



**SASB
STANDARDS**

Now part of IFRS Foundation

Advertising & Marketing

Sustainability Accounting Standard

SERVICES SECTOR

Sustainable Industry Classification System® (SICS®) SV-AD

Under Stewardship of the International Sustainability Standards Board

INDUSTRY STANDARD | VERSION 2023-12



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About the SASB Standards

As of August 2022, the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) of the IFRS Foundation assumed responsibility for the SASB Standards. The ISSB has committed to maintain, enhance and evolve the SASB Standards and encourages preparers and investors to continue to use the SASB Standards.

IFRS S1 *General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainability-related Financial Information* (IFRS S1) requires entities to refer to and consider the applicability of disclosure topics in the SASB Standards when identifying sustainability-related risks and opportunities that could reasonably be expected to affect an entity's prospects. Similarly, IFRS S1 requires entities to refer to and consider the applicability of metrics in the SASB Standards when determining what information to disclose regarding sustainability-related risks and opportunities.

In June 2023, the ISSB amended climate-related topics and metrics in the SASB Standards to align them with the industry-based guidance accompanying IFRS S2 *Climate-related Disclosures*. In December 2023, the ISSB amended the non-climate-related topics and metrics in connection with the International Applicability of SASB Standards project.

Effective Date

This version 2023-12 of the Standard is effective for all entities for annual periods beginning or after January 1, 2025. Early adoption is permitted for all entities.

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INTRODUCTION

Overview of SASB Standards

The SASB Standards are a set of 77 industry-specific sustainability accounting standards (“SASB Standards” or “Industry Standards”), categorised pursuant to the [Sustainable Industry Classification System[®] \(SICS[®]\)](#).

SASB Standards include:

1. **Industry descriptions** – which are intended to help entities identify applicable industry guidance by describing the business models, associated activities and other common features that characterise participation in the industry.
2. **Disclosure topics** – which describe specific sustainability-related risks or opportunities associated with the activities conducted by entities within a particular industry.
3. **Metrics** – which accompany disclosure topics and are designed to, either individually or as part of a set, provide useful information regarding an entity’s performance for a specific disclosure topic.
4. **Technical protocols** – which provide guidance on definitions, scope, implementation and presentation of associated metrics.
5. **Activity metrics** – which quantify the scale of specific activities or operations by an entity and are intended for use in conjunction with the metrics referred to in point 3 to normalise data and facilitate comparison.

Entities using the SASB Standards as part of their implementation of ISSB Standards should consider the relevant ISSB application guidance.

For entities using the SASB Standards independently from ISSB Standards, the [SASB Standards Application Guidance](#) establishes guidance applicable to the use of all Industry Standards and is considered part of the Standards. Unless otherwise specified in the technical protocols contained in the Industry Standards, the guidance in the SASB Standards Application Guidance applies to the definitions, scope, implementation, compilation and presentation of the metrics in the Industry Standards.

Historically, the [SASB Conceptual Framework](#) set out the basic concepts, principles, definitions and objectives that guided the SASB Standards Board in its approach to setting standards for sustainability accounting.

Use of the Standards

SASB Standards are intended to aid entities in disclosing information about sustainability-related risks and opportunities that could reasonably be expected to affect the entity's cash flows, its access to finance or cost of capital over the short, medium or long term. An entity determines which Industry Standard(s) and which disclosure topics are relevant to its business, and which associated metrics to report. In general, an entity should use the SASB Standard specific to its primary industry as identified in [SICS[®]](#). However, companies with substantial business in multiple SICS[®] industries should refer to and consider the applicability of the disclosure topics and associated metrics in additional SASB Standards.

The disclosure topics and associated metrics contained in this Standard have been identified as those that are likely to be useful to investors. However, the responsibility for making materiality judgements and determinations rests with the reporting entity.

