

READ COMMITMENTS AND RESULTS THROUGH THE SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



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The challenge of the transition to sustainability involves businesses, public administrations and citizens. It is a challenge that is won by everyone getting active in it. Some companies have started to get active a long time ago, for others the start is more recent; some instead are only now catching the signs of change and are beginning to wonder how to start their journey.

Of this journey, sustainability reports constitute a kind of reportage, a circumstance certainly true for those companies that base their business model on the circular economy. These reports serve to communicate with transparency and clarity the commitments that the company makes, the actions it develops, the resources it puts in place and, above all, the results it achieves. Communicated according to appropriate metrics and authoritative standards, the results reflect the continuous improvement effort that the company makes over time. These reports are valuable communication tools, as they enable stakeholders to understand the coherence and effectiveness of the system of governance, organisational and management

solutions that the company develops in the implementation of its sustainability strategy and, in particular, in adhering to a circular economy model. In this way, they allow the company to be recognised for its social and environmental qualities, promoting the conclusion of commercial relations with other groups that make sustainability a criterion for the selection of partners, facilitating access to credit and reducing its cost, increasing the motivation of its human resources.

But since sustainability is achieved only through a path made of coherence, the sustainability report is not only a communication tool, but also a governance one. Starting from a strategy based on the identification of the current and potential impacts of the organisation and the contribution it can make to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), governance organises and plans sustainability; at the managerial level, policies and tools are adopted for the management of sustainability, as well as projects are developed to improve social and environmental performance. But in line with the motto "if you can't measure it, you can't improve it!" these strategies require specific tools for measuring results. The authentically sustainability-oriented company therefore has information systems based on performance indicators and selectively conveys the information for the preparation of a report that gives the measure of success achieved on the most relevant sustainability issues. The report we arrive at is the photograph of the existing situation but it is also the "film" of the completed path, an image that is the starting point for innovations.

If the report is a document that summarises the journey towards sustainability and that enables readers to evaluate the companies that write them, understanding their profile, commitments and results, it should be added that the experience gained in reporting sustainability reveals a new opportunity today. Companies that - in line with their own value tension - prepare these reports with seriousness and sincerity will be able to make the accumulated experience a valuable resource to fulfil the obligations that the transposition of the European directive on corporate sustainability reporting (Directive 2464/2022) will put in front of thousands of Italian companies. A measure made necessary by the fact that the march towards sustainability must involve the entire economic system and the production of appropriate information on the paths taken must be pervasive.

That is why as economic operators, investors and citizens we must look closely at the reports of companies that narrate their sustainability. Companies speak about themselves, show themselves, and with our attention we can enhance their commitment and consistency.