



Independent Limited Assurance Report to the Directors of HSBC Holdings PLC

The Directors of HSBC Holdings PLC (HSBC) engaged us to provide limited assurance on the information described below and disclosed online at www.hsbc.com/sustainability¹ in respect of the 2014 reporting year.

Our conclusion

Based on the procedures we have performed and the evidence we have obtained, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the Selected Information for the 2014 reporting year has not been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Reporting Criteria.

This conclusion is to be read in the context of what we say below.

Selected Information

The scope of our work was limited to assurance over the information disclosed online at www.hsbc.com/sustainability¹ in respect of the 2014 reporting year (the "Selected Information") summarised below:

- HSBC's application of the Equator Principles for the reporting year and the associated data for the 12 months to 31 December 2014; and,
- HSBC's total CO₂ emissions data from energy and business travel for the 12 months to 30 September 2014.

Our assurance does not extend to information in respect of earlier periods or to any other information disclosed online at www.hsbc.com/sustainability¹ in respect of the 2014 reporting year.

Professional standards applied and level of assurance

We performed a limited assurance engagement in accordance with International Standard on Assurance Engagements 3000 – 'Assurance Engagements other than Audits and Reviews of Historical Financial Information' and, in respect of the CO₂ emissions information, in accordance with the International Standard on Assurance Engagements 3410 'Assurance engagements on greenhouse gas statements' (ISAE 3410), issued by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. A limited assurance engagement is substantially less in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement in relation to both the risk assessment procedures, including an understanding of internal control, and the procedures performed in response to the assessed risks.

Our Independence and Quality Control

We have complied with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) Code of Ethics, which includes independence and other requirements founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour. We apply International Standard on Quality Control (UK&I) and accordingly maintain a comprehensive system of quality control including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements. Our work was carried out by an independent and multi-disciplinary team of sustainability and assurance specialists.

Understanding reporting and measurement methodologies

The Selected Information needs to be read and understood together with the Reporting Criteria (HSBC's "Reporting Guidelines: Equator Principles" and HSBC's "Reporting Guidelines: Carbon Emissions" – both are available at www.hsbc.com/sustainability¹), which HSBC is solely responsible for selecting and applying. The absence of a significant body of established practice on which to draw to evaluate and measure non-financial information allows for different, but acceptable, measurement techniques. The nature, methods and precision used to determine non-financial information can result in materially different measurements, affecting comparability between entities and over time.

Work done

Considering the risk of material misstatement of the Selected Information we:

- made enquiries of HSBC's management;
- evaluated the design of the key structures, systems, processes and controls for managing, recording and reporting the Selected Information;
- performed limited testing on a selective basis of the application and reporting of the Equator Principles based on information held at corporate head offices and accessed the records, and discussed with relevant staff twenty-five transactions to check that data had been appropriately measured, evaluated, recorded, collated and reported;
- performed limited substantive testing on a selective basis of the total CO₂ emissions information at corporate head offices and accessed the records, and discussed with relevant staff of eight reporting locations to check that data had been appropriately measured, recorded, collated and reported; and
- evaluated the disclosure and presentation of the Selected Information.

HSBC's responsibilities

The Directors of HSBC are responsible for:

- designing, implementing and maintaining internal controls over information relevant to the preparation of the Selected Information that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- establishing objective Reporting Criteria for preparing the Selected Information;
- measuring and reporting the Selected Information based on the Reporting Criteria; and
- the content on the Sustainability section of their website.

Our responsibilities

We are responsible for:

- planning and performing the engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the Selected Information is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- forming an independent conclusion, based on the procedures we have performed and the evidence we have obtained; and
- reporting our conclusion to the Directors of HSBC.

This report, including our conclusions, has been prepared solely for the Board of Directors of HSBC as a body in accordance with the agreement between us, to assist the Directors in reporting HSBC's sustainability performance and activities. We permit this report to be disclosed online at www.hsbc.com/sustainability¹ in respect of 2014 reporting year, to assist the Directors in responding to their governance responsibilities by obtaining an independent assurance report in connection with the Selected Information. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Board of Directors as a body and HSBC for our work or this report except where terms are expressly agreed between us in writing.

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
Chartered Accountants
London
21 April 2015

¹ The maintenance and integrity of HSBC's website is the responsibility of the Directors, the work carried out by use does not involve consideration of these matters, and accordingly, we accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the reported Selected Information or Reporting Criteria when presented on HSBC's website.