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Sustainable
Blue Economy

Reporting Framework for the Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Initiative

April 2023



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Introduction

This framework¹ sets out the reporting requirements for signatories to the [Sustainable Blue Economy \(SBE\) Finance Principles](#). Members of the Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Initiative (the Initiative) may also use this framework in reporting against the SBE Finance Principles, though it is not required (see Who is expected to report).

The aim of reporting annually using this framework is to record the progress that individual signatories of the Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Initiative (the Initiative) are making each year to implement the SBE Finance Principles and sector-specific [guidance](#).

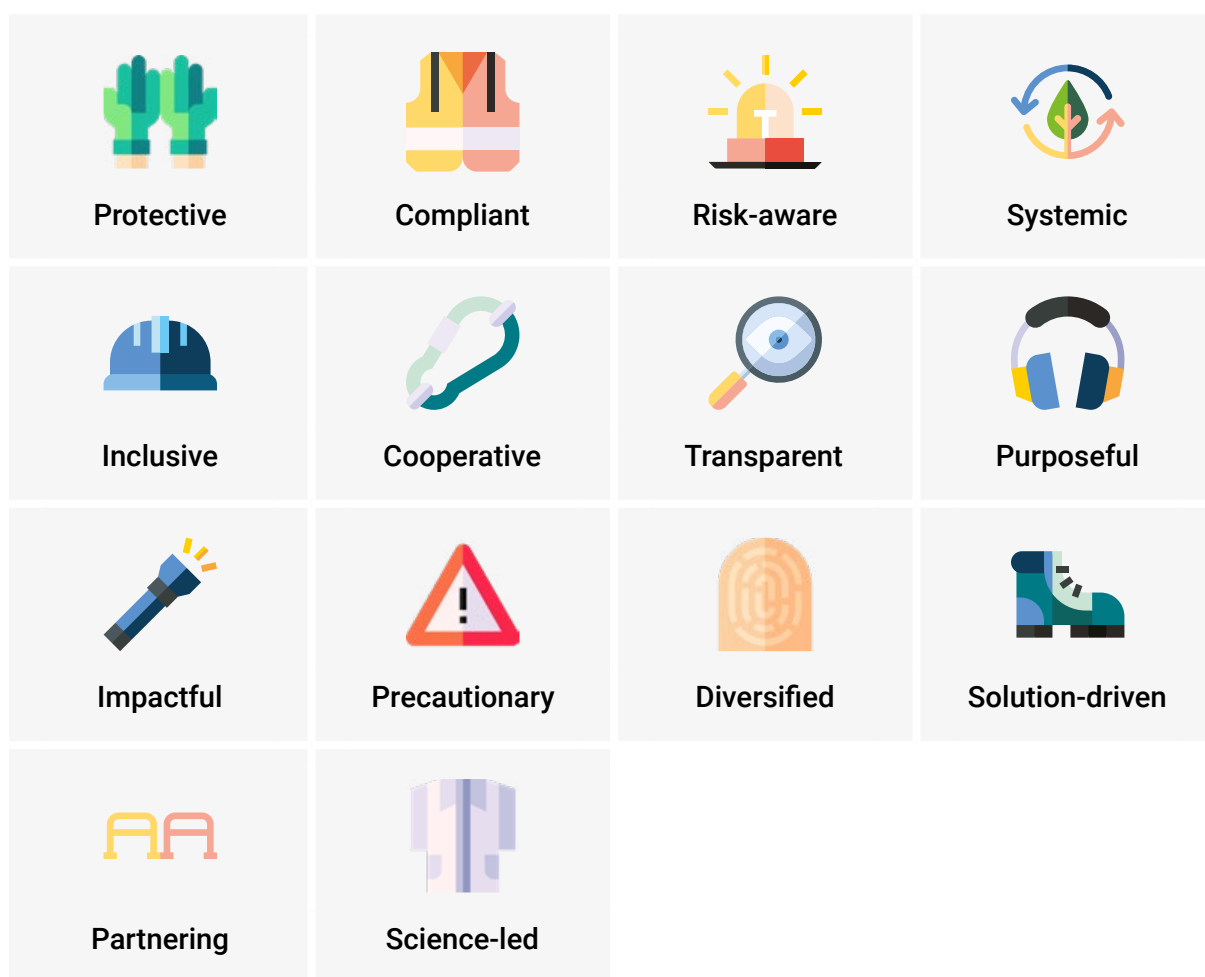


Figure I: The SBE Finance Principles

¹ The version of the reporting framework reviewed is from March 2023.

The first two sections of this framework set out what signatories must report on and how it should be presented. The third section outlines the reporting process, and the fourth describes what may occur when a signatory does not submit their report.

This framework **does not** require institutions to produce an additional report. Signatories can reference or link to the required information already in the public domain, minimizing additional reporting while ensuring transparency and accountability.

This reporting framework may be reviewed and adapted to keep up with the fast-moving field of the Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE). Signatories and members will be made aware of any changes well in advance.

