u> (Nairobi, September 2023), including a PAFA/ICPAK capacity building event and an ISSB/Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero Africa/AfDB side event to launch Kenya's journey towards adoption of IFRS S1 and IFRS S2;
 - <u>Climate Week NYC</u> (New York, September 2023)—participating in more than 40 events, including capacity building activities with UNEP FI, LSEG, Ernst & Young and PwC on ISSB Standards targeting sustainable finance professionals, accountants and companies;

- Latin America and Caribbean Climate Week (Panama, October 2023), participating in a high-level panel with the Ministry of Environment of Panama; and
- <u>Climate Finance Week Ireland (Dublin,</u> November 2023), participating in a panel on transition finance and co-delivering a capacity building programme with UN SSE, hosted by Euronext.

8. Exploit opportunities presented by multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions as catalysts for adoption of the global baseline.

Multilateral development banks (MDBs) have several important roles to play in increasing the adoption of ISSB Standards. They influence capital market practice by encouraging or requiring companies to apply ISSB Standards both for their own reporting, and throughout their investment portfolios. They can also influence jurisdictional policy, strengthening the alignment of regulatory and policy frameworks with ISSB Standards. Finally, they can provide financial and technical assistance to support implementation of ISSB Standards.

For example, since COP 27:

o we have built strong relationships with various MDBs to support their progress in adopting ISSB Standards and in capacity building. We have done so by participating in various sessions, including: the World Bank Spring Meetings (Washington, DC, April 2023) and technical working session (Washington, DC, October 2023); the AfDB Annual Meeting (Sharm El-Sheikh, May 2023); an Asian Development Bank discussion on developing a proposal on GS1 tagging (virtual, August 2023) and high-level meetings (Manila, November 2023); Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank high-level meetings and a technical session during an onsite visit (Beijing, August 2023); a European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) technical seminar on IFRS S1 and IFRS S2 (virtual, July 2023) and technical engagement with EBRD Managing Directors (London, October 2023); and a presentation on IFRS S1 and IFRS S2 to MDB Controller Forum (virtual, September 2023) and a presentation to MDB Communities of Practice (virtual, October 2023) on applying ISSB Standards to reporting for all World Bank institutions.

9. Create and maintain infrastructure such as the knowledge hub that provides open access to resources supporting implementation of ISSB Standards.

Capacity building resources should be accessible to as many stakeholders as possible.

For example, since COP 27:

· the online knowledge hub was completed, ahead of launch at COP 28. Inspired by the TCFD Knowledge Hub, it provides an open access platform and repository for educational material and other resources prepared by the IFRS Foundation, capacity building partners and others. Though report preparers are the primary audience, the resources available via the knowledge hub are expected to help a wide range of stakeholders prepare for ISSB Standards. The knowledge hub contains more than 100 open access resources (including training materials, practice guidance and tools, webinars and research publications) on launch. Ninety per cent of these resources have been provided by our capacity building partners.

2024 outlook—Execution

After COP 28, we expect to focus on continuing execution; in particular:

- increasing tailored, jurisdiction-specific capacity building interactions, while maintaining emphasis on scalable initiatives with stakeholder audiences at the global or regional level to fill common knowledge gaps;
- participating in industry events, other strategic events and roadshows;
- producing an IFRS webinar series on topics of interest, aimed at report preparers and other stakeholders;
- developing further resources for release via the knowledge hub and translating core resources;
- · developing and delivering training; and
- exploring alternative funding avenues (for example, MDBs and bilateral governments).

Appendix

List of abbreviations

ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
ACMF	ASEAN Capital Markets Forum
AfDB	African Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CReCER	World Bank's Accountability and Responsibility for Regional Economic Growth initiative
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
GHG	greenhouse gas
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
ICAEW	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
ICPAK	Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya
IFAC	International Federation of Accountants
IOSCO	International Organization of Securities Commissions
ISSB	International Sustainability Standards Board
LSEG	London Stock Exchange Group
MDB	multilateral development bank
PAFA	Pan African Federation of Accountants
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
SIL	Sustainability Innovation Lab
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
TCFD	Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP-FC4S	United Nations Development Programme-Financial Centres for Sustainability
UNEP FI	United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative
UN SSE	UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development



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