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McLeish, Mary-Anne

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Exploring the challenges of preparing an integrated report: A case study in the South African Eco-tourism industry

A research report submitted by:

Mary-Anne McLeish

Student Number: 0303492W

Ethics Clearance Number: CACCN/1071

Email: maryanne.mcleish@gmail.com

Supervisor: Professor Warren Maroun

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of:

Masters of Commerce

University of the Witwatersrand

Declaration

I hereby declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Masters of Commerce by Coursework and Research Report at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted elsewhere for the purpose of being awarded another degree or for examination purposes at any other university.



Mary-Anne McLeish

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I List of abbreviations and acronyms

The following is a summary of important terms defined in this proposal:

Table 1: Definitions	
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
IRC	Integrated Reporting Committee of South Africa
IIRC	International Integrated Reporting Council
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
JSE	Johannesburg Securities Exchange
King II	The King Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa – 2002
King III	The King Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa – 2009
Framework	The International Integrated Reporting Council's Framework

II Abstract

In recent years, the call for companies to account for their activities to a wide group of stakeholders has grown. Integrated reporting provides a platform for such stakeholder communication. Recent studies have, however, concluded that integrated reporting is viewed merely as an exercise to be undertaken to ensure compliance.

This thesis explores the challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report in the South African eco-tourism industry. It adopts a social constructivist ontology and is grounded in an interpretive epistemology. The eco-tourism industry is particularly suited to this study as the notion of sustainability and, more recently, integrated reporting is of great importance in a rapidly growing industry which places significant reliance on natural resources. It is required to deliver economic profits whilst ensuring that the differing needs of a range of stakeholders are met. A theoretical framework of change implementation, based on different mechanisms presented by existing literature, was developed and used in exploring the challenges encountered by a case organisation when preparing its integrated report. A qualitative case study was undertaken in which the role-players in the preparation of the integrated report of the case entity were interviewed, and the minutes of internal meetings and workshops and an external assurance report were reviewed.

In this context, this thesis provides further understanding of the challenges faced by organisations in the preparation of an integrated report, providing insight into how preparers are interpreting and applying the guidelines found in the integrated reporting frameworks and codes on corporate governance.

1 Introduction

1.1. Purpose, context and significance of the research

In recent years, the call for companies to account for their activities to a wide group of stakeholders has grown (De Villiers, Unerman, Rinaldi, Brown & Dillard, 2014b). Development in academic literature on accounting and accountability systems has led to the development of frameworks such as the Balanced Scorecard, the Triple Bottom Line, Sustainability Reporting and most recently, Integrated Reporting (De Villiers, Unerman & Rinaldi, 2014a).

The tourism industry places significant reliance on the use of natural resources and such reliance is significantly greater than that of other industries. Furthermore, the resources on which the tourism industry is so dependent do not enter the market and market prices are rarely associated with them. As a result, these resources are treated as if they are 'free goods' (Garrod & Fyall, 1998, p 208). The tourism industry is known for significant demands on a variety of resources and, as a result, needs to be held accountable (Lu & Nepal, 2009). This should be considered in the context of recent reports from the United Nations (UN) which indicate that the world is facing environmental disaster in the form of climate change. All organisations should be called upon to make greater efforts in reducing their carbon footprint and managing climate change risks (Atkins, Atkins, Thomson, Maroun & Hopper 2015).

In recent years, support for the view that tourism is a commercial activity, the objective of which is profit maximisation (McKercher, 1993a) has grown. The increasingly apparent impact of tourism on natural and man-made capitals, and the social and cultural environments in which tourism organisations operate, has simultaneously led to the development of tourism which 'promotes conservation, has low visitor negative impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations' (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993, p641). This type of tourism is described as eco-tourism and by nature requires consideration and acknowledgement of the needs of a wide range of stakeholders. The need for identification of and greater accountability to a wider range of stakeholders has therefore grown (Waligo, Clarke & Hawkins, 2013).

Integrated reporting provides a platform for such stakeholder communication (De Villiers et al., 2014a). South Africa is a pioneer in the implementation of integrated reporting (Integrated Reporting Committee [IRC]) 2014) through the inclusion of the preparation of an integrated report as part of the Johannesburg Securities Exchange (JSE) Listing Requirements on a 'comply or explain basis' from 2010 (EY, 2010, p2). South African companies have consequently been preparing and providing their users with integrated reports for a number of years and present a fairly well developed reporting environment that is ripe for investigation (Solomon & Maroun, 2012).

