



Sustainability Reporting:
A Perspective from the SRI
Community



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UCC Snapshot

- Founded in 1957
 - Congregational Christian Churches
 - Evangelical and Reformed Church
- 1.5 million members
- Six National Ministries
- ~\$3.2 billion in assets under management

Parallel SRI Programs

- United Methodist Church
- Episcopal Church
- Presbyterian Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church
- American Baptist Church
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Combined pension assets = ~\$40 billion

“Non-Financial” Information

- Social and environmental information needs ↑
- Volume of voluntary corporate reporting ↑
- Relevance ↓
- Consistency ↓
- Comparability ↓
- Frustration ↑

GRI - A Possible Solution

- Make corporate sustainability reporting as routine and credible as financial reporting
- Design a standardized reporting guideline reflecting the dimensions of sustainability:
 - environmental
 - social
 - economic
- Ensure a permanent and effective institutional host

GRI Timeline

Fall 1997: First organizational meetings of the GRI



February 1998 through March 1999: Quarterly public meetings for developing the draft *Guidelines*



March 1999: Public release of the exposure draft *Sustainability Reporting Guidelines*



April 1999 through Spring 2000: Pilot testing & comment period



June 2000: Release of revised *Guidelines*



November 2000: GRI Symposium, Washington, D.C.



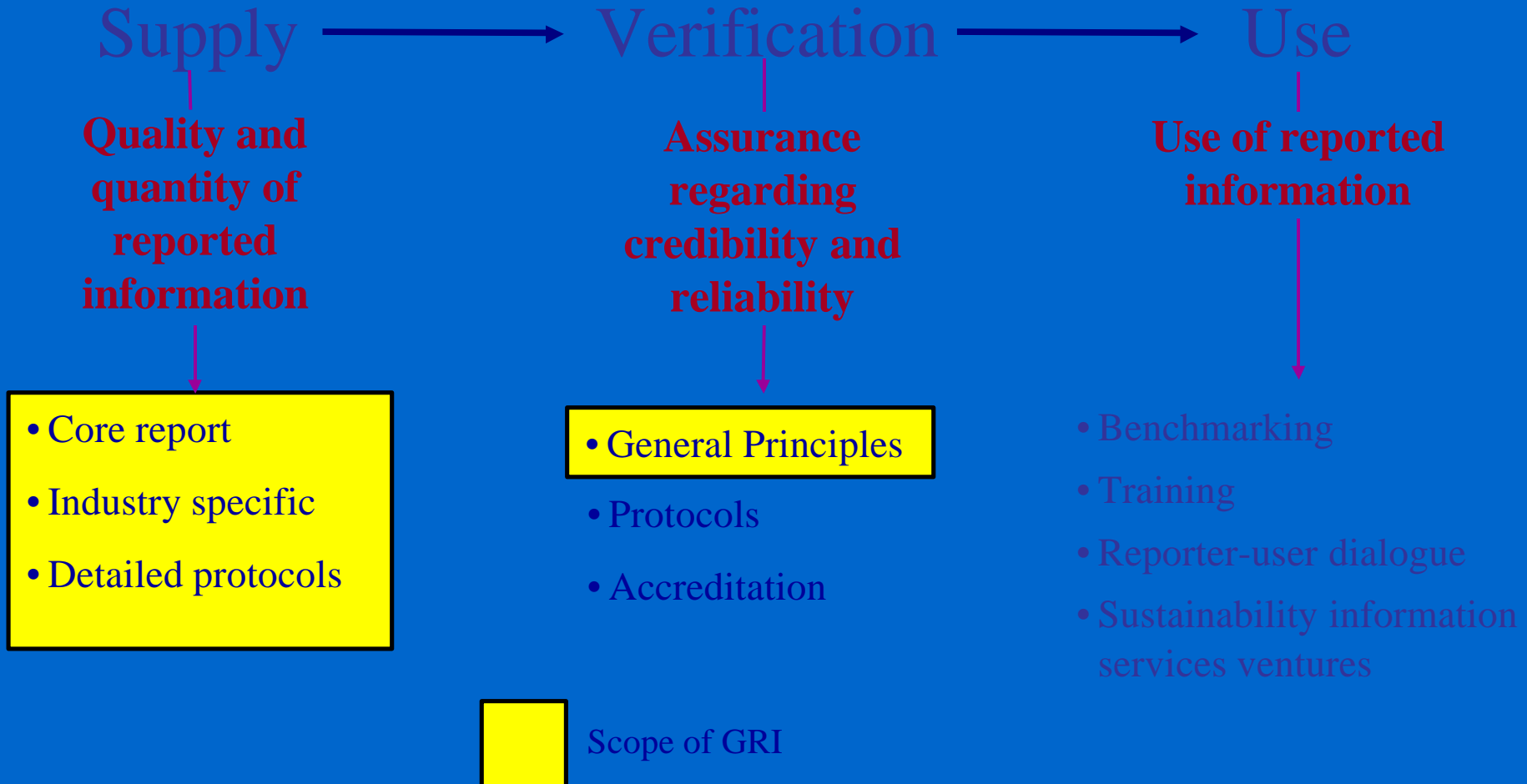
2000–2002: Ongoing Application of and Feedback on the *Guidelines*



By 2002: Establishment of independent GRI institution



GRI in the Future...



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The Business Case

- Driving Internal Improvements
- Strengthening Dialogue with Stakeholders
- Influencing Strategy
- Gaining Competitive Advantage
- Managing Risk and Protecting Reputation

Driving Internal Improvements

- *“In years past there may have been silos between environmental staff and safety staff... Now because of this concept of sustainability, we have human resources people talking to finance people talking to issues people talking to production people.”*

Strengthening Dialogue with Stakeholders

- *“In effect, GRI reporting will help us define and communicate who we are and what we believe and value. It will enable us to honestly spot and work to close the gaps between our beliefs and our performance. In the end, we think this will make us a better, more successful company.”*

Influencing Strategy

- *“We see no alternative to a business strategy that generates profits while contributing to the well-being of the planet and its people. The development of tools enabling progress to be measured and reported is a crucial part of this.”*

Gaining Competitive Advantage

- “It was the GRI reporting process that prompted our announcement last fall to increase the fuel efficiency of our SUV fleet by 25 percent by 2005.”

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Managing Risk and Protecting Reputation

- Reputation is a valuable corporate asset that is difficult to achieve, but even more difficult to protect
- Multinational corporations and the global business community face growing distrust from many positions
- Transparency is the future



Conclusions

- Linking shareholder value and public expectations to internal and external information forms the underpinning of the business case for sustainability reporting
- GRI is a promising way forward...
- www.globalreporting.org



Final Comment

- *“While Ford has embraced GRI and transparency willingly, we really had very little choice. There is no place to hide... That is where the GRI comes in. My sense is that the transparency of GRI has helped us immeasurably.”*