



AccountAbility



Federal Institute for
Sustainable Development

Stakeholder dialogue with impact:

practical experience with AA1000SES and a look ahead



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Federal Institute for
**Sustainable
Development**



Empowering Businesses with Human Rights Toolbox

Access practical guidance, regulations, and self-assessment resources to strengthen your organisation's commitment to human rights in Belgium and beyond.

[About the Toolbox](#)



Tools

Glossary

Feedback



Due diligence tailored to your business needs

While globalization creates opportunities for firms and workers, risks for violations of human rights and for environmental harms persist across global supply chains. Due diligence allows you to understand and mitigate these risks.

CARRY OUT THE SELF-ASSESSMENT →

PUT DUE DILIGENCE INTO PRACTICE WITH OUR ONLINE MANUAL →





AccountAbility | Setting the Standard for Sustainability

Annual SDG Forum Stakeholder Engagement & the AA1000SES v3

October 2026

DUBAI

LONDON

NEW YORK

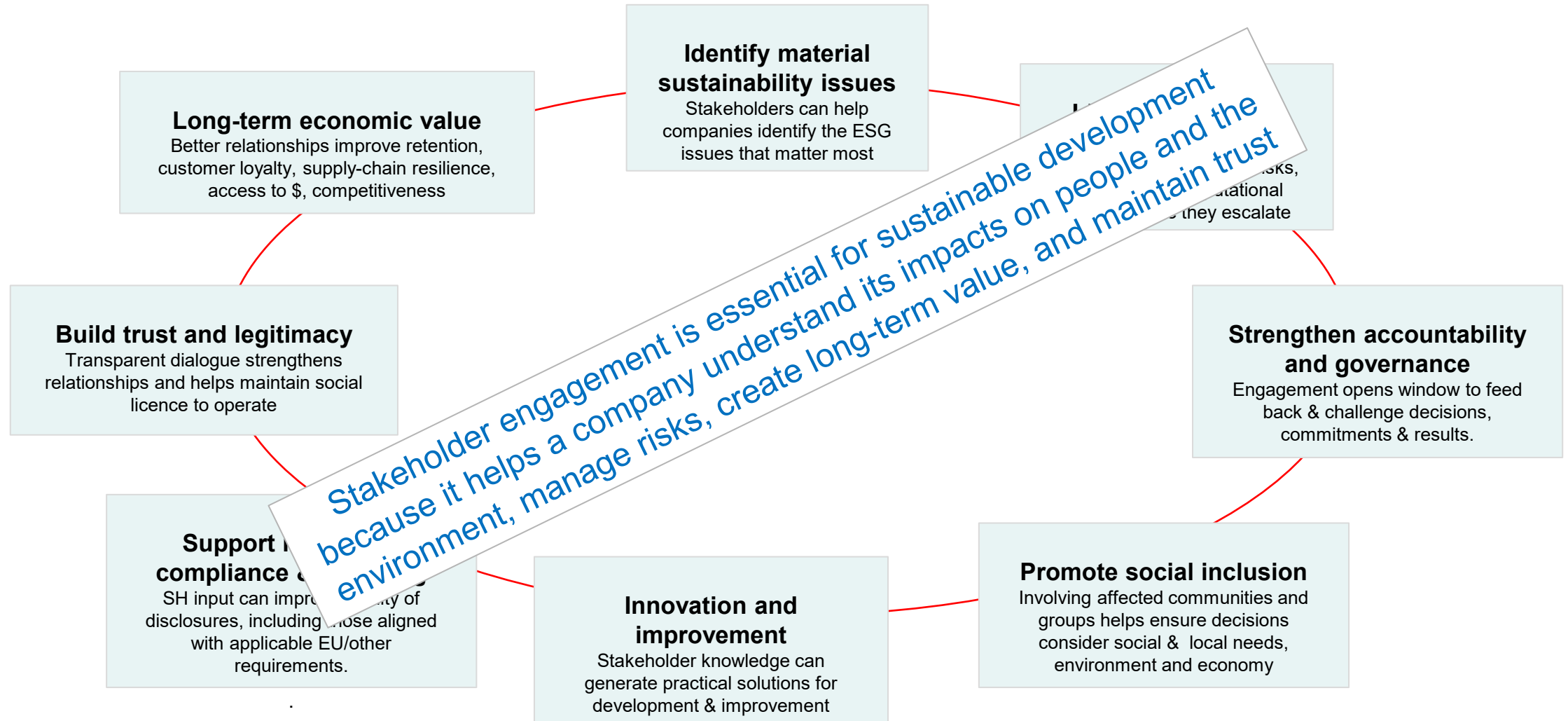
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About AccountAbility

