

What Assures ?

The AA1000 Assurance Standard: An Essential Tool for Assurance Practitioners

Wednesday 17th - Friday 19th November 2004
ExCel London Exhibition and Conference Centre

Speakers Include:

Simon Zadek

Chief Executive, **AccountAbility**

James Smith

Chairman, **Shell UK**

Jorge Cajazeira

ISO CSR Chairman, and Executive
Officer for Strategic Affairs,
Suzano Pulp and Paper – Brazil

Margaret Flaherty

Executive Director,
**World Business Council for
Sustainable Development**

Bernard Giraud

Director, Corporate Social
Development, **Danone**, and
Executive Director, **CSREurope**

Audrey Ogawa Johnson

Senior Director – Operations,
Global Compliance, **GAP Inc**

AccountAbility's AA1000 Assurance Standard is the first open-source assurance standard covering the full range of an organisation's disclosure and associated performance.

This international event will provide a unique opportunity for assurance providers, investors, regulators, NGOs, service users, corporate clients, and all those engaging with the sustainability assurance debate, to examine the Standard, and the ways it can improve the performance of their organisation.

Attendees will benefit from:

- A better understanding of current assurance practices and the role of accountability, including the AA1000 Assurance Standard and other frameworks and guidelines, such as the Global Reporting Initiative
- Practical information on how to implement and improve processes and activities, both in reporting and stakeholder engagement
- New thinking that will support a better understanding of key issues
- Networking opportunities for companies, NGOs and service providers to discuss their own experiences

With Representatives from:

ACCA

BAT

The Body Shop

BP

BT

Deloitte

Ernst and Young

Fair Labor Association

Friends of the Earth

Global Reporting Initiative

IAASB

IRCA

Johannesburg Stock Exchange

KPMG

National Consumer Council

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To register online and for more information please visit:

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What Assures? The AA1000 Assurance Standard: An Essential Tool for Assurance Practitioners
Wednesday 17th - Friday 19th November 2004. ExCel London Exhibition and Conference Centre

DELEGATE BOOKING FORM

sa188

Name _____ Title (Mr/Ms/Dr/Prof/Other) _____

Position _____

Organisation _____

E-mail _____

Address _____

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Tel No. _____ Direct Line? (Yes/No) _____ Fax No. _____

I have read and agree to the terms and conditions below:

Signature _____

HOW TO REGISTER:

Complete the delegate information section above and either:

1. **Fax** a copy of this form to: **020 7490 8830**

2. Book **online** at www.neilstewartassociates.com/sa188

3. **Post** the completed form to: Customer Services, Neil Stewart Associates Ltd, PO Box 39976, 2nd Floor, 1 Benjamin St, London EC1M 5YT

DELEGATE FEES*: Please tick the relevant box below

Wednesday 17th November: Introductory seminar
Flat Rate

£250+VAT (£293.75)

Thursday 18th November: All Day Conference

Full Rate Central Government Departments and the Commercial Sector

£550+VAT (£646.25)

Reduced Rate Public Sector bodies and AccountAbility Members

£467+VAT (£548.73)

Supported Rate Voluntary Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Developing Country NGOs and Trade Unions

£399+VAT (£468.83)

Friday 19th November: Practitioners' Training day

Full Rate Central Government Departments and the Commercial Sector

£599+VAT (£703.83)

Reduced Rate Public Sector bodies and AccountAbility members

£550+VAT (£646.25)

Supported Rate Voluntary Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Developing Country NGOs and Trade Unions

£350+VAT (£411.25)

* Fees include all day access to the event, available conference papers, buffet lunch and refreshments, for registered delegates only. Fees do not include travel costs or accommodation. Shared places are not permitted.

