KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE

2ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE

REPORTING 3.0 PLATFORM ON THE

FUTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

Reporting at the crossroads – ensuring purpose, practicability, performance

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INTRODUCTION

Berlin was a divided city for decades. In 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, reuniting the East with the West. Today, Berlin is reuni-

fied and bruising, and one of Europe’s core innovation hubs. Could there be a better place for the second

annual Reporting 3.0 Platform Conference? The title was bold: ‘Reporting at the crossroads – ensuring

purpose, practicability, performance’. 

The conference aimed to instigate the discussion concerning another necessary ‘reunification’. As

Ralph Thurm pointed out: “Current sustainability and integrated reporting does not yet explore its full

potential for reporters to explain to their stakeholders how they contribute to the development of a ‘green &
inclusive economy’, the ultimate ‘North Star’ challenge for a ‘new capitalism’ that could have the potential to ensure long-term sustainability. Unless reports only adapt to the unavoidable and resist to deliver on the ‘grand design’ of such a new economic system, one can only wonder why these reports are called ‘sustainability reports’. Delivering information on real sustainability is more than CSR reporting or ESG status or progress reporting or rudimentary integrated report-
ing, it needs measurable benchmarks to cut the fluff.”

The Reporting 3.0 Platform, initiated by BSD Germany in 2013, was designed to support the closing of this ‘sustainability context gap’. The topics of the second annual conference were developed based on the outcomes of last year’s inaugural confer-

ence and the results derived from various Reporting 3.0 Transition Labs held in Berlin and Reporting 3.0 Roundtables held in Beijing, China, and São Paulo, Brazil. The basic principles of the platform concept are threefold: first, the Rio +20 Summit focus on delivering a green and inclusive economy is a serious and worthwhile ‘grand design’ idea; secondly, transparency and reporting about the contribution of the various players to this idea creates a trigger for change; and finally, reporting which delivers on these two principles will be very different from what we get through reports today. Around 180 experts from 13 countries and 4 continents visited the conference for inspiration, to gain clarity and develop progressive ideas. Overall, the conference hosted a stunning amount of initiatives and developments, giving evidence that reporting on the benchmarks of a green & inclusive economy will become possible, and that ‘true sustainability reporting’ will actually be available in the not too distant future.

The discussions held during the conference pointed out three major developments that speak in favor of this view:

1. The ingredients of the ‘green & inclusive economy’ are becoming much clearer and more tangible for corporate decision makers, investors and leading thinkers from academia and the civil society;

2. New approaches, standards and benchmarks are under development or will be developed to close the ‘sustainability context gap’ in reporting;

3. Information technology and respective providers offer new solutions for big data management and algorithms as well as applications that enable a new level of sustainability driven decision-making by corporate managers, investors and consumers.
JOHN ELKINGTON, the inventor of the term ‘triple bottom line’, addressed the need for a ‘breakthrough capitalism’ and challenged the audience by quoting a tweet from Alex Steffen (worldchanging.com): “What happens in next 40 years is critical for all humanity for centuries to come. What happens in next 10 years sets range of what’s possible.” Mr. Elkington agreed and therefore called the next 10 years a ‘breakthrough decade’. His latest book ‘The Breakthrough Challenge’ (written together with Jochen Zeitz, chairman of Kering) sets out the ingredients of a market system that can deliver on the ‘green & inclusive economy’. The authors, among others, mention the need to apply true accounting principles, to calculate true returns, pursue full transparency, embrace integrated reporting, harness big data, redefine education in business schools and executive learning, expand the C-suite time horizon, and develop the readiness for breakthroughs. Based on these ingredients he used a three-dimensional model to describe the needed steps in reframing reporting with respect to the principles of a green & inclusive economy: 1) Lateral: the need to integrate various capitals that describe sustainable value creation; 2) Vertical: the need to define micro/
macro-link indicators to benchmark performance against biosphere limits and overall wellbeing; 3) Longitude: referring to timeframes, life cycles and demographic developments to define scaling needs in order to prove ‘good performance’. John Elkington emphasized that the ‘new normal in reporting will need to become like a ‘cat-scan’, and companies will need to accept the new normal as a piece of legacy-building for a license to grow.

