#4
PROJECT STATUS REPORT

Implementing the Sustainability Assessment Framework (SASF) in the Global ICT Industry

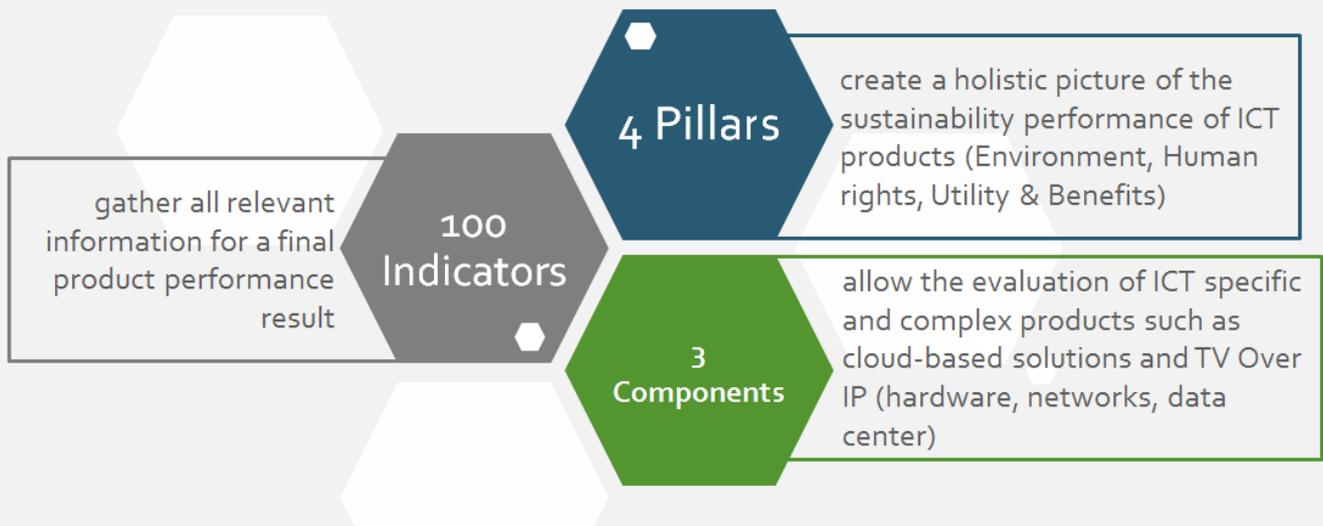February 2017

INTRODUCTION AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Between 2015 and 2016 GeSI developed the Sustainability Assessment Framework (SASF), a comprehensive assessment tool for ICT companies to internally **evaluate the sustainability performance of their products and services**. The Web-based SASF solution went live in summer 2016 following a successful pilot phase, and is currently available to all GeSI members on **www.GeSI.org/SASF.**

With the launch of the tool, Project Phase I was successfully completed. The first objective of Project Phase II, launched in the third quarter of 2016, is that GeSI members use the SASF for their initial product assessments. They were

therefore offered comprehensive guidance for implementation in the form of five support webinars that also provided a platform for exchange and Q&A. So far more than a dozen GeSI members have registered for the SASF.

The second objective was to present the tool to external stakeholders and gather feedback from them. GeSI carried out an external review process in which more than 30 experts and organizations were invited to give feedback on the SASF. The results are summarized in this project report and will be presented in detail at the internal **GeSI member meeting in the second quarter of 2017.**

SASF – a Framework for All GeSI Members

gather all relevant information for a final product performance result

100 Indicators

4 Pillars create a holistic picture of the sustainability performance of ICT products (Environment, Human rights, Utility & Benefits)

3 Components allow the evaluation of ICT specific and complex products such as cloud-based solutions and TV Over IP (hardware, networks, data center)

With SASF, companies are able to analyze their products and services and to optimize their portfolios with respect to sustainability aspects. Furthermore, SASF serves as a list of requirements for future products and thereby provides input for future design processes.

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION LAUNCH

In 2016 several companies started implementing the SASF as part of their internal product rating process. Two companies developed roadmaps, and several test assessments have been launched. Companies recognize the tool as potentially valuable for increasing transparency on products and services, and supporting the development of a sustainable product portfolio.

According to the feedback from these companies:

- The SASF approach is **comprehensive and applicable**.
- It provides a helpful, **differentiated overview of product/service sustainability**.

- Access to the tool is **quick and easy,** and **navigation is intuitive**.
- The tool provides a **well-structured dashboard** summarizing the main information.

Among the lessons learned was that a full product assessment with the GeSI SASF methodology is a complex task that requires the involvement of suppliers and internal specialist departments. The sharing of results and best practices within the SASF community is perceived as a key driver for the application of the SASF. Therefore, the current Project Phase III will focus on fostering application and exchange.

RESULTS OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

The design of the framework in Project Phase I was shaped through a transdisciplinary process which included workshops and webinars with GeSI members as well as external stakeholders.

To gather additional feedback from stakeholders **we carried out an external review process** from October to December 2016 in which key experts had exclusive access to the tool. Feedback was collected and analyzed by our project partners Stakeholder Reporting and Öko-Institut: Overall the tool was perceived as **highly comprehensive and useful** for the evaluation of the sustainability performance of ICT products and services. In the light of the manifold sustainability issues the ICT industry is dealing with, SASF as a tool succeeds in balancing complexity with usability. The rating agency oekom research evaluated the tool as potentially useful for its own assessments.

An example of a lesson learned from the review process is that experts recommend a differentiation between legal requirements and activities that go beyond the legal minimum. This should be taken into account in the evaluation method. It was also noted that the life-cycle assessment of products and services could be covered in more detail in the tool.

All member companies are invited to join the GeSI member meeting in the second quarter of 2017 to:
- ✓ get a better understanding of the tool and its functions;
- ✓ share good practice and lessons learned;
- ✓ discuss findings and implications from external review.

OUTLOOK: FROM ASSESSMENT TOOL TO REPORTING FRAMEWORK

In 2016 the SASF moved from theory to practice: All GeSI members now have access to the tool to measure the performance of their products in terms of social and environmental sustainability, and in the long run to increase the overall sustainability performance of their portfolios.

The vision of GeSI is to develop the SASF from an assessment methodology into a tool that can be used for external communication. In the long-term, GeSI – together with its member companies – aims at developing a Reporting Framework for the ICT industry.

The ongoing year 2017 will be used for further implementation of the tool, whereby companies will be provided continuous support in form of webinars and meetings. This project phase should foster the application of the tool and the exchange between member companies and stakeholders.

For further information please contact

Chiara Venturini
chiara.venturini@gesi.org

Christian Behrendt
christian.behrendt@stakeholder-reporting.com