SEMINAR, WORKSHOP AND COURSE SELECTION: Please circle or tick choices below

Wednesday 17th November Seminar: 1 2 3 4 5

Thursday 18th November

Workshop Session One

Workshop Session Two

Stream One: 1a 1b 1c Stream One: 1a 1b 1c

Stream Two: 2a 2b 2c Stream Two: 2a 2b 2c

Stream Three: 3a 3b 3c Stream Three: 3a 3b 3c

Friday 19th November Course: Foundation Course Masterclass Course

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

If you have any special requirements, please describe them here: _____

CONFERENCE PAPERS:

I am unable to attend but would be interested in purchasing the delegate pack after the event @ £139

HOW TO PAY: Please tick the relevant box below

Invoice Please send an invoice to: _____ Purchase order number (if relevant) _____

Cheque I enclose a cheque for £ _____ made payable to Neil Stewart Associates Ltd

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Please debit £ _____ from Mastercard/Eurocard/Visa/Switch/Delta

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Terms and Conditions

This booking form constitutes a legally binding agreement. Payment must be received in full prior to the event. Conference details will be issued subject to receipt of payment. We cannot be held responsible for the non arrival of registration information. If you have not heard from us within 7 days prior to the conference, please contact the conference office. Cancellations confirmed in writing before **Friday 29th October 2004** will be refunded minus an administration charge of £50. We regret that no refund can be made after that date, for whatever reason, although substitutions will be accepted if notified in writing prior to the event. Bookings made after **Friday 29th October 2004** are non-refundable.

Data Protection

The personal information provided by you will be held on a database by Neil Stewart Associates Ltd. Your details may be obtained or made available to external companies for marketing purposes. If you do not wish your details to be used for this purpose, or wish to amend your mailing details, please contact: Neil Stewart Associates, PO Box 39976, 2nd Floor, 1 Benjamin Street, London EC1M 5YT.

Wednesday 17th November Agenda (subject to change)

Background to accountability and assurance

As a scene-setter for the rest of the event, this afternoon session provides a perfect introduction and backdrop for the following days' discussions.

With specific sessions catering both for those relatively new to this area who are looking to find out more, and for experienced practitioners wanting to discuss the current issues in assurance and the role that the AA1000 Assurance Standard can play, delegates of all levels of expertise will have their needs catered for.

The afternoon will open with a plenary session, which will examine the current state of assurance and accountability, focussing on how we have reached this point, and who is doing what in this area.

The afternoon will then focus on interactive breakout sessions where delegates will convene in small groups 'in conversation with' leading practitioners in the field, providing an opportunity to learn about their specific company experience. The groups will also provide attendees with a chance to hear from others dealing with similar experiences.

Delegates will then hear a brief summary of each breakout session from the workshop convenors as well as an opportunity to participate in a question and answer session.

14:00 Registration and Refreshments

14:30 Opening Remarks

An examination of the current state of assurance and accountability
Maria Sillanpää, Managing Director, **AccountAbility**

15:00 Delegates may choose to attend one of the following seminar sessions. Places are allocated on a first-come, first served basis, subject to maximum capacities

1) Sectoral Differences

How does a principles based model such as the AA1000 Assurance Standard help to deal with sectoral dilemmas and differences relating to issues such as materiality?

Rikke Jarvad Netterstrom, Ethical Policy Manager, **The Body Shop International**

2) Stakeholder Engagement

What is the role, if any, of stakeholders in assurance, and how do you identify and engage with stakeholders, including those in 'business to business' environments?

Claus Frier, Manager, Sustainability Development, **Novozymes**

3) Group vs Country Level Reporting Assurance

How can the AA1000 Assurance Standard help organisations working at both national and international levels?

David Kingma, Corporate Social Reporting Manager, **British American Tobacco**

4) NGOs and Assurance

NGOs are increasingly being challenged on their accountability, and coming under attack from the private sector, governments and funders. There are tools that can help to manage these challenges and enable positive outcomes.

David Bonbright, Chief Executive, **ACCESS**

5) Assurance Practitioners

What challenges are assurance providers facing, and what do they need now? What experiences do practitioners have of using the AA1000 Assurance Standard?

