

Preface

In today's business environment, non-financial reporting has become imperative for businesses as there is a growing understanding that to have a truly reflective view of an organization's performance, financial performance alone is not sufficient. In India, introduction of Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR) by SEBI has significantly standardised the ESG reporting in accordance with globally accepted frameworks, which is crucial to build stakeholder trust, attract global investment and enhance goodwill as corporate citizen.

Considering the degree of trust placed by stakeholders on corporate disclosures especially on ESG and sustainability parameters, the independent third-party assurance of such disclosures has invariably become more important to ensure the accuracy and reliability of BRSR issued by entities.

To achieve this objective, the SEBI has introduced a framework of assurance of BRSR Core, which is a subset of BRSR, comprising of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and metrics across nine ESG attributes. Assurance of BRSR Core provide independent examination of information disclosed by the entity.

Being an emerging area, different from traditional audit, methods and practice adopted for conducting third-party assurance of BRSR core may pose certain challenges and hence, this Guidance Note on Third-Party Assurance has been formulated by the ICSI with an objective to serve as a useful and practical guide for assurance providers, reporting entities and other stakeholders.

In this Guidance Note, the principles and guidance are enumerated primarily for third party assurance, which may be equally useful in case of conducting third-party assessment and hence may be applied with necessary adaptation to improve the effectiveness of third-party assessment, wherever applicable.

I place on record my sincere thanks to all the members of ESG and Sustainability Board (ESGSB) of ICSI for their valuable contribution in finalising this Guidance Note on Third Party Assurance under the leadership of CS Ranjeet Pandey, Chairman-ESGSB, CS Ashish Garg, Co- Chairman, ESGSB and with the presence of my council colleagues CS R. Venkata Ramana and CS Rajesh C. Tarpara, as members of the ESGSB.

I commend the dedicated efforts put in by CS Rakesh Kumar, Deputy Director, ICSI and CS Alex VS, Executive (Academics), ICSI in bringing out this Guidance Note on Third Party Assurance under the guidance of CS Banu Dandona, Director, ICSI and overall supervision of CS Asish Mohan, Secretary, ICSI.

I am confident that this Guidance Note on Third Party Assurance will be immensely useful for all stakeholders and will be of practical value to those entrusted with the assurance of BRSR Core.

Improvement is a continuous process, which equally applicable to this Guidance Note. Readers are invited to share suggestions and comments for further advancement of this Guidance Note.

Place: New Delhi

Date: 19th December, 2025

CS Dhananjay Shukla

President

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India