

92% of S&P 500® Companies and 70% of Russell 1000® Companies Published Sustainability Reports in 2020, G&A Institute Research Shows

10th Anniversary Report Finds All-Time Highs for Sustainability Reporting of Largest U.S. Public Companies

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NEW YORK, November 16, 2021, /3BL Media/ - Governance & Accountability Institute, Inc. (G&A), a leading consulting firm on corporate sustainability and ESG, today announced the findings of its *2021 Sustainability Reporting in Focus* research on sustainability reporting trends among companies in the S&P 500® Index and the Russell 1000® Index. The report marks the 10th anniversary of G&A's research series tracking the publication of sustainability reports by the largest U.S. public companies.

G&A's *2021 Sustainability Reporting in Focus* report, focusing on the 2020 publication year, found that sustainability reporting has clearly become a best practice among the largest

U.S. public companies. Key findings include:

- 92% of the S&P 500 companies published a sustainability report in 2020, up from 90% in 2019
- 70% of the Russell 1000 companies published a sustainability report in 2020, up from 65% in 2019
- 49% of the smallest half by market cap of the Russell 1000 companies published a sustainability report in 2020, up from 39% in 2019
- 68% of sustainability reports published by Russell 1000 companies discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2012, G&A's analysts began researching the sustainability reporting of the S&P 500® companies for the publication year 2011. This became the baseline for our annual examination of corporate sustainability reporting trends in subsequent years. The results of this initial research ten years ago showed that just 20% of the S&P 500 companies published sustainability reports or disclosures, meaning that 80% of the S&P 500 companies were NOT publishing such reports. G&A has examined sustainability reporting trends of the S&P 500 companies each calendar year since then – and today the percentage of non-reporters is only 8%.

G&A's *2021 Sustainability Reporting in Focus* report includes a breakdown of the non-reporters in the S&P 500 and Russell 1000 by sector as well as the detailed reporting behaviors of the companies utilizing common frameworks and standards (GRI, SASB, TCFD), companies aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and trends in external assurance and survey reporting (CDP, CSA/DJSI).

G&A's detailed research findings on Russell 1000 companies for the 2020 publication year include the following examples:

- 52% of the reporting companies used the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards
- 39% of the reporting companies aligned with the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) Standards
- 17% of the reporting companies aligned with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) Recommendations
- 42% of reporting companies presented alignment with specific UN SDGs
- 35% of reporting companies utilized external assurance for their sustainability disclosures
- 40% of the Russell 1000 responded to the CDP Climate Change questionnaire

[Click here to read the full report for more comprehensive reporting breakouts and details on the S&P 500 and Russell 1000 companies.](#)

Louis Coppola, G&A's Executive Vice President and Co-Founder, who has designed and managed all the annual analyses to date, commented, "The last few years have been incredibly challenging with the compounding crises of COVID-19, social inequity, climate change, and for many a loss of trust and faith in our institutions. During these trying times, the focus on ESG and sustainability issues and topics has continued to deepen and accelerate. In some ways, I believe this acceleration is a direct reaction by society to the problems we all face and the environment we now find ourselves in, and I believe it will help us navigate our way through these crisis situations and the ones to come.

It is exciting to see the smaller companies in this year's research embracing this trend as well. It is also interesting to see increased use of relatively newer, yet critical reporting frameworks like SASB and TCFD -- especially as regulators here in the U.S. and around the world move towards further consolidation and rulemaking of disclosure standards for ESG."

Hank Boerner, G&A's Chairman, Chief Strategist and Co-Founder, added, "The corporate sustainability community has been challenged over the past decade by the rapid expansion of reporting frameworks and standards that have emerged and evolved. The G&A team wrestles with an alphabet soup of frameworks and standards that corporations and their providers of capital are expected to use for sustainability reporting and ESG metrics.

G&A's research has clearly shown that corporate sustainability reporting is now a best practice for the leading U.S. public companies and is increasingly being adopted by mid-cap companies as they recognize the value of being recognized for their commitment to ESG. As the world confronts the impact of climate change and other global challenges, we believe the corporate sustainability community will continue to play an important role by holding corporations and the capital markets accountable and providing ways to measure the impact of sustainability and ESG programs."

ABOUT THE G&A TEAM PRODUCING THE 2021 SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING IN FOCUS RESEARCH REPORT G&A proudly recognizes our research team of talented analysts who made significant contributions to this study:

G&A Research Supervisor: Elizabeth Peterson, G&A Senior Sustainability Analyst

Team Leader: Kirstie Dabbs, G&A Sustainability Analyst

Honor Roll Analysts

- Keerthana Ramasamy Thirugnana Sambantham
- Emilie Ho
- Gia Hoa Lam

We also acknowledge contribution to the effort by supporting analyst-interns: Yutong Wu, MPP, Kaylee Wong, MS, and Cannelle Revault, BA. *For more information on our team of research analysts please [click here](#).*

ABOUT GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY INSTITUTE, INC. G&A Institute is a sustainability consulting and research firm headquartered in New York City, advising corporations and investors on executing winning strategies that maximize ROI at every step of their sustainability journey.

Founded in 2006, G&A helps corporate and investor clients recognize, understand, and address sustainability and ESG issues to address stakeholder and shareholder concerns. G&A's proprietary, comprehensive 5-Step Process for sustainability reporting is designed to help organizations achieve sustainability leadership in their industry and sector.

G&A Institute served as the Data Partner for the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) in the U.S.A., U.K., and the Republic of Ireland from 2011 to 2020. In this role, the G&A team analyzed more than 9,000 sustainability reports and catalogued tens of thousands of important data points for these reports.

ABOUT THE S&P 500®

The S&P 500 is widely regarded as one of the best gauges of large cap U.S. equity market performance, measuring the stock performance of approximately 500 large-cap companies traded on U.S. stock exchanges. There is more than US\$13 trillion indexed or benchmarked to the index, which is owned by S&P Dow Jones Indices, a division of S&P Global. Information at <https://www.spglobal.com/spdji/en/indices/equity/sp-500>

ABOUT THE RUSSELL 1000®

The Russell U.S. Indexes are market-weighted indexes that are widely used by institutional investors as benchmarks to track performance of large/mid/small/micro-cap or investment styles. The Russell 1000 Index includes the largest publicly-traded U.S. companies by market cap, which make up approximately 92% of the total market capitalization of all listed stocks in the U.S. equity market. The indices/benchmarks are provided by FTSE Russell, a wholly owned subsidiary of the London Stock Exchange (LSE). Information at: <https://www.ftserussell.com/about-us/our-story>

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