[Said Dawlabani], the author of ‘Memenomics – the next generation economic system’ comes from a very different background and addressed the audience as keynote speaker of the second day. He is an expert in spiral dynamics, a theory that emerged over the last 3-4 decades, and explains how human consciousness develops over the lifetime of a human being. 8 different stages within 2 tiers of value systems have been assessed so far. The first 6 levels all belong to a first tier value system that describes a ‘subsistence ethic’, whereas the last two levels subsume a second-tier value system that defines a ‘magnificence of existence ethic’. The major challenge for sustainability is to define subordinate goals that help society to jump from a first-tier to a second-tier value system. For the first time Mr. Dawlabani also used this knowledge to explain how to design a capitalist system that can serve society better on the journey towards sustainability. He analyzed the various stages of the development of our economic system from the theory of human consciousness. Memenomics makes the case for how artificially imposed systems in economics become closed and toxic. The future of economics must consider a value-system approach and emerge into a whole-system form of leadership in the future. Said Dawlabani calls this ‘functional capitalism’, in need of various second-tier ingredients: seventh-level governance, a big-picture knowledge economy, functionality also applies for second-tier manufacturing and stakeholder collaboration.

According to Mr. Dawlabani future-fit reporting must take stock of the contributions and needs to record how corporations deliver on the subordinate goals and raise their level of consciousness to the 7th and 8th level systems.

Said Dawlabani continued to state that ‘at the corporate level, this is easier said than done, especially when 90-95% of corporate values remain in the First Tier (Levels 1-6) and where reporters still take pride to only report on ‘less bad’”.

Interestingly both Mr. Elkington and Mr. Dawlabani mentioned Google as one of the few companies that move towards an ambitious level of ‘radical breakthrough’ (Elkington) and ‘second-tier thinking’ (Dawlabani). Repeatedly the question ‘what would Google do?’ was coined during these two conference days. However, also shortcomings and risks of the Google approach were discussed in the sessions and during the coffee breaks. The overlap of the necessary vision which both keynote speakers addressed was stunning. Many participants perceived this as good news in two ways: first, global visionaries start to find common ground, which is great for the convergence needed on adaptation plans towards a ‘green & inclusive economy’. Secondly, if we raise the awareness of Memenomics and the need for a breakthrough decade, a ‘serving’ capitalistic system is possible.
A C-Suite panel of business leaders, convening after John Elkington’s keynote, was aimed to drill deeper into some of the technicalities. [MICHAEL MEEHAN], newly-appointed Chief Executive of the Global Reporting Initiative, picked up on several items of the before mentioned transformation agenda. He emphasized the need for GRI to become a standard setter, serving as a ‘launchpad’ for even more narrowly focused standards that will emerge due to the transformation need, allowing further convergence, consolidation and collaboration. Mr. Meehan: “Today it’s GRI, tomorrow possibly dozens of additional standards, and in the long term maybe hundreds. Allowing these standards to have room to grow, that’s really GRI’s role in the future”. Supported by big data developments, it’s not the number of reports that will define our success, it’s how valuable these data are to be applied to create change* [RICHARD MATTISON], CEO of Trucost, also sees pieces of the reporting development puzzle already coming together: “Business as usual is broken. The internalization of cost is inevitable, and it is business that is forced to make this change proactively. We will need to have information flows in global value chains on a whole variety of capitals that create value, and the push of big data in this development can’t be underestimated”. [TON VAN KEKEN], SVP of Interface Europe, described Interface’s journey towards Mission Zero, a twenty-year program started by the late Ray Anderson in 1994. Some participants perceived this journey as a first step and learning curve towards being an advocate of a restorative business in a green & inclusive economy and connected it with Dawlabani’s ‘second-tier thinking’. Interestingly, reporting about sustainability at Interface has started mainly with LCA disclosure, which developed into first Natural Capital Accounting, and was not based on any of the common standards like GRI, as it was never ambitious enough to serve and suit Interface’s journey. Their groundbreaking ’Net Works’ project is a first example of delivering a net-positive business model in which business profits are derived from fishermen collecting old fisher nets as a necessary input material for Interface’s zero-negative impact carpet tiles. As a result the fishermen produce extra micro-income and clean the oceans from waste. Constituting a good example of net-positive impact at project level, it is setting the tone for all of Interface’s business in the future.
During his introductory remarks to the session about corporate growth perspectives in a resource-constrained world and long-term target setting, Ralph Thurm pointed out that today’s sustainability reports fall short of a proper discussion on a corporation’s growth perspectives in the light of a resource-constrained planet and an overall 1,5 planets footprint. Growth doesn’t have to be bad per sé, but a systemic view can help to distinguish ‘healthy’ from ‘unhealthy’ growth. In this context [GEOFF KENDALL] presented a 4-types-of-growth model in which a company can position itself. It consists of (1) biophysical throughput growth (endless growth impossible), (2) production and consumption growth (the single economic focus today), (3) economic welfare growth, and (4) natural resources growth. Mr. Kendall refers to level (2) as acceptable as long as it serves levels (3) and (4), taking care of the environmental and social balance. [BILL BAUE] of the Sustainability Context Group referred to the development of first ratings (e.g. Climate Counts), initiatives (The 3% Solution, Mind the Science...
– Mind the Gap initiative) and reports (that range from 6.2% as per PWC reports, to 10% reduction need in carbon emissions alone in order to stay within reach of the 2 degrees warming range. The latter percentage was published by Bows-Larking at COP Warsaw) as benchmarks to calibrate growth expectations. [JANA GEBAUER] from the IÖW reminded the audience of the fact that a growth perspective indeed isn’t the main focus of quite a large percentage of SMEs. Research shows that a considerable amount of companies do not want to grow at all (a recent IÖW study quoted by Mrs. Gebauer mentions that about 60% of companies do not want to grow further or have no strategic growth target), often because of risks associated with that growth. The panel concluded that a new and focused discussion of post-growth elements within a green & inclusive economy is a healthy and enriching element that should be freed from stereotype repetition of constant growth needs. Subsistence doesn’t have to mean a reduction in quality of life at all. [MARION FÜRST] remarked that a new education-driven approach is needed to tackle consumption growth, whereas at this moment in time most emphasis would lie on the reduction of negative impact in supply chains. For allowing a shift towards post-growth business strategies and reporting frameworks, a cultural shift is needed: to move people’s expectations towards companies from “growing in numbers” to “growing in value for society and nature”. Companies focused on qualitative growth need to actively lobby for these alternative models.

