

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR CSR SELF-DECLARATION

APPENDIX C - PRIORITY MATRIX CORE THEMES AND TOPICS

CSR POLICY

seo • economisch onderzoek

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This document sets out the relevance, significance and priorities of the core themes and topics. Together with the reference matrix, it forms the basis for the CSR Self-Declaration. Each table in this document describes the topics of the following core themes:

1. Governance of the organisation (Table 1)
2. Human rights (Table 2)
3. Labour practices (Table 3)
4. The environment (Table 4)
5. Fair business practices (Table 5)
6. Consumer affairs (Table 6)
7. Community involvement and development (Table 7)

Table 1 Core theme: Governance of the organisation

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Organisation's management	Yes	At SEO, the management is structured with an executive board and a supervisory board, with decisions being taken after consultation with the works council. The organisational culture and values are embedded in the mission statement and disseminated through HR policy, health and safety policy, training policy and science policy. Social responsibility is promoted through a CSR working group, frequent communication between management and staff, and regular evaluations that include diversity, openness and stakeholder engagement.	M	Good governance is essential for the quality of decision-making, transparency and accountability within SEO. The board largely determines how social responsibility is integrated into the organisation and contributes to an open and professional culture. Effective and supported governance has a significant influence on the culture within the organisation, which can create support for the CSR policy.	L	The organisation's governance currently functions properly and complies with existing internal and legal frameworks. There are no indications that adjustments are necessary. SEO will continue to monitor governance periodically, considering potential opportunities for improvement, including further harmonisation of administrative processes, as soon as this proves relevant and effective. There is no urgent need for structural improvements.	No	

Table 2 Key theme: Human rights

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Due diligence	Yes	SEO does not abuse or take advantage of situations in which human rights are insufficiently protected. In certain regions or under certain circumstances, there are insufficient safeguards for the protection of human rights. In its actions, SEO guarantees that it will not take advantage of these situations.	L	SEO is not a human rights organisation and rarely operates in areas where human rights are less likely to be adequately protected, making this issue less significant for SEO. Nevertheless, respect for human rights is important for every organisation.	L	This issue is less significant for SEO. Moreover, SEO already exercises due diligence wherever possible. Therefore, no urgent action is required.	No	
Risk situations relating to human rights	No	SEO is rarely or never involved in circumstances or environments where it is likely to face challenges or dilemmas relating to human rights.	N/A		N/A		No	
Avoiding complicity	No	SEO has a very small chance of finding itself in a situation where it could become complicit in the commission of unlawful acts or other acts that are not in accordance with international standards of conduct.	N/A		N/A		No	
Resolving complaints	Yes	SEO has a complaints procedure that can be used by all parties involved. There are also complaints that do not fall under this complaints procedure but are still dealt with. Complaints about the content or process of a research assignment are handled by the project leader and are preferably not part of the formal complaints procedure. SEO also has an external confidential advisor who can handle complaints regarding undesirable behaviour, intimidation and discrimination anonymously and confidentially.	M	An external complaints procedure is important for protecting human rights, customer satisfaction, trust and improving products and services. The internal complaints procedure is important for employee satisfaction. If employees are dissatisfied and complaints are not addressed, this can lead to reduced employee performance, which will ultimately be reflected in the results of SEO research.	M	Resolving complaints is important for our business operations, both internally and externally. Continuous attention to this subject is therefore important. The options for reporting complaints and the existing procedure for handling them make additional actions unnecessary.	No	
Discrimination and vulnerable groups	Yes	Preventing discrimination in general and of vulnerable target groups in particular is not only relevant in SEO's personnel policy, but also in SEO's public communications, because SEO deals with employees and customers from different backgrounds. Discrimination is not only socially undesirable but can also damage the productivity and reputation of SEO as an organisation.	M	A safe working environment and a diverse workforce are of great importance to a research agency with a broad social orientation. SEO wants to give everyone an equal opportunity to develop and apply their talents within our organisation, enabling us to conduct broader and richer research for society.	M	SEO prevents discrimination and promotes equal treatment through an inclusive recruitment policy, a policy on undesirable behaviour and access to an independent confidential advisor. The employee satisfaction survey (MTO) pays systematic attention to social safety and inclusion. These measures contribute to a fair and safe working environment for all employees. Regarding the recruitment policy, this could be further structured.	Yes	The recruitment policy will be reviewed in the coming year with a specific focus on equal opportunities. In addition, the Diversity Charter will be drawn up and formally ratified.