Maria Sillanpää, Managing Director, **AccountAbility**

16:30 Summing up workshops with a panel Q&A session

An opportunity for delegates to hear a brief summary of each breakout session from the workshop convenors as well as an opportunity to participate in a question and answer session.

17:30 Networking Reception

Welcome by **Simon Zadek**, Chief Executive, **AccountAbility**

Biographies

Maria Sillanpää

Maria joined AccountAbility as Managing Director in July 2004. With extensive previous experience, Maria is one of a small number of people renowned internationally as a practitioner in the fields of social and sustainability accounting, reporting and assurance. Before joining AccountAbility, Maria spent 5 years working for KPMG's Global Sustainability Services in London where she had overall responsibility for leading and developing work on social accountability, supply chains and business integrity, and six years managing the award-winning Ethical Audit Team at The Body Shop International where she was responsible for the design and implementation of social auditing and for the publication of the company's non-financial Values Reports.

Simon Zadek

Simon is Chief Executive of AccountAbility and serves or has served on numerous Boards and Advisory Councils, including that of the Global Alliance for Workers and Communities, the State of the World's Commission for Globalisation, the ILO's World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalisation, the UN Commission for Social Development Expert Group on CSR, and the founding Steering Committee of the Global Reporting Initiative. He is currently a Senior Fellow at Harvard University, and was previously Visiting Professor at the Copenhagen Business School, the Development Director of the New Economics Foundation, and founding Chair of the Ethical Trading Initiative. In 2003 he was named one of the World Economic Forum's 'Global Leaders for Tomorrow'.

To register online and for more information please visit:

www.neilstewartassociates.com/sa188

Thursday 18th November 2004 Agenda (subject to change)

The AA1000 Assurance Standard: An Essential Tool for Assurance Practitioners

Today's all day conference provides the centerpiece to this 3-day event. Turning to the AA1000 Assurance Standard in detail, delegates will have the chance to discuss its place in the sustainability assurance debate in both plenaries and workshop sessions.

Attendees will hear from high profile stakeholders in panel debates on the topics of:

- What Assures?
- A Global Standards Architecture
- The Future of Assurance

The main focus of the day will come in a series of repeated interactive workshop sessions encompassing three streams:

- Reasons, Routes and Relevance
- Regulation, Implementation and Beyond
- Practical Applications of Assurance

The workshops will cater for delegates of all ranges of interest and expertise. Attendees will be able to select a session relating to their needs amongst the following:

- The Value of Assurance
- Defining Materiality
- What Assures You?
- Implementing Standards
- Regulatory Developments
- Beyond Best Practice
- Selecting an Assurance Provider
- The Role of Internal Controls and Assurers
- Assurer Competencies

08:30 Registration and Refreshments

09:00 Keynote Presentation

Speaker to be confirmed

09:20 Questions and Discussion

09:30 OPENING PLENARY SESSION: WHAT ASSURES?

Explores the current status of assurance, including key challenges and dilemmas. This session draws on research and experience to investigate what will assure stakeholders that what business says is what business does.

PANEL DISCUSSION: What Assures?

PANEL CONVENOR: **Simon Zadek**, Chief Executive, **AccountAbility**
James Smith, Chairman, **Shell UK**
Nicky Newton-King, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, **JSE Securities Exchange**, South Africa
Ed Mayo, Chief Executive, **National Consumer Council**

10:15 Refreshments

10:40 WORKSHOP SESSION ONE

Delegates should choose to attend one workshop from the three streams listed below. Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to maximum capacities

WORKSHOP STREAM 1: REASONS, ROUTES AND RELEVANCE

1a) The Value of Assurance

Explores the arguments that can be used both externally and internally to develop the business case for assurance, and how it can increase the credibility and effectiveness of reporting and ultimately performance.

WHO - For individuals and organisations seeking to gain an understanding of the business case for assurance, focussing on the AA1000 Assurance Standard.

CONVENOR: **Professor Adrian Henriques**, Director, **justassurance**
Audrey Ogawa Johnson, Senior Director - Operations, Global Compliance, **GAP Inc.**
Chris Tuppen, Head of Sustainable Development and Corporate Accountability, **BT**

1b) Defining Materiality

Explores how 'materiality' is being

defined, established and tested in assurance in practice.