Importance of Stakeholder Engagement in Sustainability

Stronger Practices, Better Decisions, Credible Responsibility





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The updated AA1000SES standard

AccountAbility is an expert global Sustainability Advisory and Standards firm

We work with businesses, investors, governments, and multilateral organizations to innovate and advance the global sustainability / ESG agenda by improving the practices, performance, and impact of organizations.



ADVISORY

Practical, relevant, and innovative solutions customized to meet client needs



STANDARDS

Simple, adaptable, and easy-to-use frameworks to guide responsible and impact-driven performance



INSIGHTS

Expert perspectives, forward-looking trends, and industry context

Stakeholder engagement needs to supports sustainability standards

For a company implementing sustainability standards, stakeholder engagement is not simply a communication exercise; it should inform decisions, actions and performance evaluation.

Standard/framework examples

- ISO 26000, Social responsibility
- ISO 14001, Environmental management
- ISO 14090/2, Climate Adaptation
- ISO 50001, Energy Management
- GRI Standards, Reporting
- ESRS under CSRD, Reporting
- AA1000 APS

Relevance of engagement

- stakeholder identification and engagement
- interested parties and relevant compliance obligations
- understanding climate-change impacts, risks and adaptation needs
- employee participation and energy-performance improvement
- understanding stakeholder perspectives and reporting significant impacts
- stakeholder perspectives contribute to assessing impacts, risks and opportunities; materiality decisions remain the company's responsibility
- stakeholders are central to core principles of **Inclusivity, Materiality, Responsiveness and Impact**

The Evolution of the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard

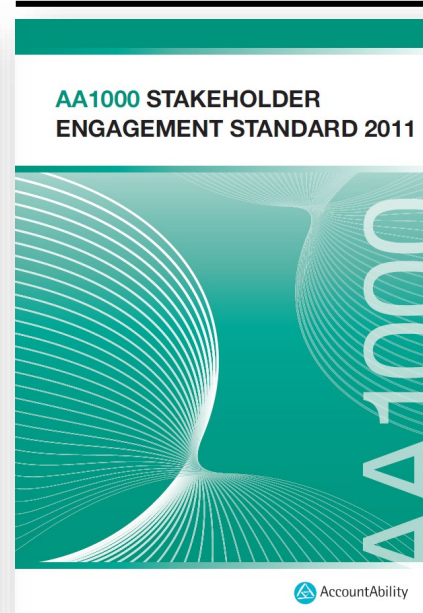
The Most Widely Used Stakeholder Engagement Standard Worldwide

2005



Guided organizations in structured stakeholder engagement as a **collaborative approach to governance**, based on the AccountAbility Principles of **Inclusivity**, **Materiality**, and **Responsiveness**.

2011



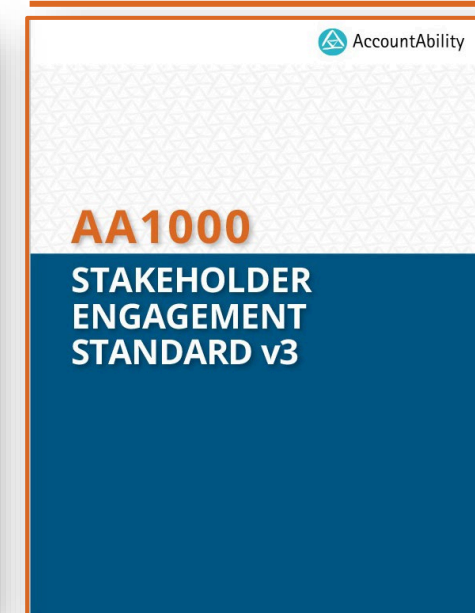
Introduced **rigor and organizational accountability** for engagement process and outcomes

2015



Repositioned engagement as a strategic imperative, integrating it with **corporate governance** for long-term value creation.