Industry Description

Advertising & Marketing entities create advertising campaigns for use in media, display, or direct mail advertising and related services including market research. Advertising and marketing entities are engaged primarily by businesses selling consumer products, entertainment, financial services, technology products and telecommunication services. Larger advertising entities are structured as holding entities, owning multiple agencies around the world that provide a wide range of services such as custom publishing, brand consultancy, mobile and online marketing, and public relations. For any advertising campaign, the same entity may be engaged in all aspects, from graphic arts and content creation to data analytics, marketing research, and media planning and buying, or the entity may manage only some aspects of a given campaign.

SUSTAINABILITY DISCLOSURE TOPICS & METRICS

Table 1. Sustainability Disclosure Topics & Metrics

TOPIC	METRIC	CATEGORY	UNIT OF MEASURE	CODE
Data Privacy	Discussion of policies and practices relating to targeted advertising and consumer privacy	Discussion and Analysis	n/a	SV-AD-220a.1
	Percentage of online advertising impressions that are targeted to custom audiences	Quantitative	Percentage (%) by revenue	SV-AD-220a.2
	Total amount of monetary losses as a result of legal proceedings associated with consumer privacy ¹	Quantitative	Presentation currency	SV-AD-220a.3
Advertising Integrity	Total amount of monetary losses as a result of legal proceedings associated with false, deceptive or unfair advertising ²	Quantitative	Presentation currency	SV-AD-270a.1
	Percentage of campaigns reviewed for adherence with a self-regulatory assessment procedure or equivalent, percentage of those in compliance	Quantitative	Percentage (%) by revenue	SV-AD-270a.2
	Percentage of campaigns that promote alcohol or tobacco products	Quantitative	Percentage (%) by revenue	SV-AD-270a.3
Workforce Diversity & Inclusion	Percentage of (1) gender and (2) diversity group representation for (a) executive management, (b) non-executive management, (c) professionals, and (d) all other employees ³	Quantitative	Percentage (%)	SV-AD-330a.1

Table 2. Activity Metrics

ACTIVITY METRIC	CATEGORY	UNIT OF MEASURE	CODE
Median reach of advertisements and marketing campaigns ⁴	Quantitative	Number	SV-AD-000.A
Number of exposures to advertisements or marketing campaigns ⁵	Quantitative	Number	SV-AD-000.B
Median frequency of exposures ⁶	Quantitative	Number	SV-AD-000.C

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¹ Note to **SV-AD-220a.3** – The entity shall briefly describe the nature, context and any corrective actions taken because of monetary losses.

² Note to **SV-AD-270a.1** – The entity shall briefly describe the nature, context and any corrective actions taken because of monetary losses.

³ Note to **SV-AD-330a.1** – The entity shall describe its policies and programmes for fostering equitable employee representation across its global operations.

⁴ Note to **SV-AD-000.A** – ‘Reach’ refers to the percentage of consumers in the target audience that are exposed to a particular advertisement in the stated period. ‘Target audience’ refers to the group of people at whom advertisements are aimed.

⁵ Note to **SV-AD-000.B** – ‘Exposures’ refers to the opportunities that a viewer, listener or reader had to see or hear an advertisement (also known as ‘impressions’ for online marketing).

⁶ Note to **SV-AD-000.C** – ‘Frequency’ refers to the number of times targeted individuals are exposed to advertisements or marketing campaigns in the stated period.

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ACTIVITY METRIC	CATEGORY	UNIT OF MEASURE	CODE
Number of employees	Quantitative	Number	SV-AD-000.D

Data Privacy

Topic Summary

Because of the prevalence of social media, location-based mobile applications and e-commerce, customers' digital footprints offer a more complete picture of their habits than might otherwise be available to advertisers. Advertisers can collect or purchase highly detailed information about buyers, and advertising strategies can be precisely targeted to potential buyers. As part of an industry that uses large quantities of data about private citizens, advertising and marketing entities must balance the potential benefits of targeted advertising with protecting customer data and privacy.