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Civil and political rights	No	SEO has a very small chance of finding itself in a situation where it would not respect individual civil and political rights.	N/A		n/a		No	
Economic, social and cultural rights	Yes	SEO contributes to economic, social and cultural rights by conducting independent research that contributes to knowledge development, policy-making and social insights. SEO offers employment without discrimination based on background and publishes research results publicly wherever possible, thereby enhancing transparency and social value.	L	SEO's influence on economic, social and cultural rights lies mainly in the research results produced by the organisation. The impact is indirect and depends on the application by clients, which means that a low significance rating is appropriate.	M	SEO does not exclude any topics in advance for conducting independent scientific research for clients. These clients are concerned with social issues to which SEO can contribute by developing expertise. No additional actions are necessary.	No	
Fundamental principles and labour rights	Yes	SEO complies with all legal provisions regarding labour rights, follows the collective labour agreement for Dutch universities, and has an HR policy that has been agreed with its staff. There is a staff representative body that meets with the Management Board monthly. Good working conditions are guaranteed by, among other things, an active Risk Inventory and Evaluation (RI&E), for which prevention officers have been appointed.	L	Compliance with legal provisions regarding labour rights is fundamental and forms the basis for satisfied and well-functioning employees.	L	Fundamental principles and labour rights are regulated through HR policy and legal provisions, so no urgent action is needed in this area.	No	

Table 3 Key theme: Labour practices

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Employment and labour relations	Yes	By creating jobs and providing wages and other forms of compensation for work performed, SEO contributes both economically and socially to the prosperity and development of individuals and communities. SEO's HR policy focuses on equal opportunities and diversity, with detailed job profiles and fair remuneration structures. SEO ensures compliance with labour legislation and pays attention to diversity and anti-discrimination when hiring staff. In addition, SEO strives for stable labour relations and makes cautious use of flexible staff, with respect for employment conditions and legal standards.	L	Employment and labour relations are important to SEO because they create a stable and well-functioning working environment, which is crucial for attracting and retaining qualified staff and thus supports the success of research and scientific achievements. Nevertheless, job creation is not SEO's primary objective.	L	In the area of employment and labour relations, there are no steps that require urgent action.	No	
Working conditions and social protection	Yes	SEO has a detailed employment conditions policy with guidelines for salary, leave, working hours and other employment conditions. In addition, SEO guarantees safe and healthy working conditions through a health and safety policy, complies with the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities, offers compensation for overtime and promotes flexibility in working hours and locations. Furthermore, SEO conducts an annual Employee Satisfaction Survey and takes action based on Risk Inventory and Evaluation (RI&E) to improve working conditions.	M	Appropriate working conditions and social protection are important for ensuring the health, safety and well-being of employees, which in turn promotes productivity, satisfaction and the quality of research.	L	Working conditions and social protection for employees are currently well regulated within SEO. This is therefore a low priority in the CSR policy.	No	

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Social dialogue	Yes	Within SEO, information is shared through various channels, including quarterly newsletters, the intranet, lunch seminars and the Works Council, which ensures transparency and employee involvement. Important decisions are prepared with the involvement of staff representatives, as was the case with recent issues such as the office renovation, pension scheme and CSR policy. Finally, SEO has a complaints procedure in which social dialogue is the first step in resolving complaints.	M	Social dialogue is important to SEO because it provides an opportunity for open communication and cooperation between all the different parties involved in SEO, including employees and customers, and management and employees. This promotes a positive working environment and effective personnel policy.	M	Social dialogue currently takes place through various channels within SEO. The most recent MTO showed that employees are increasingly satisfied with the way they feel they have a say in decisions within SEO. No further action is needed on this point beyond the regular dialogue between employees, the Works Council, management and MT.	No	
Health and safety at work	Yes	SEO has a specific health and safety policy aimed at a safe and healthy working environment, with a focus on risk management, prevention, ergonomics and the physical and mental health of employees. SEO has an independent confidential advisor and a policy on undesirable behaviour, strives for respect and equality, complies with the ISO 9001 and ISO 27001 standards, and guarantees the safety of employees and personal data in accordance with the GDPR.	M	Health and safety at work are vital for SEO to guarantee a safe and healthy working environment, protect the well-being of employees and ensure the continuity of work.	L	SEO has clear policies and procedures in place to ensure health and safety at work. Therefore, no urgent action is required in this area.	No	
Personal development and training in the workplace	Yes	SEO places a strong emphasis on personal development and training in the workplace with a training policy aimed at identifying training needs and organising appropriate training courses. For example, SEO offers internal and external training opportunities and regular performance, and assessment interviews are held to promote individual development.	H	Personal development and training in the workplace are essential for SEO, because high-quality research depends on up-to-date knowledge and skills. Employees must remain up to date in a dynamic research landscape, and continuous professional development is necessary to guarantee quality, independence and expertise.	H	Continuous attention must be paid to the personal development of employees as the key to high-quality research. The MTO, among other things, has revealed that there is a need for more structure and clarity regarding training opportunities at SEO.	Yes	Further develop the training programme and training opportunities, specifically for different job profiles, in line with the development needs of employees, and communicate this more explicitly via the intranet and in formal and informal discussions with managers.

