

# Sustainability DIY

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ESRS

Journey 5




The background features a dark teal gradient. At the top, there are two stylized cloud shapes in shades of blue and teal. On the right side, there are several large, overlapping leaf shapes in various shades of green and teal. At the bottom, there are stylized hills or ground shapes in purple and teal, with some circular patterns and a small plant-like shape on the left.

# DIY your sustainability report in accordance to the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS)

## Journey 5

The assurance process for your sustainability report

*Disclaimer: This resource has been developed by Sustain Labs Paris & Microsoft to support the use of ESRS for sustainability reporting. It is not an initiative of EFRAG or EU Commission or endorsed by these parties.*



Including “**assurance**” for your sustainability report means that your sustainability report is verified by a third party and therefore increases the credibility of your report.<sup>1</sup>

**Note:**

- ***The CSRD will apply a gradual approach to the assurance of sustainability information, allowing limited assurance for disclosures from 2026, with an expectation of reasonable assurance by 2028.<sup>2</sup>***
- ***In the event that an assurance opinion is not provided, the organization will need to issue a statement indicating that the company did not provide the necessary assurance opinion.***

1 - European Union. (2022, December 16). *Directive (EU) 2022/2464 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 amending Regulation (EU) No 537/2014, Directive 2004/109/EC, Directive 2006/43/EC and Directive 2013/34/EU, as regards corporate sustainability reporting.* (pg. 22)

2 - European Union. (2022, December 16). *Directive (EU) 2022/2464 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 amending Regulation (EU) No 537/2014, Directive 2004/109/EC, Directive 2006/43/EC and Directive 2013/34/EU, as regards corporate sustainability reporting.* (pg. 55)

## There are 2 categories of assurance defined by ESRS<sup>3</sup>

- Limited assurance is expressed in an “opinion” that nothing has come to the assurance provider’s attention that would lead them to conclude that the subject matter is materially mis-stated.
- Reasonable assurance is expressed in a positively framed “opinion” that the subject matter has been prepared in accordance with previously defined criteria.\*

\*Please note that financial reporting already requires a reasonable assurance opinion.

3 - European Union. (2022, December 16). *Directive (EU) 2022/2464 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 amending Regulation (EU) No 537/2014, Directive 2004/109/EC, Directive 2006/43/EC and Directive 2013/34/EU, as regards corporate sustainability reporting.* (pg. 22)

# Steps to get an assurance letter for your sustainability report<sup>4</sup>

1

An assurance provider is hired by the organization writing the sustainability report

The assurance provider presents findings for scope, assertions, approach, impacts, risks, opportunities covered in the report, to the organization

5

2

The assurance provider is handed over the draft sustainability report

The organization writing the sustainability report corrects errors, if any, in its sustainability report

6

3

The assurance provider is given access to conduct site visits and speak to internal and external stakeholders in all business entities included in the sustainability report

The assurance provider provides an assurance statement, which can be of 2 types - Limited Assurance; Reasonable Assurance

7

4

The assurance provider investigates business sites, checks records, and interviews internal and external stakeholders

The organization writing the sustainability report adds the assurance statement at the end of its sustainability report

8

## Preparation for the assurance process of your sustainability report<sup>5</sup>

### Who

The organization should review the assurance provider's subject matter expertise and select an assurance provider appropriately. Hire a third party assurance provider with whom your organization has no past or current business relationships.

### When

Hire the third party assurance provider at the time that you start the process of writing your sustainability report.

### Where

Organize travel of the assurance provider to business sites, only after you have handed over the draft sustainability report over to the assurance provider.

5 - European Union. (2022, December 16). *Directive (EU) 2022/2464 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 amending Regulation (EU) No 537/2014, Directive 2004/109/EC, Directive 2006/43/EC and Directive 2013/34/EU, as regards corporate sustainability reporting.* (pg. 55-59)

# Preparation for the assurance process of your sustainability report<sup>6</sup>

## Until when

Site visits and the subsequent analysis by the assurance provider require a minimum of 3 weeks and can extend depending on the size of the organization and the reporting boundaries. Factor this into your sustainability reporting timeline.

## How

Open frank channels of communication with your assurance provider to receive feedback for improving your sustainability performance and potential lapses in your disclosures.

View the CSRD template in **Microsoft Purview Compliance Manager** to understand and explore the draft ESRS disclosure requirements. In the Compliance Manager, you can select a topic, view its controls, disclosure requirements as well as the description of the disclosure, and attach evidence to support their disclosures.

The Purview Compliance Manager streamlines the report generation process. For more information, please [click here](#).<sup>7</sup>

6 - European Union. (2022, December 16). *Directive (EU) 2022/2464 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 amending Regulation (EU) No 537/2014, Directive 2004/109/EC, Directive 2006/43/EC and Directive 2013/34/EU, as regards corporate sustainability reporting.* (pg. 55-59)

7 - Microsoft. (2023, July 24). CSRD template (preview) in Purview Compliance Manager. Microsoft Cloud for Sustainability | Microsoft Learn.

<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/industry/sustainability/purview-compliance-manager-report-csrd>