WHO - For professionals seeking to explore and develop their appreciation of the current debate on materiality.

CONVENOR: **Preben Sorensen**, Partner and Global Head of Environment and Sustainability, **Deloitte**
David Bickerton, Manager, External Communications, **BP**
Auret van Heerden, President and Chief Executive Officer, **Fair Labor Association**

1c) What Assures You?

This session focuses on practitioner experience, and examines what really provides assurance, from the stakeholder perspective. It will also include the role of ratings and benchmarking, as well as communications.

WHO - For individuals and organisations who want to explore what really assures their stakeholders.

CONVENOR: **Robin Cameron**, Director, **Flag Communications**
Geoff Lane, Partner, Sustainable Business Solutions, **PricewaterhouseCoopers**
Maggie Burns, Ethical Trading Initiative NGO Co-ordinator

WORKSHOP STREAM 2: REGULATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND BEYOND

2a) Implementing Standards

Explores how companies today can select standards, and how models such as the AA1000AS and GRI reporting guidelines fit together.

WHO - For those considering and examining which standards meet their Corporate Responsibility needs.

CONVENOR: **Mark Line**, Director, **csrnetwork**
Doug Johnston, UK Leader, Corporate Responsibility Services, **Ernst and Young**
Martin Hancock, Chief Operating Officer - London, **Westpac**

2b) Regulatory Developments

Explores recent and up-coming regulatory changes, such as Sarbanes-Oxley in the US and the OFR in the UK, that will impact on how assurance of non-financial aspects of performance is provided.

WHO - For professionals wishing to explore where current developments are moving towards.

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CONVENOR: **Sue Slipman**, Chair,
Financial Ombudsman Service
Bernard Giraud, Director, Corporate
Social Development, **Danone**, and
Executive Director, **CSREurope**
Andrew Wilson, Director of Research and
Development, **Ashridge**

2c) Beyond Best Practice

Explores how leadership companies are pushing the boundaries of best-practice for assurance and non-financial reporting. WHO - For individuals and organisations that want to investigate how their current Corporate Responsibility practices can be integrated into core business strategy and processes.

CONVENOR: **Judy Kuszewski**,
Senior Advisor, **SustainAbility Ltd**
Craig Bennett, Head of Corporate
Accountability Campaign,
Friends of the Earth
Speaker to be confirmed

WORKSHOP STREAM 3: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF ASSURANCE

3a) Selecting an Assurance Provider

Explores how companies can identify their assurance needs, and then source and effectively manage external providers. WHO - For individuals and organisations seeking to gain an understanding of the diversity within the assurance market place.

CONVENOR: **Philip Monaghan**,
Service Manager, **AccountAbility**
Jo Confino, Executive Editor,
The Guardian
Speaker to be confirmed

3b) Role of Internal Controls and Assurers

Explores the changing role of internal auditors and the implied competency requirements going forward. WHO - For internal auditors, risk-managers, and those who want to understand the internal processes around assurance. CONVENOR: **Maria Sillanpää**,
Managing Director, **AccountAbility**
Alun Bowen, Senior Partner, **KPMG**
Speaker to be confirmed

3c) Assurer Competencies

Explores the evolving competency requirements of external assurance providers and those involved in assurance, and the role of AccountAbility's newly launched Assurance Certification Scheme. WHO - For practitioners seeking to explore pathways to professional development around assurance.

CONVENOR: **Jeremy Nicholls**, Chair of
Operating Board at **AccountAbility** and
New Economics Foundation Associate
Simon Feary, Director, **International**
Register of Certified Auditors (IRCA)
Rebecca Bowens, Product Manager,
Sustainability Report Assurance, **SGS**

12:40 Buffet Lunch

13:40 AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION: THE GLOBAL ARCHITECTURE OF STANDARDS

Over the last decade a host of new principles, frameworks, guidelines and standards have emerged to handle specific issues, such as labour standards and carbon emissions. Core to these developments has been a more inclusive approach to considering what should count and how, as well as the convergence of existing models. Subsequently a number of standards and frameworks have evolved to address the growing need to restructure the global architecture of reporting and assurance.