Table 4 Key theme: The environment

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Prevention of environmental pollution	Yes	SEO has an environmental impact through, among other things, mobility, energy consumption and office facilities. Where possible, SEO opts for more sustainable options to reduce its environmental impact. Regarding mobility, SEO encourages the use of public transport, bicycles and shared transport instead of cars (or aeroplanes). Work-related travel is limited as much as possible by facilitating online meetings and minimising international travel.	M	For SEO, as an economic research agency that conducts research into maximising (broad) prosperity, creating a liveable planet for both current and future generations is a highly relevant objective. Although the direct environmental impact of SEO's operational activities is limited, SEO is committed to achieving the highest possible standards within its capabilities. We do this not only because of the importance of sustainability for our (future) employees, but also because of our potential role as an example in society.	L	Preventing environmental pollution is a low priority at SEO, because the impact of its operational activities on the environment is limited. Where possible, several measures have already been taken, leaving little room for additional environmental gains. However, the discussion about SEO's environmental impact is encouraged internally.	No	
Sustainable use of resources	Yes	The main ways in which SEO contributes to the sustainable use of resources include the implementation of a paperless office, the use of recycled materials in our buildings, and actively encouraging the use of bicycles and public transport.	M	As a research agency with mainly office-based and digital activities, our use of resources consists primarily of energy consumption, office supplies and mobility. These aspects are relevant to sustainable business practices but are not part of the core of our research work. Therefore, this theme has medium significance for SEO.	L	Within SEO's sphere of influence, measures are already being taken to promote the sustainable use of resources, such as paperless working and the use of recycled materials. The opportunities for additional actions lie mainly in the optimisation of existing processes. Therefore, this theme currently has a low priority in the CSR policy.	No	
Mitigation of and adaptation to climate change	Yes	SEO contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation by conducting research that supports policymakers, businesses and civil society organisations in developing climate strategies. By analysing climate data and evaluating policy measures, SEO provides knowledge that can be used in climate mitigation and adaptation processes.	M	SEO's direct climate impact lies mainly in energy consumption, mobility and office facilities. In addition, climate research plays a role within the research portfolio. As a result, the theme of mitigation and adaptation has an average significance: SEO can take measures within its sphere of influence and contribute indirectly through research activities.	M	SEO can mainly contribute to this through the choice of research topics and the development of expertise in the field of sustainable economics.	Yes	Pay more structural attention to sustainability as a research topic and further develop expertise in the field of sustainable economics and climate policy.
Protection of the environment, biodiversity and restoration of natural habitats	Yes	SEO contributes to public debates on the environment, biodiversity and natural habitats through independent research. By analysing environmental policy and assessing the effects of environmental measures, both on request and on its own initiative, SEO supports clients in making informed decisions that benefit the protection of the environment, biodiversity and the restoration of natural habitats.	L	Although SEO does not carry out any direct ecological activities, research into environmental policy and biodiversity plays a role in certain projects. This results in a low to medium significance: the influence is indirect, but relevant to clients and social issues.	M	This issue is high on the agenda of our stakeholders, particularly governments, development organisations and NGOs. SEO can contribute to this primarily through its choice of research topics and the development of expertise in the field of sustainable economics and environmental policy.	Yes	Pay more structural attention to sustainability and environmental themes in research and develop expertise in the field of sustainable economics.

Table 5 Core theme: Fair business practices

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Anti-corruption	Yes	Anti-corruption is addressed by including fraud and continuity risks in the annual accounts and reporting. In addition, the drafting and application of a code of conduct, internal control measures and a transparent remuneration policy contribute to integrity and responsible conduct within SEO.	M	Anti-corruption practices contribute to SEO's reputation, integrity and legal compliance as an organisation and are significant in promoting an ethical corporate culture.	L	SEO applies existing anti-corruption measures, which are embedded in the organisation. Therefore, no action is required in this area.	No	
Responsible political engagement	Yes	The independence of SEO and its employees, the establishment of responsibilities, internal control measures to prevent unethical behaviour, the obligation to report secondary positions, compliance with the Dutch code of conduct for scientific integrity and the publication of research reports, in combination with the explicitly defined purpose and the associated desired behaviour, form the basis for responsible political engagement within SEO.	H	Because SEO provides advice and assesses policy, a high level of responsible political engagement is crucial to SEO's work. Independence is guaranteed in this regard.	L	Independence is SEO's core value and crucial to its commercial reputation. Because this applies to the day-to-day work carried out by SEO, no further action is required in this regard.	No	
Fair competition	Yes	SEO complies with competition law, safeguards the independence of the organisation and its employees, and publishes public research reports.	M	Competition encourages research institutes such as SEO to be innovative and to continuously strive for improvement. This benefits the quality and reliability of the research results. In addition, fair competition forces the efficient use of finances and personnel. It contributes to public confidence in the integrity of the organisation. Furthermore, competition leads to diversity in research areas and approaches.	L	Fair competition is a key aspect of SEO's operations, from which it derives many long-term commercial benefits. SEO systematically applies fair competition practices. Therefore, no urgent action is required in this area.	No	
Promoting social responsibility in the value chain	No	SEO hardly purchases any products or services for its services, which means it has little influence on social responsibility in the value chain. However, SEO often works with partners in its services; for more information, please refer to the topic Responsible political involvement.	N/A	n/a	N/A		No	