Metrics

SV-AD-220a.1. Discussion of policies and practices relating to targeted advertising and consumer privacy

- 1 The entity shall describe the nature, scope and implementation of its policies and practices related to the privacy of consumer information, with a specific focus on how the entity manages the collection, use and retention of consumers' information and its approach to targeted advertising.
 - 1.1 Consumer information is defined as information that pertains to a user's attributes or actions which may include records of communications, content of communications, demographic data, behavioural data, location data and personal data.
 - 1.1.1 Demographic data is defined as information that identifies and distinguishes a given population. Examples of demographic data include gender, age, ethnicity, language, disabilities, mobility, home ownership and employment status.
 - 1.1.2 Behavioural data is defined as information that tracks, measures and records individual behaviours such as consumers' online browsing patterns, buying habits, brand preferences and product usage patterns, among others.
 - 1.1.3 Location data is defined as information that describes the physical location or movement patterns of an individual, such as Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates or other related data that would enable identifying and tracking of an individual's physical location.
 - 1.1.4 Personal data is defined as information that relates to an identified or identifiable living individual. Various pieces of information, which collected together can lead to the identification of a particular person, also constitute personal data.
 - 1.1.5 The entity may define personal data based on an applicable jurisdictional definition. In such cases, the entity shall disclose the applicable jurisdictional standard or definition used.
 - 1.2 Targeted advertising is defined as the practice of selecting and displaying advertisements to individual users based on their user information.

- 1.3 The scope of the disclosure includes information from first-, second-, and third-party sources.
- 2 The entity shall describe the information 'lifecycle' (collection, use, retention, processing, disclosure and destruction of information) and how information-handling practices at each stage may affect individuals' privacy.
 - 2.1 With respect to data collection, the entity may discuss the data or types of data it collects without the consent of an individual, data that requires opt-in consent and data that requires an opt-out action from the individual.
 - 2.2 With respect to data use, the entity may discuss the data or types of data it uses internally, and under which circumstances the entity shares, sells, rents or otherwise distributes data or information to third parties.
 - 2.3 With respect to data retention, the entity may discuss the data or types of data it retains, the duration of retention, and practices used to ensure that data are stored securely.
- 3 The entity shall describe its use of privacy impact assessments (PIAs), data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) or similar assessments.
 - 3.1 A PIA or DPIA is an analysis of how information is handled that ensures handling conforms to applicable jurisdictional legal, regulatory and policy requirements regarding privacy; determines the risks and effects of collecting, maintaining and disseminating information in an identifiable form in an electronic information system; and examines and evaluates protections and alternative processes for handling information to mitigate potential privacy risks.

SV-AD-220a.2. Percentage of online advertising impressions that are targeted to custom audiences

- 1 The entity shall disclose the percentage of its advertising impressions that are targeted to custom audiences.
 - 1.1 An advertising impression is a measure of the number of times an advertisement is seen, heard, watched or read online.
 - 1.2 Custom audiences are defined as individuals to whom advertisers target their advertisements based on consumer information pertaining to a user's attributes or actions which may include records of communications, content of communications, demographic data, behavioural data, location data or personal data.
 - 1.2.1 Demographic data is defined as information that identifies and distinguishes a given population. Examples of demographic data include gender, age, ethnicity, language, disabilities, mobility, home ownership and employment status.
 - 1.2.2 Behavioural data is defined as information that tracks, measures and records individual behaviours such as consumers' online browsing patterns, buying habits, brand preferences and product usage patterns, among others.

- 1.2.3 Location data is defined as information that describes the physical location or movement patterns of an individual, such as Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates or other related data that would enable identifying and tracking of an individual's physical location.
- 1.2.4 Personal data is defined as information that relates to an identified or identifiable living individual. Various pieces of information, which collected together can lead to the identification of a particular person, also constitute personal data.
- 1.2.5 The entity may define personal data based on applicable jurisdictional laws or regulations. In such cases, the entity shall disclose the applicable jurisdictional standard or definition used.
- 1.3 The entity shall calculate the percentage as the total number of advertising impressions that are targeted to custom audiences, divided by the total number of advertising impressions.
 - 1.3.1 The total number of advertising impressions shall be calculated as the sum of impressions targeted to custom audiences and impressions not targeted to custom audiences, such as those targeted according to publisher (for example, contextual advertising).
- 2 The scope of the disclosure is limited to impressions from advertising campaigns delivered online, including through mobile devices or internet-based TV services.
 - 2.1 Advertising campaigns include (1) campaigns made directly by the entity and (2) campaigns the entity has made on behalf of its customers, including those resulting from advertising inventory sold on networks and exchanges operated by the entity, advertising space purchased on behalf of customers through platform buying services, and media plans developed by the entity that specify the locations and type of advert placement.