This session explores the features and future of the emerging 'global standards architecture', and the need to establish Generally Accepted Assurance Standards for sustainability that drive performance through accountability.

Panel Discussion:

PANEL CONVENOR: **Roger Adams**, Head of
Technical Services, **Association of**
Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Ralph Thurm, Deputy Chief Officer, **GRI**
Denise Esdon, Vice Chair, **International**
Auditing and Assurance Standards
Board (IAASB)
Jorge Cajazeira, ISO CSR Chairman, and
Executive Officer for Strategic Affairs,
Suzano Pulp and Paper - Brazil
Maria Sillanpää, Managing Director,
AccountAbility

14:40 Break

14:45 WORKSHOP SESSION TWO

This morning's workshop sessions are repeated to enable delegates to participate in another group. Delegates should choose to attend a different workshop in this session. Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to maximum capacities. (Refreshments will be served in the seminar rooms.)

WORKSHOP STREAM 1: REASONS, ROUTES AND RELEVANCE

- 1a) The Value of Assurance
- 1b) Defining Materiality
- 1c) What Assures You?

WORKSHOP STREAM 2: REGULATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND BEYOND

- 2a) Implementing Standards
- 2b) Regulatory Developments
- 2c) Beyond Best Practice

WORKSHOP STREAM 3: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF ASSURANCE

- 3a) Selecting an Assurance Provider
- 3b) Role of Internal Controls and Assurers
- 3c) Assurer Competencies

16:45 Refreshments

17:10 CLOSING PLENARY SESSION: EXAMINES THE FUTURE OF THE ASSURANCE DEBATE

The Future of Assurance - For sustainability assurance to contribute significantly to sustainable development it must become the way that organisations attest to their overall performance. This will not happen by chance, nor because it says so in any standard, but will only come about if sustainability assurance can prove itself by providing a better set of signals about an organisation's ongoing health and performance than financial figures alone. This session will explore and examine various options for the future of assurance. PANEL CONVENOR: **Simon Zadek**,
Chief Executive, **AccountAbility**
Chris Deri, Senior Vice-President,
Edelman Worldwide
Margaret Flaherty, Executive Director,
WBCSD

Anthony Ling, Partner, **Goldman Sachs**

17:55 Close of Day Two

Friday 19th November 2004 Foundation Course Agenda (subject to change)

Practitioners' Training Day

As a suitable conclusion to the event, today will provide an opportunity for hands-on, interactive training on how the AA1000 Assurance Standard can be applied in practice.

Once again, delegates will be able to attend sessions suited to their level of experience, and thereby interact with fellow delegates and session leaders who will be able to provide advice, comparisons and contrasts suitable for the level of development and interaction each organisation has reached.

Training will include:

- **Corporate responsibility - past, present and future trends**
- **State of sustainability assurance - current and best global practice**
- **AA1000 Assurance Standard - overview, users and uses**
- **Pre and post-training assessment using AA1000AS Competency Framework™.**

The foundation level is aimed at those starting out in CR/sustainability or just beginning to look at assurance, whereas the masterclass is designed for seasoned professionals who want to understand the latest thinking, and what's coming up in assurance.

Training sessions will be run by experienced professionals including senior AccountAbility staff members, Simon Zadek, Maria Sillanpää and Philip Monaghan.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that there is both a foundation course and a masterclass, and would advise delegates to choose the course most suited to their level of experience. (Places are subject to maximum capacities)

08:30 Registration and Refreshments

09:00 SESSION ONE:

Corporate Responsibility - past, present and future trends

Are we asking too much of companies?
Is their power overstated?
How much impact can CR have?
Does reporting make a difference?
What does it mean for SMEs?