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Respect for property rights	Yes	SEO's intellectual property rights, those of third parties and public research reports play a role in respecting property rights. Various documents in the quality and information security policy set out how SEO deals with copyright law. SEO's general terms and conditions state that the intellectual property rights to all material developed within the framework of the agreement with the client (including reports and analyses) are vested in SEO. Third-party intellectual property rights are treated with care.	M	Intellectual property rights provide a legal framework for protecting creative and innovative works. When people know that their intellectual property is protected, they are more inclined to invest in research and development.	L	Respecting intellectual property rights is central to SEO's activities and is structurally embedded in the agreements concluded with clients and subcontractors. Therefore, no urgent action is required in this area.	No	

Table 6 Key theme: Consumer affairs

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Fair marketing, factual and unbiased information, and fair practices when concluding contracts	No	Not applicable, SEO does not sell products to consumers.	N/A		N/A		No	
Protecting consumer health and safety	No	Same as above.	N/A		N/A		No	
Sustainable consumption	No	Same as above.	N/A		N/A		No	
Consumer services, support, complaint and dispute resolution	No	Same as above.	N/A		N/A		No	
Consumer privacy and data protection	No	Same as above.	N/A		N/A		No	
Access to essential facilities	No	Same as above.	N/A		N/A		No	
Training and awareness	No	Same as above.	N/A		N/A		No	

Table 7 Key theme: Community involvement and development

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Community involvement	Yes	SEO contributes to knowledge development and dissemination through scientific and policy research, enabling the community to develop further.	M	As a research and knowledge institute, strengthening the knowledge position of both individuals and society is at the core of our existence.	L	This is already well established within SEO; we are not looking to expand how this theme is embedded within SEO.	No	
Education and culture	Yes	SEO contributes to society's knowledge base by conducting scientific research and making the results widely accessible through various media. In addition, SEO employees offer training courses to introduce a broad audience to scientific research. Furthermore, as part of its social return activities, SEO supports status holders with language and career guidance to convey essential social and cultural knowledge and help them achieve a good social position.	H	As a research and knowledge institute, strengthening the knowledge position of both individuals and society is at the core of our existence.	M	This is already well established within SEO, but it requires continuous action and commitment from employees.	No	
Creating employment and developing skills	Yes	SEO contributes to employment and personal development by offering students the opportunity to do internships and providing them with appropriate internship remuneration. SEO employees also invest time and effort in social return activities. In addition, SEO pursues a sustainable HR policy focused on employee development, including guidance and training opportunities, and offering permanent employment once it is clear that the match between employee and organisation is a good long-term fit.	M	To make a lasting contribution to society's knowledge base, it is important that our employees continue to develop and stay up to date with the latest research methods and techniques.	M	Promoting knowledge and skills requires the continuous adaptation of training policy to changing circumstances. This must be accompanied by a culture of knowledge sharing and the availability of information (including about possible training courses).	Yes	Strengthening the training policy, promoting knowledge sharing and improving information about the training policy within SEO, including via SharePoint.
Development of and access to technology	No	SEO is not involved in the development or distribution of technology.	N/A				No	
Creation of income and wealth	No	SEO primarily produces knowledge and information that benefits the community itself.	N/A				No	
Health	No	SEO does not produce any products or services that have a significant impact on the health of individuals.	N/A				No	

Subject	Relevance (yes/no)	Explanation of relevance	Significance (L/M/H)	Explanation of significance	Priority (L/M/H)	Explanation of priority	Action (yes/no)	Proposed actions
Social investment	Yes	SEO contributes to a well-informed society by conducting and publishing scientific research. SEO ensures the growth of (new) employees through internships and an internal training plan, while employees also provide training for external parties. In addition, SEO participates in social return activities and (regional) meetings to further disseminate knowledge.	H	SEO invests indirectly in society through the public and independent scientific research it conducts for many types of clients. It also invests directly in society through knowledge sharing and social return activities, among other things.	M	The social return activities are currently still carried out on an ad hoc basis but could be standardised to a greater extent.	Yes	SEO continues to look for new and structural ways in which social return activities can take shape and is investigating how knowledge sharing within and outside the organisation can be further expanded.