SV-AD-220a.3. Total amount of monetary losses as a result of legal proceedings associated with consumer privacy

- 1 The entity shall disclose the total amount of monetary losses incurred during the reporting period resulting from legal proceedings associated with incidents relating to customer privacy.
- 2 The legal proceedings shall include any adjudicative proceeding involving the entity, whether before a court, a regulator, an arbitrator or otherwise.
- 3 The losses shall include all monetary liabilities to the opposing party or to others (whether as the result of settlement, verdict after trial or otherwise), including fines and other monetary liabilities incurred during the reporting period as a result of civil actions (for example, civil judgements or settlements), regulatory proceedings (for example, penalties, disgorgement or restitution) and criminal actions (for example, criminal judgements, penalties or restitution) brought by any entity (for example, governmental, business or individual).
- 4 The scope of monetary losses shall exclude legal and other fees and expenses incurred by the entity in its defence.
- 5 The scope of the disclosure shall include legal proceedings associated with the enforcement of applicable jurisdictional laws or regulations.

Note to **SV-AD-220a.3**

- 1 The entity shall briefly describe the nature (for example, judgement or order issued after trial, settlement, guilty plea, deferred agreement or non-prosecution agreement) and context (for example, unauthorised monitoring, sharing of data or children's privacy) of all monetary losses resulting from legal proceedings.
- 2 The entity shall describe any corrective actions implemented in response to the legal proceedings. This may include specific changes in operations, management, processes, products, business partners, training or technology.
- 3 All disclosure shall be sufficient such that it is specific to the risks the entity faces, but disclosure itself will not compromise the entity's ability to maintain data privacy and security.

Advertising Integrity

Topic Summary

Entities have a legal responsibility to ensure their products and services advertising is truthful and not deceptive. Although much of the regulatory compliance burden regarding advertising content and placement lies with the client, advertising agencies play a vital role in the creation of advertising content and are responsible for advising clients regarding applicable regulations. Consumer protection laws provide guidance and restrictions on advertising to children and on advertising regulated products, such as alcohol and tobacco. Regulators may investigate advertising agency involvement in deceptive advertising and penalise the agency. Advertising and marketing entities exposed to these regulations and concerns have responded by participating in self-regulatory programmes that manage these areas.

Metrics

SV-AD-270a.1. Total amount of monetary losses as a result of legal proceedings associated with false, deceptive or unfair advertising

- 1 The entity shall disclose the total amount of monetary losses incurred during the reporting period resulting from legal proceedings associated with incidents relating to false, deceptive or unfair advertising.
- 2 The legal proceedings shall include any adjudicative proceeding involving the entity, whether before a court, a regulator, an arbitrator or otherwise.
- 3 The losses shall include all monetary liabilities to the opposing party or to others (whether as the result of settlement, verdict after trial or otherwise), including fines and other monetary liabilities incurred during the reporting period as a result of civil actions (for example, civil judgements or settlements), regulatory proceedings (for example, penalties, disgorgement or restitution) and criminal actions (for example, criminal judgements, penalties or restitution) brought by any entity (for example, governmental, business or individual).
- 4 The scope of monetary losses shall exclude legal and other fees and expenses incurred by the entity in its defence.
- 5 The scope of the disclosure shall include legal proceedings associated with the enforcement of applicable jurisdictional laws or regulations.