2026



Modernized for emerging engagement complexities, anchored in **co-creation** and the additional Principle of **Impact**.

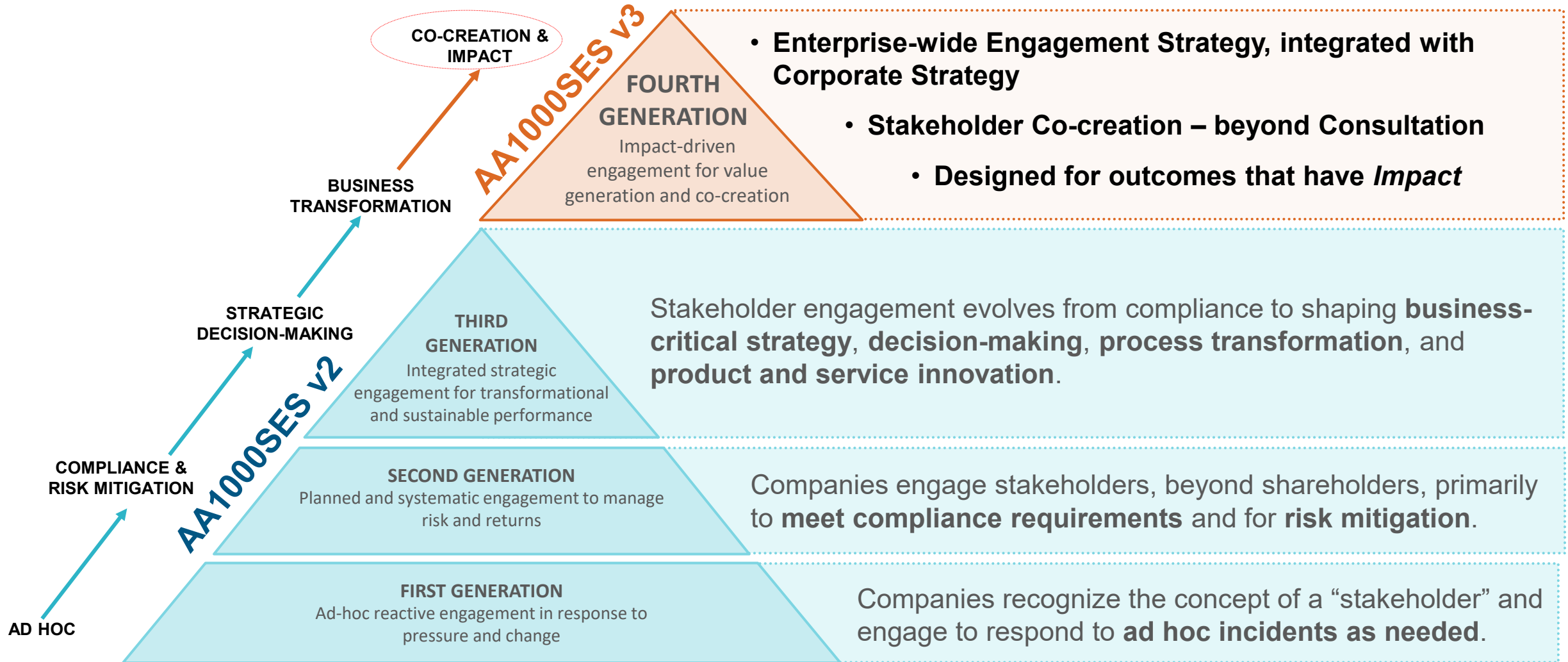
From AA1000SES v2 to AA1000SES v3

Some of the Key Changes from the 2015 Version*

	 AA1000SES v2 2015	 AA1000SES v3 2027 More relevant, more <i>Impact driven</i> ..
Principles	Focus on the AccountAbility Principles of <i>Inclusivity</i> , <i>Materiality</i> and <i>Responsiveness</i>	Focus on the revised AccountAbility Principles of <i>Inclusivity</i> , <i>Materiality</i> , <i>Responsiveness</i> and Impact
Structure	4-section approach that followed the 'Plan, Prepare, Implement, Review' model	Updated 5-phase structure to integrate SH engagement into strategy, to inform individual engagements Clearer governance requirements for greater accountability
Interoperability	No explicit interoperability with disclosure frameworks	Interoperable with emerging disclosure frameworks , helping organizations meet today's reporting requirements
Guidance	Limited guidance on modern engagement tools and good governance processes	Guidance on digital tools and AI to support engagement facilitation and evaluation

