

## UNCTAD Webinar Series on SDG Reporting by companies, including MSME

### — *The adaption of “Guidance on core indicators for entity reporting on contribution towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (GCI)” in China*

Language: Chinese

Date: 29 March, 2021, 15:30 – 17:00 (GMT+8)

## Summary Report

### 1. Attendance

The webinar took place online by Tencent Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. It was attended by 150 participants from enterprises, academics, media and other institutions in China. The full list of participants is attached in Appendix.

### 2. Objectives

The webinar on adaption of the GCI in China was delivered on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021 to provide information on the main aspects of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) reporting and the GCI, highlight findings from case studies conducted in the region and other countries, and discuss further steps on the GCI implementation in China, including in the MSME sector.

This initiative is part of UNCTAD activities implemented within the framework of UN Development Account project “Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector” (MSME surge project) and its Cluster of ‘Improving Access to Finance’. The initiative aims to strengthen the capacity and resilience of MSMEs in developing countries and economies in transition to mitigate the economic and social impact of the global Covid-19 crisis to seize the opportunity on building a greener and more inclusive economy.

### 3. Agenda

The webinar was conducted in accordance with the following programme:

Time (GMT+8)	Topics	Speakers
15:35-15:50	Introduction by the UNCTAD Secretariat	<b>Tatiana Krylova</b> , Head of Enterprise Branch, UNCTAD

15:50– 16:05	<b>Keynote Speech</b> Presentation of GCI for entity reporting on contribution towards implementation of the SDGs	<b>Dr. Guo Peiyuan</b> , Co-founder and General Manager of SynTao Co.,Ltd; Member of the stakeholder council of Global Reporting Initiative
16:05 – 16:15	<b>Observation sharing</b> Recent developments and challenges in the international harmonization and practical implementation of SDG reporting in China	<b>Dr. Shen Hongtao</b> , Director of the Chinese Accounting Association; Member of the Chinese Environmental Accounting Committee; Professor of the School of Management of Jinan University
16:15 – 16:55	<b>Panel Discussion</b> <b>Topic 1:</b> Application of GCI for the MSMEs <b>Topic 2:</b> An interactive discussion with moderator on the sustainability of MSMEs and SDG reporting <b>Topic 3:</b> Call for case studies on the application of GCI in China, including in the MSME sector	<b>Lv Xiujuan</b> , Founder, ImpactHub Shanghai <b>Ge Yong</b> , Partner, Green Leaf Ventures <b>Tian Ke</b> , Chief Editor of Focus Technology <b>Liang Guoyong</b> , Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD <b>Zijun(Jess) Zhou</b> , Project Consultant, UNCTAD
16:55 – 17:00	Final remarks	<b>Liang Guoyong</b> , Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD

Ms. Tatiana Krylova, Head of Enterprise, UNCTAD, welcomed the event, noting that the outbreak of Covid19 had significantly increased companies’ focus and demand for sustainability reporting. As an enterprise tool, sustainability reporting can provide stakeholders with important data on the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues, and is one of the critical tools for post-Covid recovery, transition to a low-carbon circular economy, and mitigation of climate change-related risks. However, the provision of such data remains a challenge for enterprises, particularly MSMEs. Therefore, UNCTAD has issued “*Guidance on core indicators for entity reporting on contribution towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (GCI)*” to help enterprises, especially MSMEs, improve the quality of sustainability reports and further contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. Peiyuan Guo, Co-founder and General Manager of Syntao Green Finance, shared a keynote speech on the theme of GCI, elaborating its objective, rationale, methodologies, and metrics of GCI to help audience better understand and apply GCI indicators. He said, GCI indicators covered the four most important areas for MSMEs including economic, environmental, social and corporate governance and only the most critical indicators were selected. He presented for each indicator the definition, measurement methods and possible sources of information to help companies apply GCI and prepare a sustainability report.

Professor Shen Hongtao, Director of the Chinese Accounting Association, commented on the recent trend of SDG information disclosure in China, saying that practical tools such as GCI could minimize disclosure costs for companies as all GCI indicators were already covered in

major existing frameworks. For example, GCI economic indicators could be extracted from traditional financial reports. In addition, as SDG disclosure level increasing, there would be concerns about the credibility of such information considering there are not yet standardized guidelines for measurement and disclosures. So the Chinese governments are encouraging companies to engage third parties to provide assessments and auditing to increase the reliability of sustainability reports.