Note to SV-AD-270a.1

- 1 The entity shall briefly describe the nature (for example, judgement or order issued after trial, settlement, guilty plea, deferred prosecution agreement or non-prosecution agreement) and context (for example, lack of substantiation of claims) of all monetary losses resulting from legal proceedings.
- 2 The entity shall describe any corrective actions implemented in response to the legal proceedings. This may include specific changes in operations, management, processes, products, business partners, training or technology.

SV-AD-270a.2. Percentage of campaigns reviewed for adherence with a self-regulatory assessment procedure or equivalent, percentage of those in compliance

- 1 The entity shall disclose the percentage of its advertising and marketing campaigns, by revenue, that were reviewed by a self-regulatory assessment procedure or equivalent organisation for adherence to applicable jurisdictional legal or regulatory advertising guidelines directed at the performance of advertisers (for example, the clients of advertising agencies).
 - 1.1 Criteria for assessing advertisements may include:
 - 1.1.1 legality, that an advertisement is compliant with applicable laws;
 - 1.1.2 decency, that an advertisement does not violate local cultural norms and customs;
 - 1.1.3 honesty, that an advertisement does not abuse the trust of consumers or exploit their lack of experience or knowledge;
 - 1.1.4 truthfulness; that an advertisement does not include content that could mislead consumers;
 - 1.1.5 social responsibility, that an advertisement respects human dignity and is free from any form of discrimination based on race, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation;
 - 1.1.6 fairness, that an advertisement is not derogatory to competing entities and is free from plagiarism; and
 - 1.1.7 privacy, that an advertisement complies with applicable jurisdictional legal or regulatory requirements regarding data protection for consumers.
 - 1.2 The scope of the disclosure includes all advertising and marketing campaigns and associated recommendations by the entity (for example, placement of advertisements).
 - 1.3 The percentage is calculated as the revenue associated with advertising and marketing campaigns reviewed by a self-regulatory or equivalent organisation for adherence to jurisdictional requirements or guidelines regarding advertising, divided by the total advertising and marketing revenue.
- 2 The entity shall disclose the percentage of its advertising and marketing campaigns by revenue that have been reviewed by a self-regulatory or equivalent organisation that were found by such an organisation to comply with the applicable assessment criteria.
- 3 The entity shall disclose the self-regulatory or equivalent organisation used to perform its calculation.

SV-AD-270a.3. Percentage of campaigns that promote alcohol or tobacco products

- 1 The entity shall disclose the percentage, by revenue, of its advertising and marketing campaigns that promote alcohol or tobacco products.

- 1.1 Tobacco products are defined as any product made or derived from tobacco intended for human consumption, including any component, part or accessory of a tobacco product. This includes, among other products, cigarettes, cigarette tobacco, roll-your-own tobacco and smokeless tobacco.
- 1.2 Alcohol products are any product capable of being consumed containing more than a half percent of ethanol or ethyl alcohol by volume.
- 2 The percentage is calculated as the revenue generated from advertising and marketing campaigns that promote alcohol or tobacco products, divided by the total revenue from all advertising and marketing campaigns.
- 3 The entity may discuss how it manages potential impacts from specific rules, prohibitions, media restrictions, labelling disclosures and warning requirements applicable to advertising for alcohol or tobacco products.

Workforce Diversity & Inclusion

Topic Summary

In the Advertising & Marketing industry, an entity gains competitive advantages from producing creative, innovative ideas. Entities in this industry compete for talented workers to create successful advertising campaigns. Larger entities have clients around the world and must employ a diverse workforce to reach diverse audiences effectively. Connecting with a target market relies, to a significant extent, on employing a workforce that reflects the communities in that market. A diverse workforce is a critical factor in improving service outcomes and enhancing an advertising entity's financial performance.

