

**GRI 408: CHILD LABOR**  
2016

**GRI**  
**408**

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## About this Standard

<b>Responsibility</b>	This Standard is issued by the <a href="#">Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB)</a> . Any feedback on the GRI Standards can be submitted to <a href="mailto:standards@globalreporting.org">standards@globalreporting.org</a> for the consideration of the GSSB.
<b>Scope</b>	<i>GRI 408: Child Labor</i> sets out reporting requirements on the topic of child labor. This Standard can be used by an organization of any size, type, sector or geographic location that wants to report on its impacts related to this topic.
<b>Normative references</b>	This Standard is to be used together with the most recent versions of the following documents. <a href="#">GRI 101: Foundation</a> <a href="#">GRI 103: Management Approach</a> <a href="#">GRI Standards Glossary</a>  In the text of this Standard, terms defined in the Glossary are <u>underlined</u> .
<b>Effective date</b>	This Standard is effective for reports or other materials published on or after 1 July 2018. Earlier adoption is encouraged.

**Note:** This document includes hyperlinks to other Standards. In most browsers, using **'ctrl' + click** will open external links in a new browser window. After clicking on a link, use **'alt' + left arrow** to return to the previous view.

# Introduction

## A. Overview

This Standard is part of the set of GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards (GRI Standards). These Standards are designed to be used by organizations to report about their impacts on the economy, the environment, and society.

The GRI Standards are structured as a set of interrelated, modular standards. The full set can be downloaded at [www.globalreporting.org/standards/](http://www.globalreporting.org/standards/).

There are three universal Standards that apply to every organization preparing a sustainability report:

*GRI 101: Foundation*

*GRI 102: General Disclosures*

*GRI 103: Management Approach*

**GRI 101: Foundation is the starting point for using the GRI Standards. It has essential information on how to use and reference the Standards.**

An organization then selects from the set of topic-specific GRI Standards for reporting on its material topics. These Standards are organized into three series: 200 (Economic topics), 300 (Environmental topics) and 400 (Social topics).

Each topic Standard includes disclosures specific to that topic, and is designed to be used together with *GRI 103: Management Approach*, which is used to report the management approach for the topic.

**GRI 408: Child Labor is a topic-specific GRI Standard in the 400 series (Social topics).**

## B. Using the GRI Standards and making claims

There are two basic approaches for using the GRI Standards. For each way of using the Standards there is a corresponding claim, or statement of use, which an organization is required to include in any published materials.

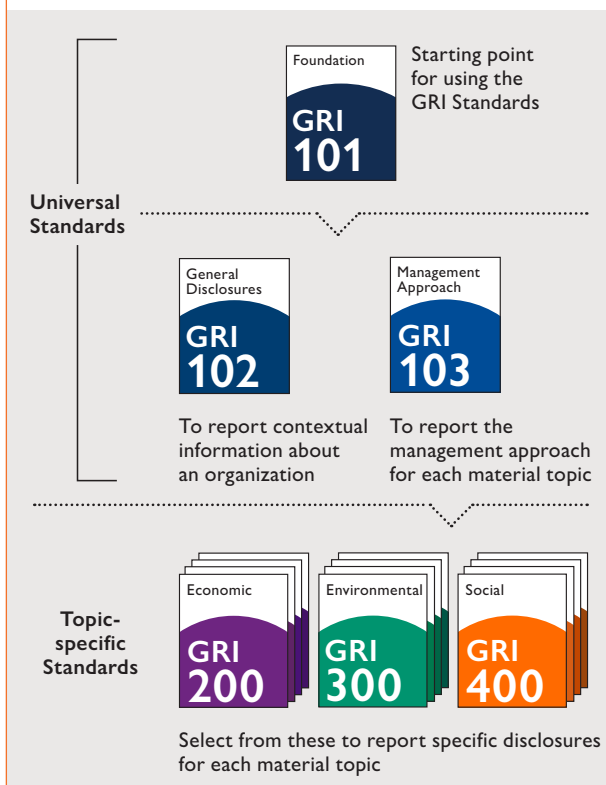
1. The GRI Standards can be used as a set to prepare a sustainability report that is in accordance with the Standards. There are two options for preparing a report in accordance (Core or Comprehensive), depending on the extent of disclosures included in the report.

An organization preparing a report in accordance with the GRI Standards uses this Standard, *GRI 408: Child Labor*, if this is one of its material topics.

2. Selected GRI Standards, or parts of their content, can also be used to report specific information, without preparing a report in accordance with the Standards. Any published materials that use the GRI Standards in this way are to include a 'GRI-referenced' claim.

See [Section 3 of GRI 101: Foundation](#) for more information on how to use the GRI Standards, and the specific claims that organizations are required to include in any published materials.

Figure 1  
Overview of the set of GRI Standards



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## C. Requirements, recommendations and guidance

The GRI Standards include:

**Requirements.** These are mandatory instructions. In the text, requirements are presented in **bold font** and indicated with the word 'shall'. Requirements are to be read in the context of recommendations and guidance; however, an organization is not required to comply with recommendations or guidance in order to claim that a report has been prepared in accordance with the Standards.

