

ESG Fitness Check

These guidance notes provide context and examples to help respondents from small, medium, and large organizations in various industries understand how to evaluate their practices against the survey statements. Adjustments can be made to fit specific industries and organizational types as needed.

Understanding the Scale

Please evaluate the following statements by clicking on one of the offered points:

- **Not relevant** - this aspect of ESG is not relevant to this organization
- **Does not apply** - relevant but not being done in this organization
- **Does rather not apply** - relevant to this organization but just initiated
- **Rather applicable** - relevant to this organization but not fully applied
- **Fully applicable** - Fully applied
- **I don't know** - I don't know if this applies in our organization or if it is relevant

Environment

1. Climate Change

1.1) The company invests in innovative products and services (% share of new products in total sales).

- **Small Organization Example:** A local restaurant introducing a plant-based menu.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional manufacturing company developing eco-friendly packaging.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global tech firm investing in renewable energy technologies.

1.2) The company maintains an ecologically and socially sensible cooperation with suppliers, customers, and research institutions.

- **Small Organization Example:** A boutique shop sourcing from local, sustainable producers.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A mid-sized construction firm partnering with green building material suppliers.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational corporation collaborating with universities on sustainability research.

2. Pollution

2.1) The company does not emit nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, and other pollutants (ISO 14008).

- **Small Organization Example:** A craft brewery implementing non-polluting brewing processes.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A chemical plant adopting new filtration systems to reduce emissions.

- **Large Organization Example:** An automobile manufacturer using advanced technology to eliminate harmful emissions.

2.2) The company measures the reduction and cost of CO2 emissions (ISO 14008).

- **Small Organization Example:** A local coffee shop tracking carbon emissions from deliveries.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A logistics company calculating emissions from their fleet and offsetting them.
- **Large Organization Example:** An energy company monitoring and reporting CO2 emissions across all operations.

2.3) The company collects received plastic packaging and returns it to the recycling process in an orderly manner.

- **Small Organization Example:** An independent grocery store setting up a plastic return scheme.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional retailer providing collection points for plastic packaging.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global consumer goods company ensuring all packaging is recyclable and collected.

2.4) The company assists customers and consumers in returning plastic packaging to the recycling process.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local bakery encouraging customers to return packaging.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A national chain offering rewards for returning plastic packaging.
- **Large Organization Example:** A large e-commerce platform providing free return shipping for packaging.

2.5) The Company separates and disposes of solid waste through a transparent documented process.

- **Small Organization Example:** A family-owned restaurant implementing a waste separation system.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A mid-sized office building introducing a recycling program.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational hotel chain ensuring waste management practices are followed at all locations.

3. Water and Marine Resources

3.1) The company uses recycled water where possible and does not discharge untreated water into the sewer system.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local car wash using recycled water systems.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional food processing plant recycling water used in production.
- **Large Organization Example:** A beverage company implementing water recycling at all production facilities.

3.2) The company takes concrete measures to reduce the consumption of drinking water.

- **Small Organization Example:** A small cafe installing water-saving devices.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A hotel chain encouraging guests to reuse towels and linens.
- **Large Organization Example:** An industrial manufacturer redesigning processes to minimize water use.

4. Biodiversity and Ecosystems

4.1) The company avoids the development of areas that should not be built on in the interest of biodiversity.

- **Small Organization Example:** A community garden avoiding expansion into natural habitats.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A construction company developing projects in previously developed areas only.
- **Large Organization Example:** A mining company restoring and conserving habitats around mining sites.

5. Resource Use & Circular Economy

5.1) The company knows the sources and causes of self-inflicted environmental impacts.

- **Small Organization Example:** A small IT firm assessing energy use in the office.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional retailer analyzing its supply chain for environmental impact.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global apparel brand tracking environmental impacts across its entire value chain.

5.2) The company takes concrete measures to reduce travel and transport costs e.g., through virtual meetings, home office, regional procurement sources.

- **Small Organization Example:** A consulting firm encouraging remote work.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A tech company reducing business travel by using video conferencing.
- **Large Organization Example:** An international bank promoting telecommuting and regional offices.

5.3) The environmental impact of procured goods/services (e.g., CO₂) is one of the decision criteria for supplier selection.

- **Small Organization Example:** A small design studio choosing eco-friendly printing services.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A healthcare provider selecting suppliers based on their environmental policies.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global electronics company prioritizing suppliers with low carbon footprints.

5.4) The environmental impact (e.g., CO₂) of one's own production is an important decision criterion for the selection and design of process technologies and investments.

- **Small Organization Example:** A craft brewery investing in energy-efficient brewing equipment.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional food producer choosing low-emission processing technologies.
- **Large Organization Example:** An automotive manufacturer incorporating renewable energy sources in factories.

Social

6. Own Workforce

6.1) Managers are appointed according to defined qualification requirements (professional, social, ecological, and leadership skills).

- **Small Organization Example:** A startup using a clear criteria checklist for hiring managers.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional bank implementing comprehensive management training.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global tech firm using a rigorous and transparent process for leadership appointments.

6.2) The company informs and trains the staff in respectful interaction and dealings with customers, partners, and employees.

- **Small Organization Example:** A small retail store providing customer service training.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A mid-sized law firm offering regular diversity and inclusion workshops.
- **Large Organization Example:** An international airline conducting comprehensive cultural competence training for all employees.

6.3) The company provides a safe and healthy working environment.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local bakery ensuring proper safety measures and equipment.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional manufacturing company implementing workplace safety protocols.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational construction company adhering to stringent health and safety regulations.

