



# Module 4: From Projects to Reports – Telling the Business Story

Transform your climate action into compelling narratives that drive stakeholder engagement and business value.

**Level:** Intermediate

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## Learning Outcomes

### Upon completion of this module, you will be able to:

1. **Select** an appropriate ESG framework (e.g., TCFD, GRI) for a given context.
2. **Design** a pilot initiative description that aligns with a chosen ESG framework.
3. **Construct** a stakeholder communication brief that links data to business value.

# Why This Module Matters

## Your Journey So Far

You've measured your emissions in Module 2 and implemented decarbonization projects in Module 3. Now it's time to communicate that progress effectively.

## The Reporting Challenge

Climate action without credible reporting remains invisible to investors, customers, employees, regulators, and communities who need to see your impact.

## What You'll Learn

How reporting creates business value, which frameworks to use, building KPI dashboards, storytelling for impact, and practical implementation tools.

# Why Climate Reporting Creates Strategic Value

## **Builds Trust with Investors**

88% of institutional investors now integrate ESG factors into decisions. Strong climate disclosure signals strategic thinking, operational discipline, and risk management sophistication—reducing your cost of capital by 1-5%.

## **Demonstrates Accountability**

Public commitments create reputational stakes that drive performance. Effective reporting tracks your baseline, annual trajectory, milestone achievements, and challenges encountered with complete transparency.

## **Strengthens Market Position**

Transparent reporting differentiates your brand, enables market access, attracts top talent, and mitigates greenwashing risks. Premium pricing becomes available for credibly sustainable products.

# Choosing the Right Reporting Framework

Different frameworks serve different purposes and stakeholders. Select the combination that aligns with your strategic priorities and reporting obligations.

Framework	Purpose	Best For	Scope	Mandatory?	Complexity
GRI	Comprehensive sustainability reporting	Holistic ESG reporting	Environmental, social, governance impacts	Voluntary	Medium-High
CDP	Climate disclosure for investors	Investor-facing reporting	Scope 1, 2, 3 emissions; climate risks	Voluntary	Medium
TCFD	Financial materiality of climate risks	Public companies; financial sector	Governance, strategy, risk, metrics	Increasingly mandatory	High
CSRD	EU sustainability regulation	Large EU companies (>€150M revenue)	Double materiality; comprehensive	Mandatory (2024-2028)	Very High
SASB	Industry-specific material metrics	Investor relations; 77 industries	Financially material ESG issues	Voluntary	Medium
ISO 14064	GHG verification standard	Third-party verified data	Scopes 1, 2, 3 quantification	Voluntary	Medium-High
SBTi	Science-based target setting	Paris-aligned commitments	1.5°C pathway validation	Voluntary	Medium

# Framework Selection Decision Tree

Navigate your reporting journey by identifying your primary driver and matching it to the most appropriate framework combination.

01

## Regulatory Compliance

Operating in EU or selling to EU? Use **CSRD**. Listed in UK, Japan, or New Zealand? Implement **TCFD**. South African listed company? Follow JSE requirements with **GRI** or Integrated Reporting.

03

## Customer Requirements

Large corporate customers requesting disclosure? Use **CDP Supply Chain**. B2B customers requiring verified data need **ISO 14064 + GRI**. Export markets demand **GRI + ISO 14064**.

02

## Investor Relations

Public company with institutional investors needs **TCFD + CDP**. Private companies seeking ESG investment should use **CDP + GRI**. For sector-specific investor queries, add **SASB** standards.

04

## Target Setting & Credibility

Setting science-based targets requires **SBTi validation + TCFD reporting**. Third-party verification needs **ISO 14064 + CDP/GRI**. Build comprehensive credibility through integrated frameworks.

☐ **SME Recommendation:** Start with internal tracking (Year 1), add GRI Core and CDP (Year 2), implement TCFD alignment (Year 3), then pursue SBTi validation and ISO 14064 verification (Year 4+).

# Building Decision-Making Dashboards

## Choose Measurable Indicators

**Absolute Emissions:** Total Scopes 1, 2, 3 in tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e per year

**Intensity Metrics:** Emissions per revenue, per employee, per product unit, or per square meter

**Financial Metrics:** Carbon price exposure, energy cost savings, green revenue, ESG-linked financing

## Visualize Trends Effectively

**Time Series Graphs:** Show annual emissions trajectory versus target pathway with consistent baselines

**Comparative Charts:** Year-over-year performance, peer benchmarking, project-level impact

**KPI Scorecards:** Traffic light indicators and progress bars showing percentage of target achieved

## Link to Business Value

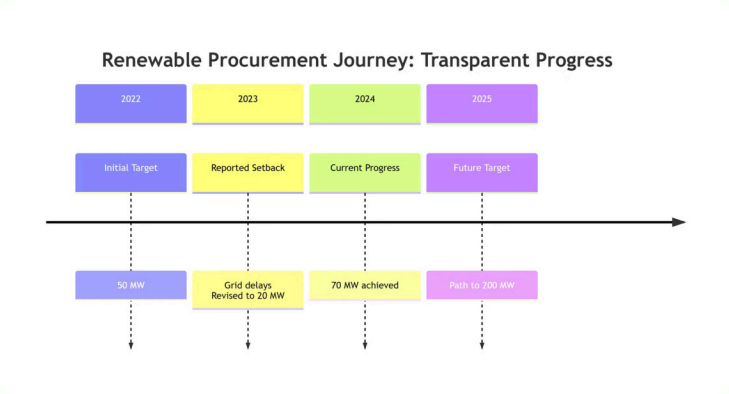
**Cost Linkage:** Energy efficiency savings reduce operating costs; renewables hedge electricity prices

**Risk Mitigation:** Emissions reduction lowers carbon tax exposure; supply chain resilience prevents disruption

**Investor Appeal:** ESG rating improvement reduces cost of capital; TCFD compliance enables institutional access

Dashboards provide real-time visibility for executives, operations teams, and external stakeholders—transforming annual reporting into continuous performance management.

