

# Industry Association Sustainability Benchmark and Checklist

The following is a benchmark tool to help industry associations assess the comprehensiveness and coverage of their member sustainability (CSR) programs.

Place a check mark in the column which you think best represents current practices at your organization.

Sustainability / CSR Practice	Description	Strengths	Potential Gaps
<b>A. Sustainability Vision and Position</b>			
Association has adopted a long-term sustainability / CSR vision for the sector/ membership to rally around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision description and adoption date</li> </ul>		
Association includes sustainability in its mandate or mission statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of sustainability component of its mandate / mission statement</li> </ul>		
Association is aware of the long-term social and environmental sustainability trends, risks and opportunities that will affect the sector's future performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description and date of research conducted</li> <li>Research findings and implications</li> </ul>		
Association is knowledgeable about the business case and drivers for CSR / sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of the business case and drivers</li> </ul>		
Association has identified how its	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of plans to scale and accelerate the sustainability solutions offered by the</li> </ul>		

Sustainability / CSR Practice	Description	Strengths	Potential Gaps
sector can contribute to a sustainable future and is implementing plans to address these opportunities	sector		
Association has a definition of CSR / sustainability approved by its members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of CSR / sustainability</li> </ul>		
Association Board has a role in sustainability / CSR strategy and oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name and mandate of Board Committee responsible for CSR / sustainability</li> <li>• Board receives training on CSR / sustainability</li> <li>• Association's commitment to CSR / sustainability has been communicated internally and externally</li> <li>• Association has adopted a CSR or sustainability policy or commitment statement</li> </ul>		
Association staff have dedicated responsibility for overseeing and implementing sustainability / CSR programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of full time employees assigned to manage program</li> <li>• Positions and title(s) of sustainability / CSR staff, e.g. VP of environment</li> </ul>		
Association forms linkages or partnerships with international standard bodies and/or other leading sector initiatives in sustainability / CSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic partnerships Association is involved with</li> <li>• Linkages / involvement with other leading sustainability initiatives (e.g., GRI, Global Compact or other international Code of Conduct, other Industry Association sustainability initiative)</li> </ul>		
A minimum level of sustainability / CSR performance has been set for members (e.g., mandatory performance criteria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of required performance criteria</li> <li>• Description of monitoring/ verification/ corrective action or remediation process</li> <li>• Number of members in compliance</li> </ul>		

**B. Addressing Key Sustainability Issues in the Sector**

Sustainability / CSR Practice	Description	Strengths	Potential Gaps
<p>Association has process for identifying key sustainability / CSR trends, issues, etc. in its sector; association is knowledgeable about the social and environmental impacts of the sector along its value chain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of strategy / process for identifying issues, e.g. trends reports, best practice scans, stakeholder engagement, materiality analysis, etc.</li> <li>Issues that have been identified in the most recent strategy development process</li> <li>Description of the social and environmental impacts of the sector and its value chain</li> <li>Regular communications to members on relevant news items</li> </ul>		
<p>Association determines its position with respect to priority sustainability / CSR issues and develops programs or activities to address them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the industry's position on the sustainability / CSR issue or topic</li> <li>Describe programs/activities to address priority sustainability / CSR issues</li> <li>Programs are included in the Association's Business Plan</li> <li>Annual budget for the sustainability/ CSR program</li> <li>How program is funded (e.g., member dues for sustainability / CSR program, core budget, member-fund-raising, etc.)</li> <li>Alternative: Association promotes member participation in sustainability programs operated by third-party non-profit organizations</li> </ul>		
<p>Association provides support as needed to members on sustainability / CSR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe one-on-one support service available to members, e.g. CSR helpdesk</li> </ul>		
<p>Association is committed to contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of effort to prioritize key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Targets</li> <li>List of SDGs addressed by the Association and its members</li> </ul>		
<p>Association has an action plan for addressing sustainability / CSR issues in and impacts of the sector, including goals, targets, metrics (e.g., indicators) and timelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe action plan</li> <li>Describe goals, targets, metrics of the action plan</li> <li>Describe process for involving members, e.g. roundtables and working groups</li> </ul>		

Sustainability / CSR Practice	Description	Strengths	Potential Gaps
<b>Association adopts sustainability / CSR goals and targets for the sector to pursue together</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe sector goals, targets, metrics</li> <li>Summarize progress</li> </ul>		
<b>Association regularly reviews progress, checks in with members to ensure they are heading in right direction and that program is adding value, etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequency of progress review and assessment</li> <li>Member involvement in evaluation and review of sustainability / CSR program</li> <li>Association regularly benchmarks its progress against other sectors</li> <li>Significant changes to the program since its inception as a result of the review process</li> <li>Evidence of review and update in past five years</li> </ul>		
<b>Association engages with governments on public policy measures to advance sustainability / CSR in the sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe public policy initiatives of the Association that advance sustainability / CSR in the sector</li> <li>List instances where association CEO and / or Board Chair took favourable public positions on sustainability topics</li> <li>List public policy positions the association has taken in the last 2 years that advocate in opposition to sustainability / CSR in the sector</li> </ul>		
<b>Association has programs to pursue industry collaboration and innovation on sustainability / CSR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe industry collaboration projects that bring members together to tackle sustainability / CSR challenges and opportunities</li> <li>Describe nature of agreements underpinning collaborations, e.g. MOUs, bilateral or joint venture agreements, etc.</li> <li>Describe industry innovation pilots supported by the Association, including the Association's role</li> </ul>		