The to-be-expected Sustainable Development Goals seem to be a major point of attention in the discussion about long-term target setting. However, at the Reporting 3.0 Conference some speakers and participants raised the point that they might be just an intermediate step in the reporting continuum, starting from relative reduction of negative impact to (absolute) negative impact to net positive impact to gross positive impact. Whilst developed with business involved and worked on by various different initiatives, [FELIX DODDS] argued that the thinking behind setting up the Sustainable Development Goals has not made a connection with reporting. “We set the goals, you need to see how to report on them” was a blunt statement. Ralph Thurm added that showing the 17 goals now under discussion in the political negotiations, and indicators just being developed after agreement on the goals by end 2015, it becomes clear that the SDG’s are likely to be good enough to set interim benchmarks, and can build a helpful pathway towards a zero impact to net positive ambition level. However, the indicators will need to set clear goals against which companies can deliver. [JÜRGEN JANSEN] from the UN GC in Germany noted that embedding the goals and indicators into national regimes will take additional time and add complexity. Without national goal setting, aligned incentives and a true cost dimension they will be less effective. Felix Dodds added that the SDG’s are now for universal application, whereas the MDG’s were just meant for developing countries. Furthermore the SDG’s come with a funding mechanism and a global (and possibly national) review mechanism. [GEANNE VAN ARKEL] from Interface deepened the example of Interface’s Net Works Project and noted the additional need for the inclusion of externalities into decision-making. The panel observed that the SDG’s don’t capture the need to account for externalities or the redesign of taxation regimes to serve the green & inclusive economy, so important ingredients of the systemic challenge aren’t captured by the SDG’s.
Another session discussed the various opportunities for an improved corporate decision making, the dynamic development of methodologies and best practices. Also the practical limitations regarding a further dissemination of True Cost Accounting approaches were examined. A leading organization in developing projects and initiatives concerning natural capital is Trucost, represented by [ALASTAIR MCGREGOR]. Since 2000, Trucost has been an active player in helping companies to investigate the external effects and costs of their operations. Mr. McGregor pointed out that currently a whole infrastructure for the support of natural capital evaluation is available, ranging from the Natural Capital Coalition to investor groups like UN PRI, UNEP FI, the signing partners of the Natural Capital Declaration, to companies that have started to incorporate calculations into their internal accounting schemes (including Puma, Natura, Weyerhaeuser, Veolia, Dow, Vale, Monsanto, Coca Cola). Another interesting development in this context is the translation of true cost into pricing, as [ADRIAN DE GROOT RUIZ] from the True Price Foundation insisted on. He confirmed seeing an expanded set of financial value drivers considering externalities as well as consumer demand and new regulation to address size of externalities & rate of internalisation. True price is then defined as retail price plus environmental & social costs, in that regard they go beyond just environmental effect internalization. Reporting true cost and using true price doesn’t have to mean an increase in price, but could overall lower costs over time due to transparency. Reporting becomes increasingly important on making these effects visible. [BEN RAMSDEN] from Pants to Poverty introduced one of the world’s first 3D Profit/Loss statements, which he and supporters like Trucost calculated for his company. It was perceived by many participants as an inspiring first attempt to show how true costing can be applied to both the social and environmental pillar of sustainability. In addition he explained how linking environmental and social benefits of his company to MDGs also allows for a micro-macro understanding of the (positive) contribution made. However, getting the right macro-data is still hard. If in the future positive incentives like tax reliefs or support from the finance mechanism of the SDGs would be available, more scale can be expected, also due to more interest put forward by investors and the financial markets. Creating net positive balance sheets for products and product groups will be a growing market. Especially B-Corporations could benefit from that development. [SIBYLLE DUNCKER] explained the evaluation of environmental impacts and social risks using a modelling tool, including an extended input-output calculation, covering the whole value chain and material topics at Otto Group. Otto Group defines sustainability hotspots as phases of the value chain, and consider implications for the business model by combining quantitative assessments (e.g. $ or risk-man-hours) and qualitative assessments (e.g. relevance of action in the view of stakeholders), resulting in a clear prioritization of issues along impacts in the value chain.

