

## When can we believe a CSR report? New report sheds light on assurance process

**A new report reveals previously unpublished information about a young but burgeoning multi-million pound global industry operating at the heart of corporate trust: CSR report assurance.**

*Assure View - The CSR Assurance Statement Report* is the first report to offer an independent, comprehensive overview of the field. The report outlines who uses assurance, who provides assurance and what methods are used. *Assure View* is a reference point for all stakeholders, from reporting companies and assurance providers to consumers who wish to find out more about companies' social and environmental impacts.

In 2008 some 3,000 companies are expected to publish a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) report to document their policies and performance on key issues, including environmental and social activities. Of these, around 750 will include a third-party assurance statement addressing the report's credibility and completeness.

While CSR reporting has become a basic business expectation, the majority of CSR reports aren't independently assured. This casts serious doubts on the role, meaning and reliability of these non-assured CSR reports. Of those reports which do include an assurance statement, *Assure View* comes to the following conclusions:

- In the absence of a 'common language' there's confusion as to which of the many assurance approaches provides the most credibility and certainty. Some standards and guidelines are emerging, but are far from being accepted across the board.
- There are hundreds of assurance providers active in this field with just three major types dominating the market. *Assure View* outlines key differences in the approaches of each of these provider types.
- From an examination of leading assurance statements and commonly referenced initiatives, together with its own experience in this field, CorporateRegister.com identifies the Key Elements which lead to meaningful assurance statements.

*"In our experience, these Key Elements make for a solid and meaningful assurance statement. It is certainly the process we follow as we provide independent assurance of corporate responsibility reports for our customers"*

commented Rebecca Bowens, Global Sustainability Report Assurance Product Manager, SGS.

*Assure View* has been sponsored by four of the world's leading assurers active in this field: SGS, KPMG, LRQA and The Reassurance Network. Guest commentaries by AccountAbility, The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) welcome *Assure View's* independent perspective on an important but fragmented field.

*"This is the first time the field of CSR report assurance has been examined in such breadth and depth. Assure View examines the concepts behind CSR assurance and identifies the Key Elements which constitute best practice"*

said Paul Scott, Managing Director of CorporateRegister.com.

## Illustrated Key Findings

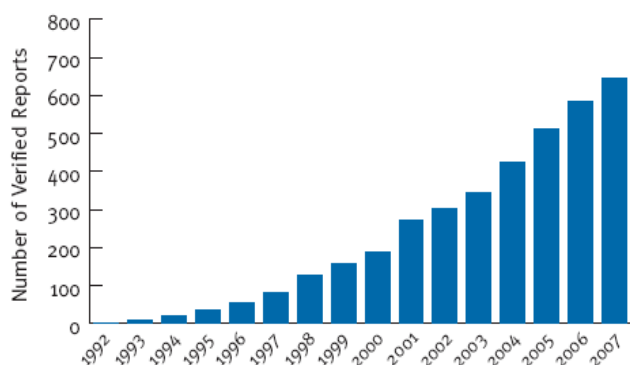


Chart 1: Global Uptake of Assurance

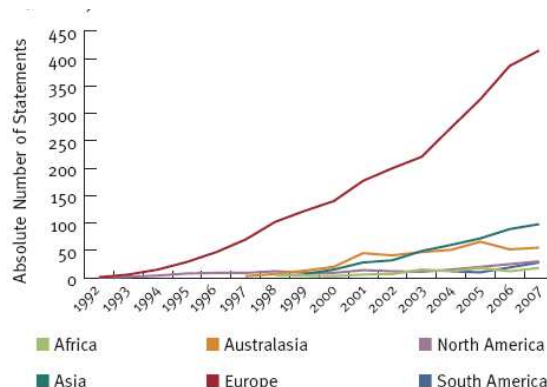


Chart 2: Uptake of Assurance by Region

- Popularity of assurance develops steadily each year, with 650 statements produced in 2007.
- European companies are leading the way in assurance.
- Despite being the second largest CSR reporting region, North American companies are much less likely to use assurance.
- Assurance in Asia is a recent and rapid development - now second only to Europe.

To get the full picture on CSR report assurance, download your free copy of *Assure View* now from [www.corporateregister.com](http://www.corporateregister.com)

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For further information contact Paul Scott, Managing Director, CorporateRegister.com Ltd.  
G18 Clerkenwell Workshops, 31 Clerkenwell Close, London, EC1R 0AT, UK  
Tel.: +44 (0)20 7014 33 66. Email: [info@corporateregister.com](mailto:info@corporateregister.com)

## Notes to Editors

### About CorporateRegister.com

CorporateRegister.com was founded in 1998 as a website dedicated to providing global CSR resources. By mid 2008 over 22,000 registered users benefited from free access to over 17,000 CSR reports together with a range of additional services – news, events, service providers.

### The Assure View sponsors:

**Gold Sponsor:** SGS is the global leader and innovator in inspection, verification, testing and certification services. With over 53,000 employees, SGS operates a network of over 1,000 offices and laboratories around the world.

Contact: Rebecca Bowens, Global Manager Sustainability Report Assurance  
[rebecca.bowens@sgs.com](mailto:rebecca.bowens@sgs.com)

**Silver Sponsor:** KPMG's assurance experience in the UK and internationally over reporting in CSR, Sustainability and Carbon performance is second to none.

Contact: Lynton Richmond, Partner, [lynton.richmond@kpmg.co.uk](mailto:lynton.richmond@kpmg.co.uk)

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Contact: Deborah Evans, Head of CSR Reporting & Assurance [debbie.evans@lrqa.com](mailto:debbie.evans@lrqa.com)

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Contact: Malcolm Guy, Director [mguy@re-assurance.co.uk](mailto:mguy@re-assurance.co.uk)