**C. Engaging Key External Stakeholders**

Sustainability / CSR Practice	Description	Strengths	Potential Gaps
Association has a process for identifying key stakeholders and determining which stakeholders to engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process for identifying key stakeholders</li> <li>Key stakeholders identified</li> </ul>		
Association operates programs to actively engage stakeholder groups in a dialogue on the sector's economic, environmental and social performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe programs / activities used to engage key stakeholders (e.g. identification of issues, policy and/ or program development, etc.)</li> <li>Describe consultation platforms (e.g. stakeholder advisory panel)</li> </ul>		
Association reports on types and results of engagements and the use of information resulting from stakeholder engagements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe reporting procedures</li> <li>Provide links to recent meeting summaries</li> <li>Describe how stakeholder engagement activities have influenced policy or program development</li> </ul>		
Association establishes stakeholder collaborations to address sustainability / CSR issues, barriers and opportunities together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of multi-stakeholder collaboration initiatives</li> <li>Description of supply chain collaboration initiatives</li> <li>Describe nature of agreements underpinning collaborations, e.g. MOUs, bilateral or joint venture agreements, etc.</li> </ul>		
Association sponsors and provides funding for sustainability organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of sustainability organizations financially sponsored by the association</li> </ul>		
<b>D. Supporting Members to Improve their Sustainability Performance</b>			
Association offers training, education and peer learning programs for its members on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe training and education programs, including certification/accreditation, if relevant</li> <li>Workshops, webinars, conferences, etc.</li> <li>List sustainability / CSR communities of practice or member peer learning platforms</li> </ul>		

Sustainability / CSR Practice	Description	Strengths	Potential Gaps
sustainability / CSR			
Association produces “how to” sustainability / CSR resource documents and tools to support its members in implementing Association’s sustainability / CSR program objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document any that pertain (e.g., toolkits, manuals, best practice guidance documents, checklists, benchmarking exercises)</li> </ul>		
Association offers incentive programs to encourage member participation in sustainability / CSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe incentive programs and level of member engagement in these programs (e.g., awards, etc.)</li> </ul>		
Association develops common sustainability / CSR metrics and metric protocols for members to track, measure and benchmark their performance and industry performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of the metrics and metric protocols</li> <li>Description of approach to measuring overall sector sustainability performance, e.g. a sector sustainable development index</li> </ul>		
Association has a library of member case studies demonstrating best practices in sustainability / CSR; acts as a clearing house for best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and type of case studies</li> </ul>		
Association develops a sustainability / CSR rating system or brand for members to use in their marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of rating system or branding program</li> </ul>		
Association participates in third-party standards that encourage procurement from members with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of standards programs that encourage sourcing from members with effective sustainability / CSR programs and products</li> </ul>		

Sustainability / CSR Practice	Description	Strengths	Potential Gaps
effective sustainability / CSR programs and products			
<b>E. Sustainability / CSR Reporting on Industry-Wide Initiatives</b>			
Association has an industry benchmarking program enabling members to compare their performance to another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of the benchmarking program and member participation rate</li> </ul>		
Association reports annually on its efforts to improve sustainability / CSR in the industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topics addressed in the annual report</li> </ul>		
Association reports publicly on the sustainability / CSR performance of the sector (including impacts of its sector, initiatives the sector has in place to address those impacts, performance data about products, materials or processes, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Method for reporting/ disclosing the performance of the Association's sustainability / CSR programs for its members (distinct from the Association's own organizational performance)</li> <li>Scope of report (e.g. performance goals and progress in implementing the sustainability / CSR program)</li> <li>Percent of membership represented by report (i.e., how many members contribute data and information to report)</li> <li>Other formats used to communicate industry sustainability performance to the public</li> </ul>		
Association conducts branding and marketing campaigns to communicate the sector's sustainability / CSR performance and build public support for the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description and nature of sustainability / CSR branding program</li> </ul>		
Association creates campaigns and marketing strategies to leverage the industry's sustainability performance in national and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of sustainability marketing program</li> </ul>		

Sustainability / CSR Practice	Description	Strengths	Potential Gaps
international markets			
<b>F. Association's Sustainability / CSR Performance – Leading by Example</b>			
Association profiles sustainability / CSR on its website home page and within a dedicated section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature of website coverage and accessibility from home page</li> </ul>		
Association has identified its own sustainability / CSR impacts ("House in Order" Program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impacts identified by Association</li> </ul>		
Association engages and trains its staff on sustainability / CSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs to train staff on sustainability / CSR</li> <li>Internal programs to engage staff on their sustainability behaviours at work, at home and in the community</li> </ul>		
Association develops goals, targets and metrics (e.g., indicators) and timelines for specific programs addressing its own sustainability / CSR impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List goals, targets, metrics and timelines for specific programs addressing sustainability / CSR impacts of the association</li> </ul>		
Association supports the replication of its sustainability program within other jurisdictions, e.g. provincial, national and international	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of efforts to replicate the sustainability program</li> <li>Name and number of other jurisdictions adopting the program</li> </ul>		