The concepts of materiality (as per GRI) and integrated thinking (as per IIRC) are beginning to be better understood. [BASTIAN BUCK] from GRI showed that analyzing impacts ON the business, impacts OF the business and the (sustainability) context and interdependencies in which impacts occur, helps in terms of integration. Additional insights can be gained from a better understanding of trade-offs and scientific or social norm-based goals and targets. Companies need to go through this essential part of the reporting process before simply defining a ‘new business model’.
Materiality and integrated thinking will shape future reports. [JYOTI BANERJEE] from the IIRC added that at this moment in time there is a key focus on connectivity, in essence how value is created but also how it is destroyed. IIRC is not a replacement for a sustainability reporting framework like GRI. Companies continue to be in need of a (sustainability) materiality process. IIRC simply defines materiality differently than GRI, but their focus on financial capital suppliers also helps to increase buy-in to the concept through newly created coalitions, e.g. the investor group or stock exchanges (that start to ask companies to publish an integrated report or explain, e.g. Brazil, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, etc.). Company examples brought forth by [NOVO NORDISK, JESPER LINDBARHT], [BASF, THORSTEN PINKEPANK] and [ENBW, DR. LOTHAR RIETH] shed light on the practical implications of integrated reporting. For instance the need to better define ‘value creation’, the need to integrate different internal departments, and make the right decisions for reporting concerning questions such as: which materiality concept to apply, which audience to define and which internal and external stakeholders to involve? The reporting ‘trilemma’ (Thorsten Pinkepank, BASF) remains a challenge: what is the right balance between materiality, comparability (e.g. through sector context) and audience (different audiences have different expectations). It was observed that mainly long-term sustainability reporters make the switch to integrated reporting, and that multi-year experience in the rudimentary reporting routines is absolutely necessary as a precondition. A continued need of standards to converge continues to be necessary.