During Panel Discussion, Ms. Lv Xiuxuan, Co-Founder of Impact Hub Shanghai, chaired and discussed with delegates on the sustainable development of MSMEs. Mr. Liang Guoyong, Economic Affairs Officer of the Enterprise Branch, UNCTAD, said that the promotion of the indicator system for sustainable development among MSMEs could be based on the principle of voluntary and beneficial, and that it was important not only for information disclosure and data collection, but also for guiding business philosophy and practices. Governments, large enterprises and intermediaries can all play an active role in this regard. Ge Yong, Partner, Green Leaf Ventures said that, when disclose ESG information, MSMEs could gradually complicate the process under proper guidance instead of pursuing a comprehensive coverage at the beginning. The initial focus should not be on the measurement but rather the establishment of a management system, so as to maximize the potential of enterprises in sustainable development. Tian Ke, Chief editor of Focus Vision, Focus Technology, further commented that MSMEs could consult and learn from professional institutions and hoped that in the future, ESG information disclosure will be a tool for external communication for all enterprises.

Ms. Zhou Zijun, Representative of the Enterprise Branch, UNCTAD, as the moderator of the webinar, shared with participants the work of UNCTAD on GCI over the past two years and said that in the coming months UNCTAD aimed to deepen its cooperation with governments and the private sector in China, and conduct more webinars and capacity-building activities for financial reporting of MSMEs in China, as well as non-financial ESG reporting.

Finally, Mr. Liang Guoyong, made a concluding remarks. He expressed his sincere gratitude to the support units and participants, and the webinar had been a success in meeting its purposes. He noted that UNCTAD case studies have shown that GCI has an important role in guiding disclosure of ESG information by Chinese companies. He hoped that UNCTAD and the Chinese business community will further jointly promote green economic transformation and make greater contributions to sustainable development .

#### **4. Feedbacks**

At the end of the webinar a feedback questionnaire was given to the participants in order to assess the materials and development of the webinar. Upon completion of the webinar, 26 completed surveys were collected. The results are the following:

**1) Gender-composition**

Male	18	69%
Female	8	31%

**2) Country**

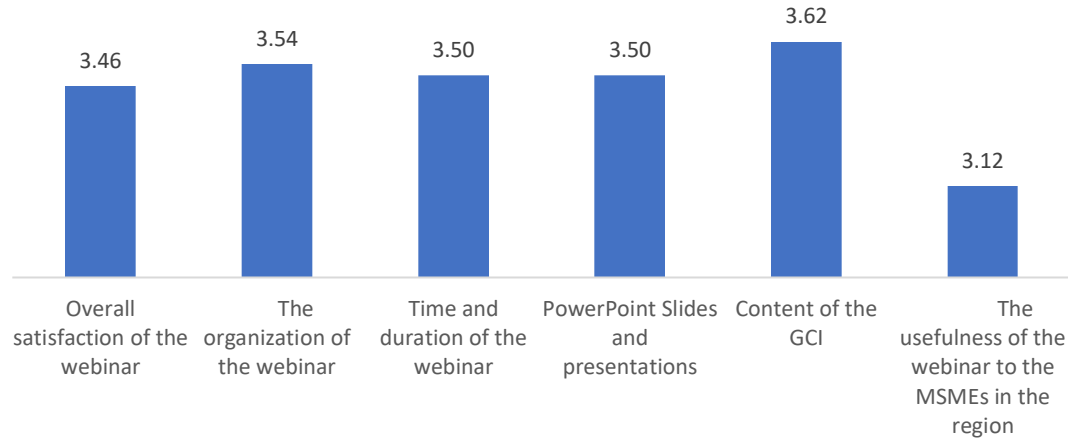
China	24
Australia	1
UK	1

**3) Would you like to be involved in future webinars on SDG reporting for entrepreneurs/MSMEs?**

Yes	25	96%
Maybe	1	4%
No	0	0%

**4) The overall of the webinar**

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Overall satisfaction of the webinar	13	12	1	0
The organization of the webinar	14	12	0	0
Time and duration of the webinar	13	13	0	0
PowerPoint Slides and presentations	14	11	1	0
Content of the GCI	16	10	0	0
The usefulness of the webinar to the MSMEs in the region	10	10	5	1



**5) *Specific comments on the webinar, GCI or any other comments?***

More case studies to share, discuss, and learn lessons from.

Hope there will be more manuals and examples with more details, in parallel with UNCTAD promotional works.

Organize some workshops to visit and learn from companies with good GCI practice.

Invite more specialists in this field.

If only there were more interactive discussion and offline communication.

Hope to refine sessions and add more interactive discussion.

1. I hope there was a Q&A session so that panelists could select questions and give responses

2. Post-seminar information sharing

Looking forward to attending more webinars about relevant GCI/SDG/ESG topics.

The attainment of UN 2030 SDG Agenda requires low-cost, easy-to-promote, and replicable innovations to be facilitated. Currently, MSMEs face difficulties at the launching stage, once after this stage MSMEs can play an important role.

## Appendix – List of participants

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