

Introduction to Integrated Reporting – what does it mean

‘Integrated reporting isn’t easy but every organisation has a great and unique story to tell, an integrated report is a powerful tool through which to communicate it.’

Reporting in an integrated way requires the move to integrated thinking; a shift in the organisational structure of companies, breaking down traditional silos.

Below you will find 10 points that will help you when you consider your integrated report.

(1) Narratives

Importance of **telling the story** of your journey

There is a fear of falling flat which may put organisations off talking about **long term** - there are often changes in governance in stability and financial situation which can negatively affect your journey.

Reporting should not solely be metrics/numbers but insights around the narrative

You can report your economic, social, environmental and cultural impacts with a narrative that goes along side it. The Crown Estate has done this.



<http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/our-business/integrated-reporting/>

To avoid any confusion or debate about the meaning of “Sustainable Development” organisations should use the definition in the WFG Act to ensure consistency.

(2) Integration

SD is not a project, but many organisations still see it as such, the Charter has helped organisations to see that it should be the principle that lies at the heart of your organisation.

Integrated thinking is the first step towards integrated reporting.

(3) Trust and Transparency

How do you build trust and transparency?

Stakeholders and Supply chain need to know what you are doing and why.

(4) Reporting Burden

Extensive reporting is already required for the heavily regulated industries and public services like health and education.

Integrated reports should make use of your existing reporting processes – don’t duplicate. The data you record will be of interest to a variety of stakeholders: use the wealth of data you have to let the public, customers, funders and statutory bodies know the true extent of the value they are getting.

Are these reports a waste of time? Only if you do not use them. Schools and colleges are starting to use their reports to inform students – they become a resource and part of the curriculum.

Creating value for your reporting may reduce the burden and drive change.

(5) Communication

No printed reports should be produced – the bigger organisations preparing these types of reports now use websites that can be updated constantly and so their reports are living documents. Redrow have done this:



Large data can be reduced to bright, informative infographics – BT has done this. A nice looking report however is worth nothing if its content is weak!

(6) Tools

A variety of tools and techniques are being developed to support integrated reporting: the Community Benefits Toolkit, the International Integrated Reporting Matrix and GRI4 are examples. Be careful however as staff don't necessarily understand what it is or who is expected to receive this information. Subject-specific reporting tools may exist in isolation and users may not realise that they are contributing to the organisation's sustainable development commitment. Cynnal Cymru now offers a dedicated integrated reporting consultancy to inform staff and draw reporting streams together.

Where regulatory reporting is required e.g. from NRW or for Health and Safety purposes, it offers a good opportunity to capture information. Regulatory reporting can be made to be fun if it is seen in a wider purpose linked to visionary goals!

(7) Buy in

From Leaders

You have to have senior buy in to your commitment to sustainability. Management and Board need to provide consistent messages to stakeholders and staff.

From Professional Bodies

Professional bodies need to lead by example and ask their organisations about how they report on SD.

From Staff

Employee involvement is essential, but you have to educate them, particularly with regards to wider SD benefits – that its not just about the financial security of the organisation but about community & environmental benefits, ethical procurement and the way we do business.

(8) Embedding into Early Decision-making and key messaging

SD principles embedded into an organisation from an early phase will always provide benefit. Messages running through the organisation can affect decision making at every level. This message can also go outside the organisation to the supply chain, to the public, staff and their families.

If people do not get their SD messages from their Local Authority, NGOs or Government literature then where do they get it from? It is important that individuals and organisations who understand the need for sustainability, communicate this. The Goals of the WFG Act provide a common language so the messages can cross all boundaries.

(9) Collaboration

This is a core behaviour of the sustainable development principle. Integration should include patterns of behaviour as well as commitments to reporting. Public service Boards and their transparency will play an important part in cross sector involvement in the Act, this could maximise contribution to the Goals.

We all need to bring people into collaborative partnerships and not just produce our reports in isolation.


(10) Welsh Perspective and Legislation

Some global and national companies that are Charter signatories gave great reports in 2014/15 with no information on their impacts or benefits in Wales. It could be in the interest of some organisations who do business with the public sector in Wales e.g. on large contracts with the NHS to allocate resources to reporting particularly on activities in Wales. BT already do this and Lloyds are considering


To align the Charter with the Goals it is essential to move all the sectors forward with the same ambitions for 'the Wales We Want'.

The Goals and Indicators form a framework against which all Wales based organisations can contribute, not just the bodies under the duty of the Act, this should be how we do business in Wales. However, we must not make this a tick box exercise.

There are already examples of organisations using the Act to report.



<http://www.sd-charter.net/signatories/ty-mawr-lime-ltd-2/>



<http://www.cwmbran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Annual-Report-2015.pdf>

Useful Links

The IIRC <http://integratedreporting.org/>

Global Reporting Initiative

<https://www.globalreporting.org/information/sustainability-reporting/Pages/default.aspx>

EY Value of Sustainability Reporting Documents

<http://www.ey.com/US/en/Services/Specialty-Services/Climate-Change-and-Sustainability-Services/Value-of-sustainability-reporting>

KPMG Better Reporting Guides

<https://home.kpmg.com/xx/en/home/services/audit/better-business-reporting.html>



<http://www.sd-charter.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Tidy-Towns-E.pdf>