Who is expected to report?

Signatories of the SBE Finance Principles are expected to report publicly and annually on how their organization is implementing the SBE Finance Principles and progressing towards their set targets.

Members² of the Initiative are not required to report but are recommended to update the SBE FI Secretariat (the Secretariat) annually on their organization's progress on supporting the uptake of the SBE Finance Principles and sustainable blue finance practices. Members may use this framework for signatory disclosure to guide their reporting.

2 Signatories of the SBE Finance Principles are financial institutions that have committed to align their activities with said principles. Members of the Initiative are organizations that support the SBE Finance Principles. Financial institutions who join as members are expected to work towards becoming signatories.

What to report

Reports shall provide information on how each bank, insurer or investor is delivering on the SBE Finance Principles at an operational level and across their financial activities (i.e. lending, investing or insuring).

Reports shall include:

- Actions taken during the reporting period
- Short- and long-term plans
- Alignment with global agreements
- SBE targets, where applicable
- Governance overview

Actions taken during the reporting period

Provide clear, specific information on what the signatory has done during the previous 12 months (up to 18 months for new joiners³) to adopt and implement the SBE Finance Principles and SBE targets across their financing activities. Each year's report should aim to portray progress from a signatory's starting point⁴ or the previous year.

Short- and long-term plans

Describe the short-term and long-term plans the signatory has to implement the SBE Finance Principles and the exclusions developed for the sectoral guidance (as set out in the [Recommended Exclusions](#) publication).

Alignment with global agreements

Describe how the signatory has aligned—or plans to align—its strategy to be consistent with and contribute to global agreements, as expressed in:

- the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (in particular SDG 14—Life Below Water)
- the Paris Climate Agreement
- the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- national and regional frameworks related to sectors for which UNEP FI has developed SBE financing guidance.

3 Find more information on the reporting process on pages 5–7.

4 Signatories may have different starting points and operate in different contexts, which may affect how they provide information on ocean-related impact and dependencies the first time they report.

SBE targets

Where applicable, demonstrate how the signatory has set and published SBE targets,⁵ and established means to measure and monitor progress against set targets (e.g. setting key performance indicators).

For each SBE target, reports shall show how the signatory is taking action to meet the target (through associated action plans) and what progress is being made year-on-year.

If this is not possible, the signatory can explain why actions could not be implemented or needed to be changed, and how the plan to meet the target has been amended accordingly.

Governance overview

Reports shall provide an overview of governance structures, policies and practices that the signatory has in place—or plans to put in place—to align with a sustainable blue economy (e.g. exclusions policies, practices promoting responsible relationships with clients or measures to foster a culture of sustainability among employees).

Guidance on what to report

Avoid generic statements such as “we support the Sustainable Development Goals” that do not report on any concrete targets, actions, results or projects.

Where feasible and appropriate, include a mix of qualitative and quantitative information. When this information is attainable, signatories should report on progress based on a set of selected indicators.

Provide practical examples where possible.

Leverage tools and disclosure frameworks that are—or will become—available over time, including the framework provided by the Taskforce on Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD).

Over time, we expect a third-party assurance approach against this framework to develop. In that context, we encourage signatories to assure their annual reports through these third parties.

⁵ Each signatory shall set SBE targets in accordance with the target-setting process developed by the Initiative. The target-setting methodology that supports this process will be published by the beginning of 2024. For reporting in 2023, signatories and members are encouraged to pilot target-setting approaches based on their work to implement the Principles and in collaboration with the SBE FI.

Ways to report

Availability

Reports shall be publicly available (accessible through a web link), as a PDF hosted on the signatory's website, and will be listed on the Initiative's Members page.

Length

Reports should be short and concise (ideally not exceeding five pages).

Format

Reports can either be a stand-alone documents or feature as part of a larger report, such as an annual or sustainability report.

- Banks that have signed the Principles for Responsible Banking (PRB) can include it in their PRB reporting
- Insurers who have signed the Principles for Sustainable Insurance (PSI) can include it in their PSI reporting.

When a signatory's report features as part of a larger report, the relevant information should be clearly labelled in a dedicated section. Each reporting cycle the signatory must notify the Secretariat that the reporting contribution has been made through this larger report and where to find it.

Signatories can opt to provide summaries of relevant SBE information that has been disclosed in other reports (e.g. sustainability reports, PRB or PSI reports) in their reporting for the Initiative. Where applicable, signatories should provide references or links to the required reporting information. The aim is to keep the additional reporting burden to a minimum while ensuring transparency and accountability. **When referring to other documents, please specify the pages where the information appears.**

Language

Reports are to be published in English. Where possible, data and information provided or referenced within the report should also be available in English.

The reporting process

Reporting schedule

Signatories are required to report annually. For those that joined the Initiative on or before May 2021, the first annual report was expected by the end of May 2022.