Recent studies have, however, concluded that integrated reporting is sometimes viewed only as an exercise to be undertaken to ensure compliance (Carels, Maroun & Padia, 2013; Solomon, Solomon, Joseph & Norton, 2013). In certain instances it was concluded that an organisation's statement of compliance with recommended King III and IRC (2011, 2013) disclosures was essential in terms of the organisation's image management, as opposed to being an indicator that genuine stakeholder engagement had taken place. As a result, it has been recommended that further research should be undertaken to obtain an understanding of how preparers are interpreting and applying the guidelines found in the integrated reporting frameworks and codes on corporate governance. In particular, it has been recommended that future researchers should concentrate on the challenges being faced by preparers (Raemaekers, Maroun & Padia, 2015).

Furthermore, the importance of the organisation's communication strategies should not be under-estimated as such strategies have the potential to separate the organisation from others within the industry, potentially contributing to an enhancement of an organisation's competitiveness (Pulido-Fernández, Andrades-Caldito & Sánchez-Rivero, 2015).

In addition, integrated reporting is a new area of policy and practice which has developed at a significant pace (Humphrey, O'Dwyer & Unerman, 2013). As a result, the study of integrated reporting provides an opportunity to study the development of accounting regulation over a period, which is shorter than that typical in the case of financial reporting standards (De Villiers et al., 2014a). Academic documentation of initial developments in integrated reporting can provide valuable insights to inform further development of policy and practice. Furthermore, academic documentation of initial developments in integrated reporting may provide academics with a foundation on which to develop further research (De Villiers et al., 2014a).

In this context, the aim of this thesis is to provide further understanding of the challenges faced by organisations in the preparation of an integrated report, providing insight into how preparers are interpreting and applying the guidelines found in the integrated reporting frameworks and codes on corporate governance. The eco-tourism industry is particularly suited to this study as the notion of sustainability and, more recently, integrated reporting is of great importance in a rapidly growing industry which is required to deliver economic profits (McKercher, 1993a) whilst ensuring that the differing needs of a wide range of stakeholders are met (Waligo et al., 2013). Due to the heightened relevance of sustainable development in the eco-tourism industry (Garrod & Fyall, 1998), an environment in which the challenges in the preparation of the integrated report are similarly heightened, is presented. It is hoped that documentation of these challenges will inform future development of policy and guidance.

The documentation and understanding of challenges experienced in the preparation of an integrated report will also contribute to an understanding of internal processes used by organisations in

communicating information. Furthermore, research is relevant to the activities of society when it provides clarity on challenges, dangers and opportunities, all of which are likely to be encountered in social engagement, contributing to deeper social and political understanding (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

It is for these reasons that a study considering the problems encountered by companies in the eco-tourism industry in the preparation of an integrated report in the South African context has been undertaken, and determination of the challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report is the main purpose of this study.

1.2. Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 examines the existing literature on integrated reporting, sustainability and eco-tourism. The notion of integrated reporting is presented in Section 2.1. The reporting frameworks which were considered and used prior to the introduction of integrated reporting and contributed to its development, are then considered. A consideration of the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC)'s vision and proposed Framework is then provided. Specific attention is then paid to the role played by South Africa in the development of integrated reporting. Section 2.2 discusses the development of stakeholder theory and proposes that this theory may be used in explaining the increased demand from a wider range of stakeholders for corporate accountability. The consideration and study of stakeholders have resulted in significant contribution to an enhanced understanding of sustainability, the origins of which are discussed in Section 2.3. The significant dependence of the eco-tourism industry on natural resources is then discussed, followed by the relevance of sustainability reporting and, more recently, integrated reporting in the tourism industry.

Change, such as external reporting requirements, is internalised by organisations through various mechanisms. These mechanisms of change are contrasted in Section 2.4. Specifically, the push and pull mechanisms identified by Stubbs and Higgins (2014), notions of trials of strength (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011) and organisational decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) are used in the thesis as the theoretical framework for exploring the challenges encountered by a case organisation when preparing its integrated report. Chapter 2 concludes with a discussion of the challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report, as indicated by the existing body of literature (Section 2.5).

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, paradigm and design. The research undertaken adopts a social constructivist ontology and is grounded in an interpretive epistemology. Discussion of the specific research method, as well as the aspects of validity and reliability, is also included. Chapter 4 discusses the background of the case entity. The findings are discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 summarises the objectives of the research, presents key findings and provides closing remarks. A

description of the research contribution of this thesis is then presented. Finally, research limitations are specified and areas for possible future research are then proposed.

