

Scorecard

GRI 415 Public Policy Standard

About GRI 415

COVERAGE OF COMPANIES

Global

LAUNCH DATE

2016

LINK:

<https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/media/1030/gri-415-public-policy-2016.pdf>

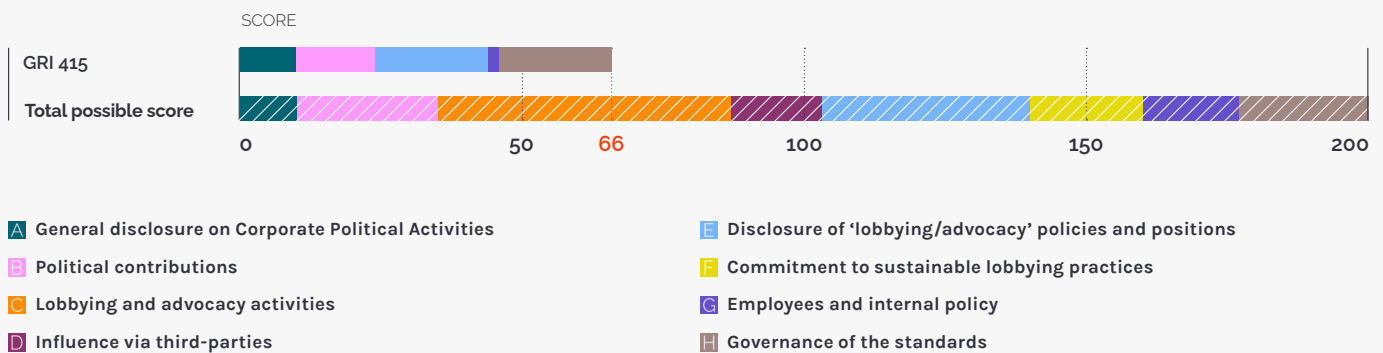
GRI 415 Public Policy Standard Score



Tracker Rank and Score for GRI 415

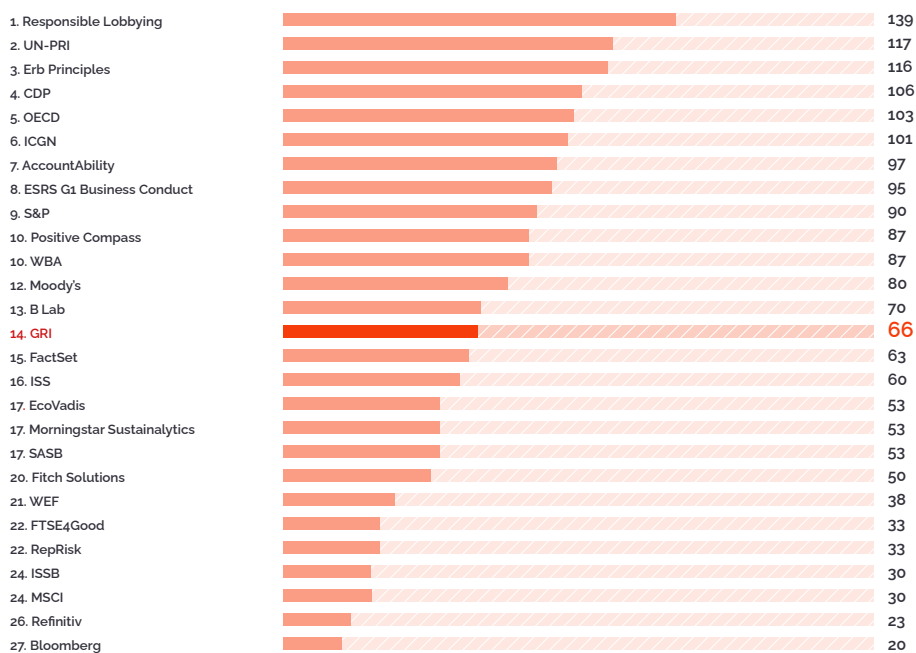
The score is out of a total of 200 and the rank describes the standards position in the 27 standards assessed by the Tracker.

