TIP 437: EPRI – Energy Sustainability Interest Group (ESIG)

Context
Growing attention to corporate transparency, disclosure, and opportunities to improve sustainability performance are driving investment and interest in related research. Financial and credit markets increasingly use environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors in company valuations. International efforts such as the CDP (formerly, Carbon Disclosure Project), Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and the Task Force for Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD), among others, continue to encourage transparency on sustainability issues.

As we explore how a commitment to sustainability throughout electricity generation, delivery, and utilization can support a sustainable economy, this program serves as a resource nexus to bring sustainability thought leaders together and propel progressive scientific research and analysis.

Description
ESIG’s purpose is to collaboratively develop resources to establish and enhance sustainability programs at electric power companies. In 2020, the group advanced several technical projects, including research to understand sustainability priority issues, metrics most relevant to the industry, as well as the frequency, trends, and value of sustainability reporting for the electric power industry.

The primary tasks for the ESIG are:
1. Facilitate Industry Sharing - Webcasts and Workshops
ESIG engages the project collaboration in ongoing sharing. EPRI plans to host a series of webcasts and facilitate discussions on sustainability topics prioritized by project funders. Webcasts are recorded, except in cases where recordings would impede frank discussion on potentially sensitive topics, and the recordings will be made accessible to project funders

2. Priority Sustainability Issues Research
ESIG plans to launch a refresh of earlier research on issues that are most important for determining sustainability performance of the electric power industry (Priority Sustainability Issues for the North American Electric Power Industry – EPRI product #3002011444).

3. Sustainability Goals Inventory
The goals inventory provides unique insights to inform companies considering establishment of sustainability goals, as well as industry stakeholders interested in this topic. The project will refresh this research to ensure that participants have the most current information on sustainability goals throughout the electric power industry.

4. Sustainability Reporting and Disclosure Research
Continue research to evaluate the frequency, trends, and value of voluntary reporting through a regular survey of the members. Along with providing important insights for members, this research will be used as EPRI tracks and engages with third-party reporting organizations to improve the relevance and efficiency of sustainability reporting.

5. Emerging Issues
ESIG will collaborate to identify emerging issues and help shape future ESIG and newly launched programmatic research around priority sustainability issues; maturity and goals; sustainability metrics; as well as reporting and disclosure.

Why It Matters
Electric power companies face unique challenges as they seek to manage financial, environmental, and social performance, while providing safe, clean, reliable, and affordable power. A commitment to sustainability can help achieve enduring growth, superior long-term financial performance, reduced financing costs, as well as improved risk management and stakeholder relationships.

Goals and Objectives
The Energy Sustainability Interest Group aims to provide a collaborative industry forum for electric power companies to discuss sustainability issues and conduct focused technical research to support sustainability program development among its members. It provides a forum to share industry-leading practices and learn from subject matter experts both within and outside of its membership.

Deliverables
Deliverables from this project include collaborative interactions and technical reports and updates. Planned deliverables include:
- Two workshops to interface with fellow ESIG members and explore topics prioritized by members.
- Regular webcasts to discuss technical work and learn from and interact with invited speakers.
- An annual summary of ESIG’s activities.
- Technical updates and reports as appropriate.
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BPA Membership: 2015 to Current Year

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