1.3. Research statement

This research uses an exploratory case study methodology to shed light on the current challenges being faced by a leading South African eco-tourism company when preparing its integrated reports.

1.4. Assumptions and delimitations

A key assumption is that a social constructivist ontology is best suited for describing the reporting environment. That is, the reporting process is an essentially human or social one and a qualitative method, such as a case study is best for investigating its functioning (Yin, 2013).

This study considered challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report of a case entity. The challenges considered were only those experienced by a single reporting entity. The transferability of the results of this study is, therefore, limited. Furthermore, this study has not recommended how such challenges may be overcome.

The role of assurance in the realm of integrated reporting has not been considered in this study.

2 Literature review

This chapter introduces the concept of integrated reporting, considering its forerunners and its recent development, in which South Africa has played an important role. The various theories which are relevant in the discussion of the relationships among companies, management and stakeholders are then discussed. Specifically the stakeholder theory is explored in relation to an increased demand for corporate accountability to wide range of stakeholders.

The eco-tourism industry is identified as one which places significant reliance on natural resources, and one in which sustainable development has become increasingly relevant. The increased need to consider the interests of a wide range of stakeholders, sustainable development and integrated reporting, is then considered in the context of this industry.

The various mechanisms through which changes, such as external reporting requirements, are internalized by an organisation are contrasted. Specifically, the push and pull mechanisms identified by Stubbs and Higgins (2014), notions of trials of strength (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011) and organisational decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), are used in the thesis as the theoretical framework for exploring the challenges encountered by a case organisation when preparing its integrated report. This chapter then concludes with a discussion of the challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report, as indicated by the existing body of literature.

2.1. The background to integrated reporting

2.1.1. The forerunners of integrated reporting

Pulido-Fernandez et al. (2015) suggests that an organisation's communication of sustainability strategies to the market is an important consideration. In answer to the demand for increased accountability and the emergence of the stakeholder theory in recent years, the forms of reporting and communication between company and stakeholders have been constantly evolving. Academics and those in practice have considered the relationship between the strategic proposals of management, control systems within an organisation, measurement of performance, and an entity's reporting systems (Parker, 2012). Development in academic literature in the realm of 'accounting and accountability systems' has led to the development of frameworks such as the Balanced Scorecard, the Triple Bottom Line, Sustainability Reporting and most recently, Integrated Reporting (De Villiers et al., 2014a, p1044).

The Balanced Scorecard is known to include non-financial indicators yet such indicators do not traditionally include social, environmental and sustainability matters (De Villiers et al., 2014a).

Furthermore, it is unlikely that the Balanced Scorecard will facilitate any integration between these matters (De Villiers et al., 2014a). The Triple Bottom Line, which became prominent in the late 1990's, promoted the provision of environmental and social information (Elkington, 1998) in corporate communication with stakeholders. The term 'sustainability' has been criticized as the provision of sustainability disclosures has been seen as an attempt by businesses to engage with sustainability in a manner which is merely symbolic (Buhr, Gray & Milne, 2014).

Until recently, the communication of social and environmental information took place mainly through the inclusion of this information in the annual reports of companies. The annual reports remained financial in nature, and certain social and environmental information was included with the intention of providing stakeholders with information that was perceived as necessary in meeting their information needs (Deegan, 2002). In time, due to the increased length and complexity of social and environmental information, companies started providing such social and environmental information in separate forms of communication, and the purpose of the annual report returned to that of communication of matters relevant to providers of financial capital (De Villiers et al., 2014a).

In light of the growth in demand for the provision of social and environmental information, and in order to enhance comparability and credibility of such information, initiatives to provide and improve reporting guidelines and assurance standards developed. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is accredited with making a notable contribution to reporting guidelines and assurance standards in the realm of social and environmental reporting (Buhr et al., 2014). The complexity of the guidelines and assurance standards has increased and the extent of social, environmental and governance information provided by organisations has grown in volume. As a result, users of information in the sustainability report were provided with an 'information overload', and were unable to identify links between social, environmental and governance impacts (De Villiers et al., 2014a). In order to address this lack of cohesion, the Prince's Accounting for Sustainability Project was formed in 2004. Subsequently this body developed guidance on how to report in a cohesive manner. Application of this guidance was expected to enable organisations to draw a user's attention to the significant connections between social, environmental and economic actions and impacts (Hopwood, Unerman & Fries, 2010). In 2010, the GRI and the Prince's Accounting for Sustainability Project formed the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) with the intention of developing integrated thinking and integrated reporting globally (De Villiers et al., 2014a). Prior to the formation of the IIRC in August 2010, the notion of integrated reporting was present in corporate reporting. For example, Novo Nordisk, a Danish pharmaceutical company had been providing users with an 'annual integrated sustainability and financial report' since 2004. The provision of such information had been made mandatory through the alteration of the company's Articles of Association (Humphrey et al., 2013, p11).