For all subsequent signatories and subsequent reports, the reporting cycle is as follows:

First reporting cycle	<p>Signatories that join after May 2021 shall report by the end of the May of the year following their joining date. For example, a signatory that signed on to the SBE Finance Principles in June 2023 is required to report by the end of May 2024.</p> <p>Signatories who join within six months of the May deadline for a given reporting cycle are welcome to report by the following May but have the option to provide their first report the following year. For example, a signatory that signed on to the SBE Finance Principles in December 2023, may either report by the end of May 2024 or May 2025.</p>
Subsequent reporting cycles	<p>After the first reporting cycle, signatories are expected to report annually by the end of May.</p>

Signatories may choose to align their disclosure with their financial year or the calendar year. If this occurs after their report for the Initiative is due, signatories can request an extension from the SBE FI Secretariat.

Annual reporting cycle

Figure II provides an overview of the annual reporting cycle.

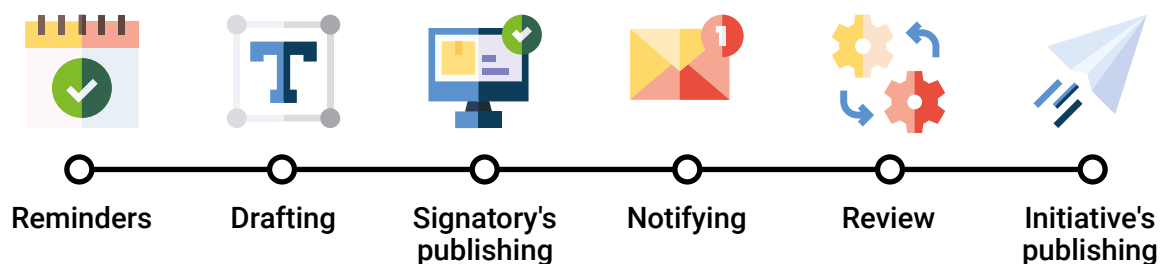


Figure II: Annual reporting cycle



Reminders

The Secretariat reaches out individually to signatories that are due to report at least three months in advance to remind them of the upcoming deadline.

Note: All communications from the Secretariat are sent to the email addresses provided by the signatories beforehand. It is the responsibility of signatories to ensure the Secretariat has up-to-date contact details.



Drafting

The signatory drafts their report, following this framework. Signatories should notify the Secretariat of any delay to reporting due to unforeseen circumstances. The Secretariat reserves the right to decide when to grant an extension and how long it can be.

Signatories are encouraged to send their reports ahead of the deadline to give ample time for posting or for amending the report, should the Secretariat identify any technical issues the signatory needs to address.



Signatory publishing

Once the report is drafted, the signatory makes it publicly available on their website.

Any signatory may share with the Secretariat a draft of their report for review before making it publicly available. This optional review is solely to ensure that the draft report meets the formal requirements set in this framework—no feedback on content and scope will be given.

After the review is conducted, the signatory amends the report (if requested by the Secretariat), publishes the report on their website and continues with the reporting cycle.



Notifying

The signatory informs the Secretariat by email that the report is ready for review and shares the link.



Review

The Secretariat reviews the report. Where a submitted report does not meet the requirements set out in this framework, the Secretariat can request the signatory to amend the report; if requested, a reasonable deadline extension can be provided.



Initiative's publishing

Once the Secretariat is satisfied with the report, the Secretariat publishes the report on the Initiative's website, concluding the reporting cycle for the year.

Failure to report

Signatories are expected to report according to the annual reporting cycle. Where a signatory has not submitted their SBE Finance Principles report within three months of their reporting deadline and has not engaged with the Secretariat on the reason for late submission, the signatory may be declared an 'inactive signatory' by the Secretariat.

If the report is not received by the Secretariat within a further three months (i.e. within six months of the reporting deadline), and no reasonable explanation is provided for the late reporting, the Secretariat reserves the right to remove the signatory from the list of signatories ('delist' the signatory).

Delisted signatories may no longer benefit from the membership's resources on the Initiative's website or from the community. Where a reasonable explanation is provided, the Secretariat reserves the right to grant an exceptional extension (at the Secretariat's discretion and on a case-by case basis) with a set duration within which the signatory is to provide their report. Once the report is received (within the agreed extension period), the signatory's status will revert to 'active signatory'.

To support signatories to deliver their reporting on time, the Secretariat will:

- Remind signatories of the reporting deadline at least three months in advance
- Engage with signatories whose reports are overdue to provide advice
- Notify signatories about any impending changes to their status.

Contacting the Initiative about reporting

Any questions, extension requests or report submissions should be sent to the contact points of the team members of the Initiative, which can be accessed through the Initiative's [members area](#).

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UNEP Finance Initiative brings together a large network of banks, insurers and investors that collectively catalyses action across the financial system to deliver more sustainable global economies. For more than 30 years the initiative has been connecting the UN with financial institutions from around the world to shape the sustainable finance agenda. We've established the world's foremost sustainability frameworks that help the finance industry address global environmental, social and governance (ESG) challenges.

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