The session will examine these questions in the context of key trends in CR. Through the use of examples it will look for 'elephants in your bedroom': the core impacts and challenges which are not yet addressed by many companies. These key questions are crucial in determining both the direction which CR will take globally and also how it will inform the strategies taken by businesses both big and small. The session will also look at the potential for CR to go beyond voluntarism and in particular look at its relationship with regulation. Finally, a number of potential developments will be outlined that may inform future progress.

10:30 Refreshments

11:00 SESSION TWO:

State of Sustainability Assurance - current and best global practice

Illuminating the current "State of Assurance", this session will introduce you to the most important assurance trends and provide highlights of emerging practice.

12:30 Buffet Lunch

13:30 SESSION THREE:

AA1000 Assurance Standard - overview, users and uses

This session will broaden and enrich your understanding of the first international Assurance Standard with Stakeholder Engagement at its heart, the AA1000 Assurance Standard, promoting accountability for sustainable development. You will be introduced to a wide range of organisations including NGOs, government agencies, SME's, Blue Chip companies, Accountants etc that apply the AA1000 Principles to their reporting and disclosure processes in answering the question "what assures?".

For example, the AA1000 Assurance Standard is not only being used for Sustainability Reports, but also Awards development, Stakeholder engagement models, internal decision making processes and benchmarking/ rating baseline etc.

15:00 Refreshments

15:30 SESSION FOUR:

Pre and Post-Training Assessment using AA1000AS Competency Framework™

The purpose of the currently developed AA1000AS Certified Practitioner Programme is to promote best practice and as such provide confidence to regulatory authorities, accreditation & certification bodies, business, Non-Governmental Organisations, public sector organisations, individuals and stakeholders at large that practitioners certified to this program are competent. The AA1000AS Certified Practitioner Competency Framework™ will build on four building blocks: Expertise - logic band skills and content skills, Experience - dialogic skills, Training - Code of Practice & Conduct.

As we, AccountAbility, put stakeholder engagement not only at the heart of our AA1000AS but also our wider body of work, this session will introduce you to the first draft of the Competency Framework™ (foundation document to the programme) and invite you to comment on the constituents as well as the assessment process itself within a group discussion. The session will close with an elaboration on how training will fit into the overall AA1000AS Certified Practitioner programme, including linkage to a 5-day training course.

17:00 Close of Conference

Friday 19th November 2004 Masterclass Course Agenda (subject to change)

08:30 Registration and Refreshments

09:00 SESSION ONE:

Emerging Trends in Corporate Responsibility - current versus best global practice

How are 'leadership' companies and other organisations trying to align and embed CR within core business strategy? What is the role of sectoral or multi-stakeholder partnerships in effecting real change? Can a company influence public policy in a responsible way? What is the role of assurance in this discussion?

The session will examine these questions in the context of key trends in CR. Through the use of examples it will look for 'elephants in your bedroom': the core impacts and challenges which are not yet addressed by many companies. These key questions are crucial in determining both the direction which CR will take globally and also how it will inform the strategies taken by businesses both big and small. The session will also look at the potential for CR to go beyond voluntarism and in particular look at its relationship with regulation. Finally, a number of potential developments will be outlined that may inform future progress.

10.30 Refreshments

(please note, the session will resume at 11.00)

12:30 Buffet Lunch

13:30 SESSION TWO:

Future of Sustainability Assurance - keeping pace with shifting contexts

What will effective assurance look and feel like in the future for both reporters and assurance providers? What is the role of civil society or NGOs in the assurance process? For example, how can 'Stakeholder Panels' be incorporated into a robust assurance process and complement audit and verification practices? What will be the impact of new regulatory shifts such as OFR in the UK or Sarbanes-Oxley in the USA?

This session will illuminate the current "State of Assurance", introducing you to the most important assurance trends and providing highlights of emerging practice.