Another session pointed out that there is a lot of activity in the creation of science-based goals and context-based sustainability in order to help companies define their ‘North Stars’. These would be helpful to cross the line from relative reporting of ‘how less bad’ a company performed to actually defining a ‘good enough’ expectation. Geoff Kendall from the 3D Investment Foundation presented his work on the ‘Future-Fit-Benchmark’, which is a project to help create targets that are future-focused, science-based, co-created as well as open sourced. The implications for business would be to agree on goals that define a future fit, assess gaps, set targets and subsequently monitor and adjust. [MARK MCELROY] from the Centre for Sustainable Organizations remarked that science-based goals are necessary, but in his view insufficient. “We also need ethics-based goals (e.g. fairness, equity and minimum wage).” He continued: “While science-based goals may reflect biophysical, empirical threshold, additional context is needed to be able to relate to an organisation’s specific (and additional) targets. All major standard setters acknowledge the need for context in their principles.” He continued to state that performance is a function of impacts on vital capitals (financial and non-financial) and we actually are in need of ‘multicapitalism’. As standards like GRI say what needs to be done but not how to do it, methodology to operationalize the context and science-based reporting is needed. A “multicapital scorecard” developed over the last years will be piloted with Ben & Jerrys (as a 1st context-based integrated reporting system). [RODNEY IRWIN] from the WBCSD elaborated on WBCSD’s effort through the ‘Redefining Value’ project, which is part of the Action 2020 strategy (that operationalizes the Vision 2050, published already in 2010). Key from the WBCSD initiative was that a trajectory of monetisation of externalities is now followed by actionable priorities. Vision 2050 is about radical transformation and business is enabled to disclose their ‘true value’, focusing on both environmental and
societal value. For better reporting the WBCSD supports the development of a Natural Capital Protocol (to be finalised by March 2015) as well as a Social Capital Protocol (a white paper on this is currently being developed). Barriers to progress lie in regulation (e.g. litigation culture in USA – companies don’t want to report forward-looking information). Also, accountability rules of family-owned businesses and state-owned businesses can be barriers. At this moment the WBCSD still focuses on ‘management accounting for sustainability’, before expecting their member companies to go public.

John Elkington’s three-dimensional picture of a needed breakthrough in reporting became boldly visible in the ideas about ‘ThriveAbility’ and research conducted by Gallup. [DR. ROBIN WOOD] of the ThriveAbility Foundation presented a three-dimensional cube model that is the basis for a multi-year project to develop company-specific, industry-specific and national ThriveAbility Factors that can later serve as an Index. This index would describe the nexus between human development, net-positive business and breakthrough innovations. Human Thriving- on the horizontal X-Axis measures the thriving, struggling and suffering of human beings, along with their capacity to change and grow through each stage of development. Industry Impacts- on the vertical Y-Axis – measure the impact of the ten major industry global supply chains (using the SICS classification from SASB) on the planet and its people, from deeply negative to net and gross positive. Micro to Macro- on the diagonal Z-Axis – applies measurements at different levels of scale, from the individual through organizations and nations to the planet itself. This model marked the necessities to refer to wellbeing, one of Gallup’s flagship research projects. [ANDREW RZEPA] from Gallup presented the outcomes of Gallup’s World Poll, with the main message that only 13% of the worldwide workforce are engaged with their work, whereas the majority are not engaged or even actively disengaged. The overall notion of various sessions of the conference was confirmed once again: when it comes to sustainability, the basic concept to involve humans got barely forgotten. Ticking off requirements by standards and serving rankings & ratings black box logic to perform a good score has only little to say about the true sustainability of an organization. And as [KLAS SCHULER] from Triple3Leader noted, HR departments need a new definition of their role in sustainability, too.