**Recommendations.** These are cases where a particular course of action is encouraged, but not required. In the text, the word 'should' indicates a recommendation.

**Guidance.** These sections include background information, explanations and examples to help organizations better understand the requirements.

An organization is required to comply with all applicable requirements in order to claim that its report has been prepared in accordance with the GRI Standards. See [GRI 101: Foundation](#) for more information.

The minimum age for hazardous work is 18 years for all countries. Hazardous child labor is defined by Article 3 (d) of ILO Convention 182 'Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention' as 'work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.'

Due diligence is expected of an organization in order to prevent the use of child labor within its activities. It is also expected to avoid contributing to, or becoming complicit in, the use of child labor through its relationships with others (e.g., suppliers, clients).

These concepts are covered in key instruments of the ILO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the United Nations: see [References](#).

The disclosures in this Standard can provide information about an organization's impacts related to child labor, and how it manages these impacts.

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## D. Background context

In the context of the GRI Standards, the social dimension of sustainability concerns an organization's impacts on the social systems within which it operates.

*GRI 408* addresses the topic of child labor. Abolishing child labor is a key principle and objective of major human rights instruments and legislation, and is the subject of national legislation in almost all countries.

Child labor is work that 'deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical or mental development including by interfering with their education. Specifically, it means types of work that are not permitted for children below the relevant minimum age.'<sup>1</sup>

Child labor does not refer to youth employment or to children working. It refers to a universally-recognized human rights abuse. The internationally-agreed understanding of the meaning of child labor is set out in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138 'Minimum Age Convention'.

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<sup>1</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Organisation of Employers (IOE), *How to do business with respect for children's right to be free from child labour: ILO-IOE child labour guidance tool for business*, 2015.

# GRI 408: Child Labor

This Standard includes disclosures on the management approach and topic-specific disclosures. These are set out in the Standard as follows:

- Management approach disclosures (this section references *GRI 103*)
- Disclosure 408-1 Operations and suppliers at significant risk for incidents of child labor

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## 1. Management approach disclosures

Management approach disclosures are a narrative explanation of how an organization manages a material topic, the associated impacts, and stakeholders' reasonable expectations and interests. Any organization that claims its report has been prepared in accordance with the GRI Standards is required to report on its management approach for every material topic, as well as reporting topic-specific disclosures for those topics.

Therefore, this topic-specific Standard is designed to be used together with *GRI 103: Management Approach* in order to provide full disclosure of the organization's impacts. *GRI 103* specifies how to report on the management approach and what information to provide.

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### Reporting requirements

- 1.1 The reporting organization shall report its management approach for child labor using [GRI 103: Management Approach](#).

## 2. Topic-specific disclosures

### Disclosure 408-1

#### Operations and suppliers at significant risk for incidents of child labor

##### Reporting requirements

The reporting organization shall report the following information:

- a. Operations and suppliers considered to have significant risk for incidents of:
  - i. child labor;
  - ii. young workers exposed to hazardous work.
- b. Operations and suppliers considered to have significant risk for incidents of child labor either in terms of:
  - i. type of operation (such as manufacturing plant) and supplier;
  - ii. countries or geographic areas with operations and suppliers considered at risk.
- c. Measures taken by the organization in the reporting period intended to contribute to the effective abolition of child labor.

Disclosure  
408-1

##### Guidance

###### *Guidance for Disclosure 408-1*

The process for identifying operations and suppliers, as specified in Disclosure 408-1, can reflect the reporting organization's approach to risk assessment on this issue. It can also draw from recognized international data sources, such as the ILO *Information and reports on the application of Conventions and Recommendations* (see reference 1 in the [References section](#)).

When reporting the measures taken, the organization can refer to the ILO 'Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy' and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises* for further guidance.

In the context of the GRI Standards, a 'young worker' is defined as a person above the applicable minimum working age and younger than 18 years of age. Note that Disclosure 408-1 does not require quantitative reporting on child labor or the number of young workers. Rather, it asks for reporting on the *operations and suppliers* considered to have significant risk for incidents of child labor or young workers exposed to hazardous work.

###### *Background*

Child labor is subject to ILO Conventions 138 'Minimum Age Convention' (ILO Convention 138) and 182 'Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention' (ILO Convention 182).

'Child labor' refers to an abuse, which is not to be confused with 'children working' or with 'young persons working', which may not be abuses as stipulated in ILO Convention 138.

The minimum age for working differs by country. ILO Convention 138 specifies a minimum age of 15 years or the age of completion of compulsory schooling (whichever is higher). However, there is an exception for certain countries where economies and educational facilities are insufficiently developed and a minimum age of 14 years might apply. These countries of exception are specified by the ILO in response to special application by the country concerned, and in consultation with representative organizations of employers and workers.

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**Disclosure 408-1**

Continued

ILO Convention 138 stipulates that 'national laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons 13 to 15 years of age on light work which is (a) not likely to be harmful to their health or development; and (b) not such as to prejudice their attendance at school, their participation in vocational orientation or training programmes approved by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received'.