It will also deepen your understanding of the first international Assurance Standard with Stakeholder Engagement at its heart, the AA1000 Assurance Standard, promoting accountability for sustainable development. You will be introduced to a wide range of organisations including NGOs, government agencies, SME's, Blue Chip companies, Accountants etc that apply the AA1000 Principles to their reporting and disclosure processes in answering the question "what assures?". For example, the AA1000 Assurance Standard is not only being used for Sustainability Reports, but also Awards development, Stakeholder engagement models, internal decision making processes and benchmarking/ rating baseline etc.

Finally, the session will link the masterclass training to pre and post-training assessment using AA1000AS Competency Framework™.

15.00 Refreshments

(please note, the session will resume at 15.30)

17:00 Close of Conference

Sponsorship Opportunities

This event provides an excellent and timely business opportunity for those with products and services to promote, as well as representing a chance for organisations active in this area to position themselves as leaders. A variety of sponsorship options are available, from headline sponsorship to the sponsorship of a specific training stream or networking event.

For more information please contact **John Mercer**, Sponsorship Research Manager at Neil Stewart Associates on **0044 20 7324 4332** or email john.mercer@neilstewartassociates.co.uk

Purpose of the Event

This event will:

- Hear about the fundamental principles behind the assurance debate - why has it become imperative to have standards?
- Examine what processes companies need to commission and specify to be robust
- Debate the key factors that assurance practitioners need to ensure high standards
- Consider the key principles for a successful assurance policy
- Analyse recent trends in the accountability and disclosure debate
- Consider a number of national and international perspectives on the assurance debate
- Assess the implications of national and international regulatory and legislative frameworks, such as Sarbanes-Oxley in the US and OFR in the UK
- Discuss how companies and organisations around the world can engage with the assurance agenda, and consider what role the AA1000 Assurance Standard might play in these sectors
- Hear from key corporate representatives about their experience of the agenda, and specifically their experience of the AA1000 Assurance Standard
- Discuss the principles behind the Standard's development
- Assess the place of standards in the wider sustainability assurance agenda
- Discuss the Standard's relationship to other frameworks and guidelines such as GRI
- Discuss the impact of the Standard on the work of assurance providers
- Discuss the impact of the Standard on the work of prospective clients/reporting organisations
- Examine the place of the Standard in the wider corporate responsibility debate
- Assess the future role and development of the Standard in the context of convergence and mainstreaming tendencies

In interactive small group workshops, delegates will have the opportunity to:

- Examine in detail AccountAbility's AA1000 Assurance Standard
- Discuss how the Standard can be applied in their own work
- Have the opportunity to have their specific queries and questions about the Standard answered
- Hear the advice and recommendations of current users of the Standard, and how companies have benefited from using it
- Receive practical information for the successful implementation of reporting processes and engaging stakeholders
- Be able to compare and contrast their own experiences in relation to the use of the Standard
- Hear about AccountAbility's new Professional Development scheme around the Standard
- Explore the definition and development of the current debate around materiality.

The small group setting of the workshops means all attendees will have an ideal opportunity to engage with the debate, peer groups and experts in the field.

Who Should Attend?

This conference will attract an international audience of stakeholders who are engaging with the assurance agenda across the globe. Those working in the following roles will benefit from attending:

- Business Managers
- Assurance Providers
- Corporate Responsibility Managers
- Investor Relations Professionals
- Internal Audit Managers
- Communications and Public Affairs Professionals

Representatives from the following sectors will benefit from attending:

- Corporate Sector
- Service Providers
- Central and Local Government
- Public Sector Organisations
- Voluntary and Community Groups
- NGOs
- Researchers, Academics and Thinktanks
- Consumer Groups and Trade Unions

All those looking to engage with and find out more about the assurance debate will find this event to be an invaluable source of information.

Unable to Attend?

Conference papers are available after the conference for £139. This useful reference will include: available speakers' papers, speakers' biographies and sponsors/exhibitors inserts.

To purchase the conference papers, complete the relevant sections on the booking form and send it with payment to Neil Stewart Associates Ltd.

NB. The delegate pack will be sent after the event, once payment has been received.