6.4) The Company's General Terms and Conditions contain conditions for the observance of human rights by suppliers and in business transactions.

- **Small Organization Example:** A boutique shop including ethical sourcing clauses in supplier contracts.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional distributor ensuring all contracts meet human rights standards.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global retailer enforcing strict human rights policies across all supply chains.

6.5) The company offers its employees training and further education opportunities within its own company and through external training and educational institutions as well as suppliers.

- **Small Organization Example:** A small tech startup providing online courses for skills development.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A healthcare provider offering in-house and external training programs.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational finance firm partnering with universities for employee education.

6.6) The company offers secure jobs and fair pay.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local craft shop paying living wages to all employees.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional service company ensuring job security and competitive salaries.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global corporation implementing fair pay and job security policies worldwide.

6.7) The Company supports and promotes community sports, educational, health, and/or care facilities.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local business sponsoring a community sports team.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional company supporting local schools and healthcare centers.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational corporation funding large-scale community projects globally.

6.8) The company supports facilities for children and adolescents that serve social integration and the promotion of career opportunities.

- **Small Organization Example:** A family-run business donating to local youth centers.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional business offering internships and scholarships to local students.
- **Large Organization Example:** An international company running programs to support disadvantaged youth in various countries.

7. Workers in the Value Chain

7.1) The Company shall provide equal opportunities to its employees in accordance with the UN Charter of Human Rights.

- **Small Organization Example:** A small design firm ensuring a diverse hiring process.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A mid-sized consultancy promoting equal opportunities through HR policies.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global manufacturing company with a robust diversity and inclusion program.

7.2) Employees receive fair living wages – regardless of gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local store ensuring equal pay for all employees.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional tech company conducting regular pay audits.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational corporation enforcing global wage equity policies.

7.3) The company examines suppliers and partners with regard to compliance with human rights (e.g., child labor, health hazards).

- **Small Organization Example:** An independent retailer verifying supplier practices through certifications.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A mid-sized producer conducting regular audits of suppliers.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global brand using a dedicated team to ensure supplier compliance with human rights standards.

8. Consumers and End-users

8.1) The company informs customers/consumers about the ingredients used and the countries of origin of the materials used.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local food producer providing detailed ingredient lists.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional apparel company labeling country of origin on all products.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global cosmetics brand ensuring transparency about ingredient sourcing.

8.2) The company supports and organizes the recycling of its products at the end of their life cycle.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local electronics shop offering recycling options.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional furniture company providing take-back services for old products.
- **Large Organization Example:** An international electronics manufacturer implementing global recycling programs.

9. Affected Communities

9.1) The company knows its stakeholders and how they are networked with the company (who, by what intensity).

- **Small Organization Example:** A small business mapping out key local stakeholders.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional company conducting stakeholder analysis.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational company using advanced tools for stakeholder mapping and engagement.

9.2) The company's management regularly examines on a case-by-case basis how changes in the environment affect the company's opportunity and risk profile.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local consultancy assessing environmental impacts on projects.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional manufacturer reviewing environmental risks annually.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global energy firm conducting comprehensive environmental risk assessments regularly.

Governance

10. Business Conduct

10.1) The Company has a solid financial basis and healthy development.

- **Small Organization Example:** A family-owned business maintaining positive cash flow.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional company achieving steady growth and profitability.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global corporation demonstrating financial stability and sustained growth.

10.2) The meaning and purpose of the company, its contribution to economic, social, and environmental development are clear and publicly available.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local nonprofit clearly stating its mission on its website.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A mid-sized company publishing an annual sustainability report.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational corporation integrating its purpose and contributions into all public communications.

10.3) The company's objectives are designed for long-term value creation and not for short-term economic benefits.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local business planning for sustainable growth.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional company focusing on long-term strategic goals.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global enterprise aligning objectives with sustainable development goals.

10.4) The company's objectives and principles include the interests of employees, society, and the environment.

- **Small Organization Example:** A small business incorporating employee and community well-being into its mission.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A mid-sized firm developing policies that benefit employees and the environment.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global company embedding social and environmental principles into its corporate strategy.

10.5) The corporate strategy identifies potential risks and actions to counter possible crises.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local business developing a basic risk management plan.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional company creating detailed contingency plans.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational corporation implementing comprehensive risk management frameworks.

10.6) The organizational structure, processes, and management structure of the company are designed to achieve long-term goals.

- **Small Organization Example:** A startup creating an organizational chart to support growth.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A mid-sized firm optimizing processes for efficiency.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global enterprise continuously refining its management structure to meet strategic goals.

10.7) The company/management behaves in accordance with the law and is not prosecuted for violations of the law.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local shop complying with all local regulations.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional firm ensuring all business practices meet legal standards.
- **Large Organization Example:** A multinational corporation adhering to global compliance requirements.

10.8) The Company does not face any attacks from the media and the public for ethical misconduct.

- **Small Organization Example:** A family-run business maintaining a positive public image.
- **Medium Organization Example:** A regional company ensuring ethical practices are followed to avoid negative publicity.
- **Large Organization Example:** A global brand implementing strict ethics policies to maintain a positive reputation.

10.9) The company is prepared for possible – direct and indirect – crisis situations; managers and employees know what to do.

- **Small Organization Example:** A local restaurant developing an emergency response plan.
 - **Medium Organization Example:** A mid-sized tech firm conducting regular crisis management drills.
 - **Large Organization Example:** A multinational corporation having detailed crisis management protocols and training for all employees.
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