There is also a growing number of impact-oriented reporting tools available for smaller and medium-sized organizations. The question how to get especially SMEs lined up for sustainability reporting is a long-going question. Standards like GRI, designed to work for global value chains and companies of all sizes, don’t see a rise in numbers in the SME sector of business. [JAN NOTERDAEME] of CSR Europe gave insight into the new EU Directive, relevant for up to 6.000 European listed companies larger than 500 employees. It underscores the intention of the European Commission to demand a broad range of companies to submit sustainability performance information. [PETER KROMMINGA] of UPJ referred to experiences from the project Regio.net, and doubted that the EU Directive would have considerable impact for the SME sector (99.6% of business in Germany are below 500 employees and not listed). He saw drivers for reporting in the position of an SME as part of a supply chain, stakeholder demand, risk reduction and the strategic ambition level to use reporting as a trigger for transformation. [GERD HOFIELEN] presented the Common Good Matrix and Balance

Reporting 3.0 _ Conference Report 2014
It is a values- and impact based model that already attracted hundreds of SMEs to report their performance against the balance sheet, including aspects like Human Dignity, Cooperation and Solidarity, Ecological Sustainability, Social Justice, and Democratic Co-Determination and Transparency. [ANDREAS RENNER] announced the start of the German B-Corporation movement, an initiative for social entrepreneurs, and a journey taken by many startups and SMEs to explain and report their societal contribution, formulating the core reason to be. Finally, [YVONNE ZWICK] from the German Council for Sustainable Development referred to the updated and recently published second version of the (German) Sustainability Code, and the intention to instigate introduction of the code in other European countries.

Two sessions discussed the needs as well as the drivers, tools and barriers for a further integration of sustainability information in the decision making of consumers and investors. [PETER PAUL VAN DE WIJS] from GlobeScan emphasized the importance of credible information and presented intercultural differences, in particular regarding the sources of trust. In addition, he presented the latest research findings on a new sustainability related consumer group, which GlobeScan calls the ‘Aspirationals’. [ROBERT RUBINSTEIN] from Triple Bottom Line Investors as well as [VOLKER WEBER] from Sustainable Finance Forum introduced their views on the current role of sustainability information in investment decisions. Solid sustainability information points out the business case of ESG investment and will shift the emphasis from ‘belief to proof’. Mr. Weber argued strongly for more transparency of businesses: “The reporting of companies in terms of sustainability is increasingly relevant for investors. Investors or asset managers need standardised and comparable information. In this context the voluntary commitment to the Global Reporting Initiative is noteworthy. Likewise, the German Sustainability Code – introduced in 2012 by the Council for Sustainable Development – is a big step in the right direction. Businesses should be encouraged to act sustainably and must provide information for investors. The obligation to report on non-financial indicators should be extended for this purpose”. Guido Axmann from the Think Tank THEMA1 reconfirmed the need for more product-specific reporting and shared inspiring views on the role of ‘crowd based feedback schemes’ in order to ensure the credibility of sustainability information. The presentations and discussions also made clear that rankings and ratings could potentially play an important role in driving transformation towards sustainability. However they currently do not live up to this potential, as they a) do not use ambitious context-based benchmarks, b) do not provide information in a way that can directly contribute to the decision making of consumers and investors (with the exception of certain SRI investors), c) are too little connected to the material aspects of specific companies and sectors, and d) are perceived by companies more as an (unavoidable) burden than a helpful instrument for managing their transition. [MARK TULAY] from the Global Initiative of Sustainability Ratings introduced his vision of sustainability rankings that have breakthrough ambitions. For example he demanded that materiality needs to shift from values to value and ESG Measurement should move from Policy & Procedures to Performance & Context. He also confirmed the need for further harmonization of frameworks and standards. [SUSAN DREYER] from the CDP underlined new and promising ways to compare corporate sustainability performance, for example with the help of science-based goals (indi-
individual company and sector target budgets derived top-down i.e. from the 2° goal). In addition she pointed out the importance of consumer-oriented CO₂ information. [CHERYL HICKS] from the Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production contributed in particular by explaining the importance of sustainability information that allows for the comparison of lifestyles with regards to environmental impacts. The latter is of key importance for corporate sustainability strategies that are aiming for a net-positive impact or a truly sustainable business model. [JIVAN GAFFURI] explained the holistic evaluation approach of the RobecoSam sustainability rating. Of particular interest was the financial materiality framework that takes various forms of capital into account. Finally, [JULIA TÄSCHNER] from Deutsche Börse Group discussed the blessings and curses of sustainability ratings. For example, she confirmed that they matter to company executives but are increasingly requiring an enormous effort because of different methodologies or scopes and the generally increasing number of requests. A need for further harmonization was expressed by Mrs. Täschner in this context.
A third main outcome of the Reporting 3.0 Conference was discussed in the corridors, at several information booths, and in two specific sessions: how information technology and respective providers will be offering new solutions and algorithms as well as applications to deliver on the necessary new data needs.