While child labor takes many different forms, a priority is to eliminate without delay the worst forms of child labor as defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention 182. This includes all forms of slavery or practices

similar to slavery (such as sale, trafficking, forced or compulsory labor, serfdom, recruitment for armed conflict); the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution or illicit activities and any work that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. ILO Convention 182 is intended to set priorities for states; however, organizations are expected not to use this convention to justify forms of child labor.

Child labor results in under-skilled and unhealthy workers for tomorrow and perpetuates poverty across generations, thus impeding sustainable development. The abolition of child labor is therefore necessary for both economic and human development.

# Glossary

This Glossary includes definitions for terms used in this Standard, which apply when using this Standard. These definitions may contain terms that are further defined in the complete [GRI Standards Glossary](#).

All defined terms are underlined. If a term is not defined in this Glossary or in the complete *GRI Standards Glossary*, definitions that are commonly used and understood apply.

## child

person under the age of 15 years, or under the age of completion of compulsory schooling, whichever is higher

**Note 1:** Exceptions can occur in certain countries where economies and educational facilities are insufficiently developed and a minimum age of 14 years applies. These countries of exception are specified by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in response to a special application by the country concerned and in consultation with representative organizations of employers and workers.

**Note 2:** The ILO Convention 138, 'Minimum Age Convention', 1973, refers to both child labor and young workers.

## due diligence

In the context of the GRI Standards, 'due diligence' refers to a process to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how an organization addresses its actual and potential negative impacts.

**Note:** This definition is based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, 2011, and the United Nations (UN), 'Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework', 2011.

## impact

In the GRI Standards, unless otherwise stated, 'impact' refers to the effect an organization has on the economy, the environment, and/or society, which in turn can indicate its contribution (positive or negative) to sustainable development.

**Note 1:** In the GRI Standards, the term 'impact' can refer to positive, negative, actual, potential, direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, intended, or unintended impacts.

**Note 2:** Impacts on the economy, environment, and/or society can also be related to consequences for the organization itself. For example, an impact on the economy, environment, and/or society can lead to consequences for the organization's business model, reputation, or ability to achieve its objectives.



## material topic

topic that reflects a reporting organization's significant economic, environmental and social impacts; or that substantively influences the assessments and decisions of stakeholders

**Note 1:** For more information on identifying a material topic, see the [Reporting Principles for defining report content](#) in *GRI 101: Foundation*.

**Note 2:** To prepare a report in accordance with the GRI Standards, an organization is required to report on its material topics.

**Note 3:** Material topics can include, but are not limited to, the topics covered by the GRI Standards in the 200, 300, and 400 series.

## supplier

organization or person that provides a product or service used in the supply chain of the reporting organization

**Note 1:** A supplier is further characterized by a genuine direct or indirect commercial relationship with the organization.

**Note 2:** Examples of suppliers can include, but are not limited to:

- Brokers: Persons or organizations that buy and sell products, services, or assets for others, including contracting agencies that supply labor.
- Consultants: Persons or organizations that provide expert advice and services on a legally recognized professional and commercial basis. Consultants are legally recognized as self-employed or are legally recognized as employees of another organization.
- Contractors: Persons or organizations working onsite or offsite on behalf of an organization. A contractor can contract their own workers directly, or contract sub-contractors or independent contractors.
- Distributors: Persons or organizations that supply products to others.
- Franchisees or licensees: Persons or organizations that are granted a franchise or license by the reporting organization. Franchises and licenses permit specified commercial activities, such as the production and sale of a product.
- Home workers: Persons at home or in other premises of their choice, other than the workplace of the employer, who perform work for remuneration and which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used.
- Independent contractors: Persons or organizations working for an organization, a contractor, or a sub-contractor.
- Manufacturers: Persons or organizations that make products for sale.
- Primary producers: Persons or organizations that grow, harvest, or extract raw materials.
- Sub-contractors: Persons or organizations working onsite or offsite on behalf of an organization that have a direct contractual relationship with a contractor or sub-contractor, but not necessarily with the organization. A sub-contractor can contract their own workers directly or contract independent contractors.
- Wholesalers: Persons or organizations that sell products in large quantities to be retailed by others.

# References

The following documents informed the development of this Standard and can be helpful for understanding and applying it.

## **Authoritative intergovernmental instruments:**

1. International Labour Organization (ILO), Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, *Report III - Information and reports on the application of Conventions and Recommendations*, updated annually.
2. International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138, 'Minimum Age Convention', 1973.
3. International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 142, 'Human Resources Development Convention', 1975.
4. International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 182, 'Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention', 1999.
5. International Labour Organization (ILO), 'Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy', 2006.
6. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, 2011.
7. United Nations (UN) Convention, 'Convention on the Rights of the Child', 1989.
8. United Nations (UN), 'Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework', 2011.
9. United Nations (UN), *Protect, Respect and Remedy: a Framework for Business and Human Rights*, 2008.
10. United Nations (UN), *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises, John Ruggie*, 2011.

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