Category scores of GRI 415



*Categories where the standard received no points do not appear in the colour-coded graph

Rank and scores for all standards



Description

GRI was founded in Boston in 1997 following on from the public outcry over the environmental damage of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, eight years previously. The aim was to create the first accountability mechanism to ensure companies adhere to responsible environmental conduct principles, which was then broadened to include social, economic and governance issues.

The first version of what was then the GRI Guidelines (G1) published in 2000 – providing the first global framework for sustainability reporting. The following year, GRI was established as an independent, non-profit institution. In 2002, the GRI's Secretariat relocated to Amsterdam (The Netherlands), and the first update to the Guidelines (G2) launched. As demand for GRI reporting and uptake from organisations steadily grew, the Guidelines were expanded and improved, leading to G3 (2006) and G4 (2013).¹

The GRI Standards are intended to enable all types of companies and organisations to understand and report on their impacts on the economy, environment and people in a consistent, comparable and credible way, thereby increasing transparency on their contribution to sustainable development. In addition to companies, the Standards are highly relevant to many stakeholders - including investors, policymakers, capital markets, and civil society. The Standards are intended to be modular, covering an organisation's material topics, their related impacts, and how they are managed across three types of Standards: (a) *Universal Standards* that incorporate reporting on human rights and environmental due diligence, in line with intergovernmental expectations, and apply to all organisations; (b) *Sector Standards*, designed to enable more consistent reporting on sector-specific impacts; and (c) *Topic Standards* - list disclosures relevant to a particular topic.

GRI's Public Policy Standard (GRI 415), one of the Topic Standards, was published in 2016. It sets expectations for organisations to disclose their lobbying activities, including any financial or in-kind political contributions, and the significant issues that are the focus of their public policy lobbying. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) exists to help organisations be transparent and take responsibility for their impacts in order to create a sustainable future. The GRI has their own set of sustainability standards but is working with the ISSB to seek greater compatibility with IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards. A revised GRI Standard should be available for use by 2026.

In 2016, GRI transitioned from providing guidelines to setting the first global standards for sustainability reporting – the GRI Standards. The Standards continue to be updated, including new Topic Standards on challenging issues, including Tax (2019) and Waste (2020), and a major update to the three Universal Standards (2021).² That year also saw the addition of Sector Standards,³ starting with Oil & Gas. To follow were *Agriculture, Aquaculture & Fishing* and *Coal* (2022),⁴ then *Mining* and a revised *Biodiversity* Topic Standard (2024).⁵ A new standard on corporate political activities and other forms of lobbying could be next.

Score summary

The GRI 415 Public Policy Standard receives a Tracker score of 66 out of 200. The GRI standard has a narrow focus on reporting of the “total monetary value of financial and in-kind political contributions made directly and indirectly” by country and by recipient or beneficiary type. The standard receives Tracker points for requiring this basic level of disclosure. The standard also requires a reporting company to explain “if applicable, how the monetary value of in-kind contributions was estimated.” This earns basic points in Tracker Category B on ‘Political contributions.’ The GRI also provides opportunities for feedback on its standards, although the GRI 415 standard itself has not been updated since launch in 2016.

Opportunities for improvement

The GRI 415 standard could be significantly revised with reference to the 8 Tracker Categories. Updating the standard to more fully reflect the range of corporate political activities and associated lobbying would enable companies reporting to the GRI standard to provide more complete and accurate information to investors, regulators, and other stakeholders. Developments in the updated CDP survey, for example, indicate the extent to which market expectations on corporate lobbying disclosure have evolved since the publication of the original GRI 415 Public Policy Standard. As a globally important contributor to corporate reporting expectations the GRI.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.globalreporting.org/about-gri/mission-history/>
- 2 <https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/standards-development/universal-standards/>
- 3 <https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/sector-program/>
- 4 <https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/standards-development/sector-standard-for-coal/>
- 5 GRI 101: Biodiversity 2024: <https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/standards-development/topic-standard-for-biodiversity/>

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