While sustainability reporting aims to provide social, environmental and economic information to a wide range of stakeholders, the focus of integrated reporting can be said to be presentation of information related to broad risk evaluation and potential future growth in value. Value is represented by various forms of capital, specifically appealing to potential and current providers of capital (De Villiers et al., 2014a). The information provided in such a report should not merely include social and environmental information but should integrate such information with financial information (Dey & Burns, 2010).The practice of providing information in such a manner has come to be known as 'integrated reporting' the main outcome of which is an integrated report (De Villiers et al., 2014a).This report includes the financial information, management commentary, governance, social and environmental matters, presented in such a manner that the connectivity of such information enables a user to assess the impact of such matters on the entity's long-, medium- and short-term value creation prospects (Dumitru, Glăvan, Gorgan & Dumitru, 2013).

As noted by Stubbs and Higgins (2014), integrated reporting presents challenges previously not presented by sustainability reporting. Because integrated reporting is inseparable from business strategy and how an organisation undertakes value creation, it is necessary to involve finance managers and those involved in the strategy of an organisation to a greater extent when disclosing non-financial information (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). Integrated reporting is orientated towards the future and focuses on the relationships and connections between the financial and non-financial aspects of business and, as such, presents new challenges previously not presented by sustainability reporting (Higgins, Stubbs & Love, 2014).

2.1.2. The IIRC's vision and framework

The International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) is a global semi-regulatory body with the goal of ensuring the global adoption of integrated reporting through the use of a global reporting framework (IIRC, 2013a). The IIRC is a global coalition of regulators, investors, companies and standard setting bodies. The view shared by this body is that communication regarding the creation of value by businesses should be the next phase in the development of corporate reporting (IIRC, 2014). The IIRC's intention is to ensure that financial and non-financial information is no longer provided in isolation, and integrated thinking is adopted. Such integrated thinking should be integral to the management and accounting within companies to the extent that integrated reporting becomes the corporate reporting norm (IIRC, 2013a).

The role of the financial crisis in the development of integrated reporting cannot be ignored. Integrated reporting provides a means of addressing the concerns of regulatory bodies and the media resulting from the financial crisis (cf Humphrey et al., 2013). Furthermore, Peter Simons (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants) has stated that integrated reporting represented a response to

the abrupt and unforeseen nature of the financial crisis and would lead to improved risk management and greater transparency in corporate reporting (Humphrey et al., 2013). This is emphasised by Soyka (2013) in stating that the IIRC aims to correct some notable market failures through the provision of an approach which will enable investors to distinguish between businesses which are in a position to create value from all relevant perspectives, and those which are not (Soyka, 2013).

In December 2013, the IIRC released the International Integrated Reporting Framework (the Framework) after extensive consultation with and consideration by various businesses and investors globally. The purpose of the Framework is to provide guiding principles, content elements that govern the overall content of an integrated report and to provide guidance on the fundamental principles (IIRC, 2013a).

Integrated reporting is believed to offer a solution which will make an entity's dependence on, use of, access to and impact on different resources and relationships understandable. These are described by the IIRC as 'capitals' or 'stocks of value' (Humphrey et al., 2013). 'Value creation' is defined by the Framework as the process that results in increases, decreases or transformations of the capitals caused by the organisation's business activities and outputs. The capitals are categorized in this Framework as financial, manufactured, intellectual, human, social and relationship and natural (IIRC, 2013a). It can be said that shareholders are more powerful than other stakeholder groups. Soyka (2013) states that although the Framework indicates that the main intended audience for integrated reports is providers of capital, it cannot be said that the interests of such shareholders are considered to be of greater importance than that of other stakeholders, such an employees, customers and local communities (Soyka, 2013). Integrated reporting offers an in-depth assessment of the long-term capability of an entity's business model and strategy. This assessment is expected to lead to information which will meet the needs of stakeholders and result in effective allocation of resources (Humphrey et al., 2013).