The “Fourth Generation” of Stakeholder Engagement

The Evolution of Stakeholder Engagement



Key Updates to the AA1000SES v3

A Standard Designed for Long-term *Relevance, Resilience, and Impact*



Ongoing & Responsive Engagement

A greater focus on **continual stakeholder engagement** for more **meaningful and dynamic relationships** and **ongoing insight into emerging risks and opportunities**.



Two-Way Dialogue

An increased emphasis on **two-way dialogue** which enables organizations to **co-create solutions**, **better evaluate effectiveness**, and **calibrate responsiveness to stakeholder expectations**.



Digital Relevance

New guidance provided on the **use of digital platforms and AI** as tools to **map stakeholders**, **manage engagement**, and **analyze insights** for more **efficient and scalable engagement processes**.



Regulatory Compliance & Interoperability

Updates to ensure **interoperability with current and emerging regulatory frameworks and disclosure requirements** which foster more **credible, transparent, and auditable stakeholder engagement practices**.



Principles-Based Approach

The **inclusion of the 2018 AccountAbility Principle of “Impact”** alongside *Inclusivity, Materiality, and Responsiveness*, **emphasizes the importance of outcomes and value creation** for more meaningful engagement.

How AccountAbility Standards can help SMEs engage with stakeholders

AA1000SES v3; An *Open, Scalable* Standard That Meets SMEs Where They Are

Open-Source and Free to Apply

- **Open-source framework:** any organisation can download and apply it **without a licence fee**.
- External assurance is optional.

Designed for Every Size and Maturity Level

- Written to be **adaptable to organizations of all sizes**, sectors, geographies, and maturity levels.
- It is principles-based, **not one-size-fits-all**.

Focus on both Strategy and Individual Engagements

- Phase 1 (**Strategy**) guides organizations to create robust processes and governance that then can apply over Phases 2–4 (**Design, Engage, Measure**) to one engagement, allowing users to **build long-standing approaches**.

Practical Support for Small Teams

- Guidance on **digital tools and AI** to map stakeholders and analyze feedback
- A **self-checker** to test alignment
- Can combine with an AccountAbility **CSEP training** to build skills in-house.

