

## 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 Guidelines. Our responsibility was to carry out an assurance engagement, verify data and provide specific suggestions for improvement.

We found that PNNL satisfactorily meets the guidelines and reported the information in the spirit of GRI disclosure. The 2011 Sustainability Report provides a reasonable and balanced representation of information concerning report content, quality, boundary setting and material indicators. PNNL reported on all the management approaches, profile disclosures and core performance indicators. While these are not all detailed in the print version, we have reviewed all 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.

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 plan for addressing each one. These changes were included for the final version of the report.

### **Assurance approach:**

Our activities included a review of the reporting metrics, report content and a selection of source data. We also performed a site visit and conducted several meetings with PNNL employees to discuss the accuracy and authenticity of report content, data, policies and methodologies 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 profile disclosures and core performance indicators, assessing 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 review
- 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 should continue to be methodical about engaging stakeholders and obtaining stakeholder input on sustainability efforts and future reports. Also, if PNNL could report on its sustainability performance in relation to its peers in the industry, it would provide stakeholders with more context and the ability to compare PNNL's performance against other similar organizations.

**Opinion:** This was PNNL's third GRI-based sustainability report. The organization has demonstrated rigorous procedures for data gathering and reporting, and has improved its reporting efforts by committing to a stronger stakeholder engagement process. It is in our opinion that in the instances where PNNL does not collect data or have a specific policy or procedure, it is because the issue is deemed not applicable at this time or immaterial. Therefore, we support the company's self-assessment that its 2011 report meets the GRI application level of A+.



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