Integrated reporting in its current form has a focus on the future strategy of an entity and specifically focuses on value creation, which is notably different from the initial focus on stakeholders and request for companies to stand accountable for the impact of corporate activity (De Villiers et al., 2014a).

The Framework also provides guiding principles: strategic focus and future orientation, connectivity of information, stakeholder relationships, materiality and conciseness, reliability, comparability and consistency (IIRC, 2013a). It recommends content elements which include an organisational overview and external environment, governance, business model, risks and opportunities, strategy and resource allocation, performance, outlook and a basis of preparation and presentation. The Framework discusses the disclosure of material matters and the determination of materiality, and other matters such as frequency of reporting, time frames for long-, medium- and short-term, aggregation and disaggregation (IIRC, 2013a). In the context of frequency of reporting, the Framework intends to

promote an approach which represents a continuous and more transparent process, as opposed to the 'snapshot' associated with external reporting (Soyka, 2013, p7).

Humphreys et al. (2013) suggest that the IIRC has not only been responsible for driving the development of a new corporate reporting framework but has also had to try and reform conventional investor interests into those which place emphasis on long-term investment. It is suggested that the success of integrated reporting is dependent on the simultaneous reformation of investor interests. This calls for a significant move away from a system of financial capital allocation which favours short-term over long-term (Humphrey et al., 2013). In a study which explored the reactions of institutional investors and analysts to the first set of South African integrated reports, the results suggested that the integrated reporting framework was considered to be an improvement on the existing annual financial statements. This is attributed to increased prevalence of non-financial metrics and evidence of the integration of financial, environmental, social and governance measures in providing an improved understanding of an entity's sustainability (Atkins & Maroun, 2015).

Academics and various civil society groups are divided as to whether integrated reporting will result in the advancement of sustainability goals, and there are contrasting views as to what integrated reporting represents. For some, integrated reporting is a powerful instrument to streamline the notion of sustainability in organisations and markets. Yet others are of the view that it is merely prolonging the false belief that a standardized form of reporting will satisfy the public's information needs (De Villiers et al., 2014b). Passive compliance with the IIRC's proposals and Framework, and meeting the expectations of an audience alone are insufficient if the notion of integrated reporting is to be stabilized. It is necessary to facilitate a constant dialogue with those role players in the society in which organisations operate (Van Bommel, 2014).

The notable pace at which the IIRC's Framework has developed indicates the considerable increase in the significance of integrated reporting (Humphrey et al., 2013). As noted by Humphrey et al. (2013) the IIRC has been successful in converting integrated reporting from a promising idea to a reporting necessity (Humphrey et al., 2013). Furthermore, the eventual impact of integrated reporting may be to recreate corporations and develop fresh relationships between such corporations and the society in which it operates (Soyka, 2013).

2.1.3. Integrated reporting in South Africa

Prior to the formation of the IIRC in 2010, South African organisations led the way in the development of integrated reporting guidelines (De Villiers et al., 2014a).

The King Report on Governance[1] led to significant changes in the realm of integrated reporting in South Africa. King II (2002) recommended a responsible attitude towards stakeholders and the increased integration of sustainability into governance and corporate reporting ((Institute of Directors of Southern Africa [IODSA]), 2002). In 2009, King III introduced the requirement that financial information and sustainability information is integrated in the form of an integrated report, which should be prepared annually by companies with a primary listing on the JSE (PwC 2009). Companies listed on the JSE have been required either to provide an integrated reporting or explain why they have not done so (Humphrey et al., 2013). King III requested companies to 'commit to the principles of integrated thinking' and endorsed the notion that strategy, governance and sustainability are closely related (De Villiers et al., 2014a). Furthermore, companies are required not only to report on social, environmental and economic matters but also to incorporate into their decisions a consideration of possible impact on the ability of future generations to meet their needs (De Villiers et al., 2014a). Subsequently, in May 2010, the Integrated Reporting Committee of South Africa (IRC), made up of South Africa's leading business role players, was established with the intention of developing guidelines on integrated reporting (IIRC, 2014). In March 2014, it was announced that the IRC endorsed the IIRC's Framework (IIRC, 2014). In June 2014 the Integrated Reporting Committee of South Africa issued a practical guide, based on the IIRC's Framework in response to requests from new preparers of reports, drawing on the experience of some South African companies which have been involved in integrated reporting for nearly five years (IRC, 2014).

Integrated reporting practices are not included in the listing requirements of any other country, and for this reason South Africa is considered to be a pioneer of integrated reporting (De Villiers et al., 2014a).

