



# The Role of Internal Auditors in ESG Implementation and Reporting

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Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) is rapidly gaining prominence as a critical area shaping the future of businesses. To remain competitive and credible, organisations must thoroughly understand, operationalize, and transparently communicate their sustainability commitments and strategies. This is essential to meeting the growing expectations of customers, investors, regulators, employees, and other key stakeholders.

In response, boards and executive management are increasingly relying on assurance providers to deliver valuable insights and support. This leverages the value of the internal auditor in an organisation's ESG journey. ESG encapsulates the corporate governance, environmental impact and social interaction an organization has with the community they inhabit, now and in the future. The internal auditor can be relied on in strategic planning, risk management, and all related assurance to mitigate identified ESG risks.

Internal auditors play a pivotal role in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives, working to uphold transparency, accountability, and compliance with evolving standards. As key stakeholders in the governance pillar of ESG, they focus on the organizational structure of a company, which includes management, the board, audits, internal controls, and business ethics. By evaluating the effectiveness of ESG controls and identifying potential risks, internal auditors provide critical assurance to the organization.

## What Is the Role of The Internal Auditor

### 1. Understand your organization's ESG priorities:

The starting point for Internal Auditors is to have a comprehensive understanding of the organization's ESG priorities and analyze how these translate to risk and opportunities to effectively review ESG reporting metrics for relevancy, accuracy, timeliness, and consistency and conformance with regulations.

### 2. Combined Assurance with other Assurance Providers:

Internal auditors provide essential advisory capacity in the establishment of a robust control environment including policies and procedures, governance structures, assurance support by providing objective review of ESG risk assessment and controls.

### 3. Update the Internal Audit Universe and Plan:

The Internal Audit function ensure that all ESG risks are captured and appropriately represented in their Internal Audit Universe and Plan, and then perform a risk assessment to create a prioritized roadmap for delivery.

### 4. Full delivery of audit plan including ESG specific audits:

Conduct a review and assessment of the organization's ESG commitments, controls, stakeholder engagements according to the audit program.

### 5. Report to the audit committee on ESG strategy implementation and reporting effectiveness.

Internal auditors should report on ESG disclosures, processes and controls as part of their output to the Audit Committee for ESG Implementation and Reporting to move beyond statements and policies, the internal auditor must be recognized, not as an afterthought but as a strategic enabler of accountability, and long-term success. Internal auditors advise management and the board on ESG governance and provide assurance on internal controls surrounding ESG practices. Nevertheless, strong governance over ESG is a collective effort of the principal players within an organisation.

## How can Deloitte help

Deloitte offers support from subject matter experts on;

- **ESG Governance Assessment**

Perform a comprehensive assessment of the organization's ESG governance structures in place benchmarking leading practices. This covers ESG strategy, board oversight, internal control and risk management, policies and procedures and training support.

- **Internal Controls over Sustainability Reporting**

Assess the organization's ESG priorities and commitments against performance metrics and regulations, including review of ESG controls and reporting procedures.

- **ESG Audit**

Provide internal auditors support in embedding ESG audits into the audit plan. We assist in the development of audit programs, risk templates for assessments etc.



*For more information on the role of Internal Audit across the ESG agenda, training and reporting needs, please do not hesitate to get in touch.*



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