

External Assurance Letter from Sustainable Business Consulting

Sustainable Business Consulting evaluated Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's (PNNL) sustainability report to establish that the information in the report was an authentic representation of the company's social, environmental, and economic performance in relation to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) reporting framework as specified in the GRI G3.1 Guidelines. Our responsibility was to carry out an assurance engagement, verify data and provide specific suggestions for improvement.

We found that PNNL meets the guidelines and reported the information in the spirit of GRI disclosure. The 2012 Sustainability Report provides a balanced and reasonable representation of information concerning boundary setting, quality, report content, and material indicators. PNNL reported on all the core performance indicators, profile disclosures and management approaches. While these are not all incorporated in the print version, we have reviewed all the data and content that will be posted on the organization's [Sustainability at PNNL](#) Web pages for complete disclosure. We are not aware of the exclusion of any material issues or misstatements of information and are confident in PNNL's disclosure.

After we reviewed the initial draft of the report and highlighted concerns or made suggestions for improvement, PNNL responded to each concern with a thorough explanation and addressed each one. These changes were included for the final version of the report.

Assurance approach:

Our activities included a review of the report content, reporting metrics and a selection of source data. We conducted several meetings with PNNL employees to discuss the accuracy and authenticity of report content, data points, methodologies and policies around the organization's social, environmental, and economic data and activities.

Our assurance team was made up of sustainability experts, one of which is certified in GRI reporting. As part of this process, we:

- reviewed all the core performance indicators, profile disclosures, management approaches and assessed the information based on the GRI Guidelines
- took a random sample of data points and interviewed employees who provided that data to verify accuracy and understand the procedures for data collection, tracking and analysis
- analyzed stakeholder engagement activities and materiality determination process
- provided suggestions after initial readings and two reviews
- assessed the final version of the report content to ensure it met the principles for ensuring report content and quality, as defined by the GRI

Recommendations for improvement

PNNL is doing more for sustainability than they have time to describe in their reporting procedures. Many of the efforts are simply from the employees' regular day to day and PNNL has the opportunity to put policy in place to support those efforts and have an even stronger sustainability performance and reporting. Community impact could be tracked with more metrics than just how many dollars are spent in the community. Social and environmental impacts come from each philanthropic effort at PNNL and the recipients could be asked to deliver the results of these impacts after project completion. This will assist future decisions when assessing the PNNL mission and its relation to incoming grant proposals. Risks associated with PNNL's sustainability efforts could be discussed as part of the overall benefit of sustainability and why PNNL chose the areas for its honeycomb.

Opinion: This was PNNL's fourth GRI-based sustainability report. The organization has once again demonstrated rigorous procedures for data gathering and reporting, and has improved its reporting efforts by committing to a stronger stakeholder engagement process. We fully support the company's self-assessment that its 2012 report meets the GRI application level of A+.



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