# Case Study: City of Cape Town's Reporting Excellence



## The Challenge

Cape Town's renewable energy procurement was unprecedented for South African municipalities. Stakeholders demanded clear, credible communication about accountability, transparency, and replicability.

### Integrated Strategy Reporting

Embedded renewable procurement within comprehensive climate reporting aligned with C40 Cities and TCFD. Annual reports tracked citywide GHG inventory, procurement progress, emissions avoided, financial performance, and challenges encountered.

### Institutional Accountability

Established Climate Strategy Office with board-level oversight, integrated climate reporting with financial audits, and implemented third-party verification. Formal governance signaled seriousness to stakeholders.

1

2

3

4

### Public-Facing Dashboard

Created interactive online dashboard showing real-time renewable capacity, cost savings versus Eskom baseline, and project milestones. This transparency allowed residents to track progress independently, building public support.

### Transparent Challenge Reporting

Reported setbacks openly—grid integration delays, revised timelines, adjusted targets. Honesty about challenges enhanced credibility more than over-promising ever could have.

68%

### Public Support

Resident support for renewable procurement increased from 52% to 68% after communication campaign

1-2%

### Lower Borrowing Costs

Municipal bonds achieved interest rates 1-2% lower than comparable municipalities

120MW

### Renewable Capacity

Achieved by 2024 with transparent reporting of delays and path to 200MW target



# Reflection: Building Your Reporting Strategy



## Which Framework Fits?

Consider your organization size, industry, geography, stakeholder priorities, and maturity level. SMEs start simple with GRI Core; large enterprises integrate TCFD + GRI + SBTi; public companies prioritize mandatory TCFD compliance.



## Communicate Authentically

Report both successes and challenges. Explain methodology transparently. Use third-party verification. Connect emissions to business context. Share human stories beyond data. Address greenwashing concerns proactively.



## Build Your Roadmap

**Year 1:** Complete Scope 1 & 2 inventory; publish basic webpage. **Year 2:** Adopt GRI/CDP; create first report. **Year 3:** Add TCFD; set SBTi targets. **Year 4+:** Achieve ISO 14064 verification; attain industry leadership.

- ☐ **Authenticity Checklist:** Are you reporting challenges alongside successes? Explaining methodology? Using third-party verification? Connecting emissions to business context? Setting ambitious yet credible targets? Sharing human stories? Maintaining year-over-year consistency?

# Key Takeaways: Reporting as Strategic Asset

## 1 Reporting is Strategic, Not Administrative

Organizations with mature sustainability reporting achieve 10–15% higher valuations, reduce cost of capital by 1–5%, and improve brand reputation. Position reporting as strategic investment in stakeholder relationships—not compliance overhead.

## 2 Storytelling Drives Engagement

Data provides credibility; narrative provides context and motivation. Combine both for impact. Share human stories, acknowledge challenges, articulate vision, and invite stakeholder participation. Establish your organization as climate thought leader.

## 3 Transparency Builds Credibility

Trust equals competence × transparency × consistency. Share positives and negatives. Explain methodology and limitations. Report regularly with year-over-year comparability. Deliver on commitments or transparently explain deviations.

"You can't manage what you don't measure. You can't improve what you don't report. You can't lead if stakeholders don't know what you're doing."

# Module 4 Summary: Your Reporting Journey

Reporting transforms climate action from invisible internal projects into visible external leadership that drives competitive advantage and stakeholder trust.



## Choose Framework

Based on stakeholder needs and organizational maturity



## Build Dashboard

Start with 5-7 core KPIs; expand over time



## Draft Story

Identify 2-3 human narratives for next report



## Set Cadence

Commit to annual minimum; work toward quarterly



## Seek Verification

Engage third-party assurance to build credibility

## What You've Mastered

- Why reporting creates strategic business value beyond compliance
- Major frameworks (GRI, CDP, TCFD, CSRD, SASB, ISO, SBTi) and selection criteria
- Building KPI dashboards that connect emissions to business outcomes
- Storytelling techniques linking data with human narratives
- Real-world implementation through Cape Town case study

## Tools You've Gained

- Framework selection decision tree
- KPI dashboard template structures
- Authenticity and credibility checklists
- Year 1-4 reporting roadmap progression

# Completion of Modules

1

**Module Integration: Connecting All Four Modules**

2

**Module 1 (Why Decarbonisation Matters):** → You understood the business imperative

3

**Module 2 (Measuring Emissions):** → You quantified your carbon footprint

4

**Module 3 (Implementing Decarbonisation):** → You took action to reduce emissions

5

**Module 4 (Reporting & Communication):** → You're now telling the story and building credibility

6

**The Cycle Continues:** Reporting → Stakeholder feedback → Refined strategy → New targets → More action → Better reporting

7

**This is continuous improvement, not a one-time project.**

# Reference List:

## Reporting Frameworks and Standards

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## Business and Investor Context

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## Case Study and South African Context

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