Five Engagement Levels: Start Where You Are

Level 5 · Transformative
Share control of decisions

Level 4 · Strategic
Partners in shaping outcomes

Level 3 · Integrated
Engaged throughout, with limited influence

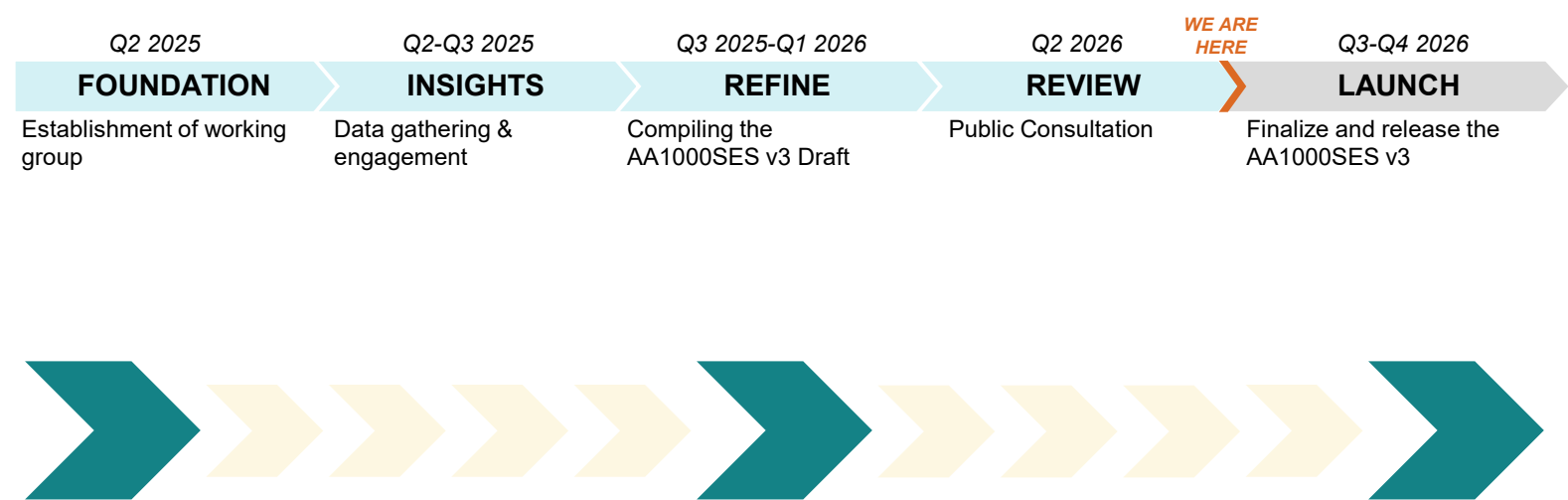
Level 2 · Tactical
Stakeholders are asked for input

Level 1 · Reactive
Stakeholders are informed

SMEs choose the level that fits the purpose of each engagement and their resources, then move up over time.

Launching AA1000SES v3

Publication Timeline



November 2026
Pre-launch in Seoul with Korean Standards Association at 2026 Sustainability Conference



January 2027
Launch event in New York City in partnership with Fordham University



Q1 2027
Launch events across: London, Riyadh, and Mumbai

CSEP Training

A brand-new Stakeholder Engagement Certificate Program for practitioners, v3 based



Transition from ad hoc, reactive engagement efforts to **structured, credible, and practical** engagement strategies through:

- Interactive training sessions
- Real-world case studies and examples
- Practical tools and engagement frameworks
- Certification as a **Certified Stakeholder Engagement Practitioner (CSEP)**
- Public recognition on AccountAbility's website

Developing Certified Leaders in Stakeholder Engagement

Certified Stakeholder Engagement Practitioner (CSEP) Training



Build Organizational Capacity in Strategic Stakeholder Engagement

Based on AccountAbility's latest AA1000SES v3 Stakeholder Engagement Standard, the **CSEP program** will provide individuals and organizations with the tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to make the **transition from ad hoc, reactive engagement efforts to structured, credible, and practical engagement strategies.**



Who is this training for

Executives, manager, practitioners, and teams that engage internal and/or external SHs regularly:

- Customer Success
- Sustainability & ESG
- Strategy & Transformation
- Governance, Risk, and Compliance
- Investor Relations
- Communications
- Procurement & Supplier Management
- Corporate Affairs
- Public Affairs
- Government Affairs
- Human Resources
- Consultants and advisors



What will participants learn

- Design effective SH engagement strategies
- Facilitate credible two-way SH dialogue
- Apply AA1000SES principles and requirements in practice
- Integrate SH insights into corporate strategy and decision-making
- Demonstrate credible and auditable engagement practices



Value for organizations

- Build internal capacity to strengthen organizational engagement practices and outcomes
- Address ESG, sustainability, and regulatory expectations
- Enhance public credibility, trust, transparency
- Improve SH-informed decision-making
- Demonstrate alignment with the AA1000SES global benchmark

Get Involved

Scan the QR Code to Learn More About the AA1000SES v3



Adopt the Standard

The AA1000SES v3 is open-source and free for any organization to download and apply.



Train Your Team

Build in-house skills through the Certified Stakeholder Engagement Practitioner (CSEP) training.



Share Your Story

AccountAbility welcomes case studies from SMEs on their use of the AA1000 Series.





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THANK YOU

AccountAbility is providing this information overview for discussion purposes.

Information in these materials related to our approach, methodologies, or experiences is confidential and proprietary to AccountAbility and may not be disclosed to third parties without our prior written consent.

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