A specific feature of the conference was the so-call Information Technology Startup Pitch. A professional and experienced jury of leaders from 2degrees, Airport Munich, IIRC and Thema 1 heard pitches of young startups, all in their various development stages from prototyping up to market rollout. These were [EREVALUE], [CHANGERS], [CROWD IMPACT], [TRUVALUE] and [VERSO]. They all approach this new market of big data accumulation and meaningful aggregation, action-oriented information accumulation and new ways to communicate and publish sustainability information. The winner, Verso, received a 50,000 Euro software license package from the venue sponsor Microsoft Ventures. As an additional price, Airport Munich provided an internal pitch opportunity at the corporate headquarter for the 2nd placed Start-Up Changers. com. The pitch decks of each of the start-up do show that a new landscape of tools
is approaching the sustainability data field and communication/reporting market, each of them coming from a different angle, but all with a certain role in this new landscape: better communication to financial markets, to employees, to consumers; software to cover the complete plan-do-check-act-cycle of good (sustainability) management; data ‘vacuum cleaners’ that allow a much bigger variety of data for materiality questions, etc. The audience agreed that we have just only seen a glimpse of this new development.

In a later session, representatives from Verso, Florian Holl, [SAP, FRANK MÜLLER], [2DEGREES, MARTIN CHILCOTT] and [EREVALUE, MARJELLA ALMA] explored that new landscape further. There are various trends in favor of the increased usability and feasibility of IT in ‘integrated management’, which includes sustainability performance. The most important trends are:

- the necessity that integrated thinking and integrated reporting will need to be based on integrated data management;
- the need to assess other volumes of data to better understand sustainability context and to get from ‘big data’ to ‘smart data’;
- the move from reports to reporting for various stakeholder groups needs a new quality of software support that delivers not yearly, but instant information and messaging;
- the need to develop from stakeholder dialog to collaboration needs new ‘engaging’ tooling;
- the engagement of employees in sustainability has to be actively supported through new ‘embracing, action-oriented’ software and applications;
- the need to interpret value not only from a financial perspective, but from a multi-capital perspective asks for more and differently sliced information packages;
- the need for linking micro-performance to macro-urgencies (context-based reporting) needs to connect very different data sources;
- and finally the change in embedding sustainability into the overall strategy needs more forecasting and status data from outside of the organization to be able to position the organization in a micro-macro-linked world and organize necessary organizational transformation.
The second annual conference has already showcased a big step forward regarding the need for a platform concept like Reporting 3.0. Whereas the 2013 inaugural conference was a stock-taking of the areas in which transformation to ‘reporting for a green & inclusive economy’ was assessed and the need was confirmed, the 2014 edition was in many ways inspiring with regard to the opportunities that new insights, new tooling, new methodologies and new players are already offering. We already look forward to the third edition in 2015 and the progress to be made until then.

In 2015 Reporting 3.0 will evolve further as a global platform. Transition labs and regional roundtables will continue, and there are plans to involve an even deeper quality of collaboration through projects in the range of areas like e.g. sustainable business models, materiality, accounting, goals- targets- and incentives setting; all necessary ingredients to deliver on the trigger function of reporting towards achieving a ‘green & inclusive economy’. The combined forces of IT, sustainable business modeling, micro-macro-linked accounting, and collaboration in open groups can immensely contribute to and benefit from a platform concept like Reporting 3.0. BSD Consulting, the initiator and facilitator of the Platform is therefore exploring opportunities to partner with future-oriented companies and strategic partners in order to build upon the success of the last two years and to co-create the emerging Future of Reporting with those partners.

We thank everybody involved in making the 2nd annual conference such a stunning event. We hope to see you all back on several of the Reporting 3.0 platform events and projects, or at the 3rd annual conference in 2015.

More Information:

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