Metrics

SV-AD-330a.1. Percentage of (1) gender and (2) diversity group representation for (a) executive management, (b) non-executive management, (c) professionals, and (d) all other employees

- 1 The entity shall disclose (1) the percentage of gender representation among its employees for (a) executive management, (b) non-executive management, (c) professionals and (d) all other employees.
 - 1.1 The entity shall categorise the gender of its employees as women, men or not disclosed.
 - 1.1.1 The entity may disclose additional categories of gender identity or expression.
 - 1.2 The entity shall use these employee categories: (a) executive management, (b) non-executive management, (c) professionals and (d) all other employees.
 - 1.3 Executive management is defined as chief executives and senior officials who formulate and review the entity's policies, and plan, direct, coordinate and evaluate the overall activities of the entity with the support of other managers.
 - 1.3.1 The entity may refer to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) Sub-Major Group 11 or an applicable jurisdictional occupation classification system for a definition of executive management. In such cases, the entity shall disclose the occupation classification standard used to classify executive management.
 - 1.4 Non-executive management is defined as those who plan, direct, coordinate and evaluate the activities of the entity, or of organisational units within it, and formulate and review its policies, rules and regulations, other than executive management.
 - 1.4.1 The entity may refer to the ISCO Major Group 1 (excluding Sub-Major Group 11) or an applicable jurisdictional occupational classification system for a definition of non-executive management. In such cases, the entity shall disclose the occupation classification standard used to classify non-executive management.

- 1.5 Professionals are defined as employees who perform highly skilled or highly qualified work generally categorised in the business administration, finance, legal, sales, marketing, public relations, and information and communications technology occupations.
 - 1.5.1 The entity may refer to the ISCO Major Group 2 or an applicable jurisdictional occupation classification system for a definition of professionals. In such cases, the entity shall disclose the occupation classification system used to classify professionals.
- 1.6 All other employees are defined as those employees who are not classified as executive management, non-executive management or professionals.
- 1.7 The entity shall calculate the percentage of gender representation for each employee category as the number of employees in each gender category divided by the total number of employees in the respective employee category.
- 2 The entity shall disclose (2) the percentage of diversity group representation among its employees for (a) executive management, (b) non-executive management, (c) professionals and (d) all other employees.
 - 2.1 The entity shall identify diversity groups in its workforce.
 - 2.1.1 Diversity is defined as the presence of people from populations who have been underrepresented in a particular field or are otherwise historically marginalised in a particular society.
 - 2.1.2 Diversity groups may be defined by dimensions such as race, ethnicity, disability status, region of origin, migrant status, indigenous background, age, socioeconomic background, religious affiliation, sexual orientation or gender identity.
 - 2.1.3 Diversity groups may be defined by applicable jurisdictional laws or regulations or third-party frameworks.
 - 2.1.4 The entity may omit diversity groups if collecting data on that group would be prohibited by applicable jurisdictional laws or regulations or would pose a risk of harm to members of the group.
 - 2.2 The entity shall calculate the percentage of diversity group representation for each employee category as the number of employees in each diversity group, divided by the total number of employees in the respective employee category.
- 3 The entity may provide disclosures on gender or diversity group representation disaggregated by jurisdiction.
- 4 The entity may provide supplementary contextual disclosures on factors that significantly influence gender or diversity group representation, such as the jurisdiction in which employees are located.
- 5 The entity may disclose gender or diversity group representation by employee category in these table formats:

Table 3. Gender Representation of Global Employees (%)

	WOMEN	MEN	...	N/D*
Executive Management				
Non-executive Management				
Professionals				
All Other Employees				

*N/D = not disclosed

Table 4. Diversity Group Representation of Global Employees (%)

	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	...	N/A*
Executive Management					
Non-executive Management					
Professionals					
All Other Employees					

*N/A = not available or not disclosed

Note to SV-AD-330a.1

- 1 The entity shall describe its policies and programmes for fostering equitable employee representation in its global operations.
 - 1.1 Relevant policies may include maintaining transparency of hiring, promotion and wage practices, ensuring equal employment opportunities, developing and disseminating diversity policies and ensuring management accountability for equitable representation.
 - 1.2 Relevant programmes may include training on diversity, mentorship and sponsorship programmes, partnership with employee resource and advisory groups and provision of flexible work schedules to accommodate the varying needs of employees.



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Now part of IFRS Foundation