

## **Statement of expectation on the future governance of the AA1000 Standards**

### **From a key stakeholder within the AA1000 user group community – Assurance Providers & Sustainability Practitioners**

To AccountAbility Directors and other stakeholders of the AA1000 standards,

We believe there is an extraordinary future for the AA1000 standards in making an even greater contribution to sustainable development. We, assurance providers and sustainability practitioners using the AA1000 standards, have all worked with, developed and promoted the AA1000 standards since 2003 and some of us have worked with the AA1000 framework from earlier. We and our clients have found the standards to be extremely helpful in delivering both sustainability assurance and sustainability management advice, and we have significantly invested in promoting and achieving buy-in for the standards in the regions we operate.

Collectively we have contributed significantly over the past 12 years to the AA1000 standards' development and promotion. That contribution has been freely and globally given; recognising the significance of this common good, and acknowledging the benefit to our work and careers that AA1000 standards have brought. AccountAbility's stewardship up until 2010, whilst not perfect, was founded on an inclusive and multi-stakeholder governed approach.

Since 2010 there have been a number of events in relation to governance and management at AccountAbility that have caused us to become deeply concerned for the future and integrity of the standards; these include:

- The resignation of AccountAbility Council en masse
- Resignation of the recently recruited Director of Standards
- Resignation of the AA1000 Standards Board en masse
- Resignation of individual Technical Committees members

These events alone represent a crisis for the governance of the Standards and their future. There is also the challenge of AccountAbility's publicly stated, new focus on consultancy services. This new focus puts AccountAbility in direct competition with us, a key stakeholder group; that is the assurance providers and advisors using AA1000 standards.

This new focus would not be an issue if there was in practice, and seen to be independent, governance for the AA1000 standards. We believe that the future governance of the standards is the most critical issue for all stakeholders of the AA1000 standards to engage on now. We will engage positively and proactively wherever we can to ensure independent governance for the standards is secured.

Without recognising and responding to the issues that key AA1000 standards stakeholders have had with AccountAbility's approach to the standards in the last months, moving forward with AccountAbility is challenging. The principles articulated in the new AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard need to be visibly implemented by AccountAbility itself, so that we can ensure that the future of these common good standards is secured.

Finally, a new, independent governance structure for the standards is needed and it must be underpinned by inclusive engagement.

At such a critical juncture for the future of the AA1000 standards we invite you to join the LinkedIn AA1000 Users Group <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=3736613> to affirm and build the community of users that we have become, as well shape the future of our AA1000 commons.

Yours sincerely

(alphabetically)

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