2.2. Stakeholder theory

The development of integrated reporting frameworks highlights the move from shareholder-centric reporting based entirely on financial capital transformation to a stakeholder-centric model which recognises the importance of non-financial capital. This change is consistent with the evolution of agency to stakeholder theory (Massa, Farneti & Scappini, 2015).

The party to whom the company should be accountable and therefore the objective of the company vary depending on the accounting theory favoured, and this presents a hotly contested debate (Rossouw, 2005). In recent years there has been a movement from a theory in terms of which the company is believed to exist only for the sake of shareholders (Jensen & Meckling, 1976) to a theory

[1] The King Report on Governance was prepared by the King Committee in 2002 and again in 2009.

which acknowledges the existence of wide range of stakeholders (Waligo et al., 2013). The need to consider the interests of a wide range of stakeholders may be seen to present companies with difficulties in determining which should be prioritized, especially when faced with the possibility of conflicting demands. The most recent derivation of the stakeholder theory requires companies to base such decisions on the outcome which would result in the most optimal use of society's resources (Jensen, 2002). The development of such theories over time is discussed below.

Agency theory

Agency theory suggests that the company exists for the sake of its shareholders and that the purpose of the company is profit maximization for the benefit of the shareholders. Managers are, for this reason, considered to be agents of the shareholders. Interests of other stakeholders are, as a result, subordinated in favour of the profit maximization interest of the shareholders (Jensen & Meckling, 1976) (Rossouw, 2005). Furthermore, principal-agent relationships should reflect efficient organisation of information and risk bearing costs (Eisenhardt, 1989a). Positivist research employing agency theory focused almost entirely on the relationship between the owners and managers of large corporations (Eisenhardt, 1989a). Jensen and Meckling (1976) considered the structure of ownership within corporations and how possible ownership of equity by managers assists in the alignment of managers' interests with those of owners.

Stakeholder theory

The last twenty years have seen a shift away from a shareholder-focused approach to corporate governance to a stakeholder-centric model as the relevance of pressing environmental, social and governance issues have become more apparent (Massa et al., 2015). Since an organisation's stakeholders are an important part of the environment in which it operates (Freeman & McVea, 2001), researchers have set about proving the stakeholder notion in a variety of settings (Waligo et al., 2013). The stakeholder concept is based on the principle that the organisation is at the centre of a system of relationships with a variety of different parties (Waligo et al., 2013), which may be contrasted with the view founded on agency theory focused solely on an entity's relationship with its shareholders.

In recent years, the prominence of corporate governance has increased. This increase may be attributable to corporate failures and abuse of managerial power within organisations (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Corporate governance is based on the notion that companies should take responsibility for managing their activities in such a way that is fair to the company's stakeholders, and does not merely focus on the company's shareholders. Stakeholder theory suggests that companies should serve the interests of all their stakeholders (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). King (chairman of the IIRC) is of the view that business needs to be governed and managed in such a way

that reflects that their activities relating to resource accrual and distribution are based on decisions which take into account the needs of a wide group of stakeholders (EY, 2015).

Enlightened stakeholder theory

Although recent increases in the prominence of corporate governance would be attributed to a stakeholder theory preference, Jensen (2002) describes this theory as incomplete as it does not describe an objective function. The stakeholder theory requires management to take into consideration the needs and expectations of a wide variety of stakeholders and, as such, requires management to optimize firm results in a variety of arenas (Jensen, 2002). As a result of the lack of an objective function, management - acting in terms of stakeholder theory - has no way of making decisions regarding firm behaviour when faced with conflicting demands. Stakeholder theory, in essence, represents a decision criterion, yet provides no basis on which to make such decisions. It is for this reason that it is considered incomplete (Jensen, 2002). The incorporation of an objective function, such as value maximization, will enable management to determine appropriate firm behaviour and when the notion of trade-offs is appropriate (Jensen, 2002).

Jensen (2002) emphasises that the ranking of stakeholders in order to assess whether the interests of certain stakeholders should be prioritized in relation to others is not the correct approach. The enlightened shareholder theory, as discussed by Jensen (2002), would require consideration of which firm behaviour will result in, for example, the optimum use of society's resources (Jensen, 2002). In terms of this model, shareholders tend to remain the company's most prominent stakeholder, and this is emphasised by the board's duties of accountability. The board does not, however, have the right to neglect its responsibilities to other stakeholders in meeting the needs of the shareholders (Rossouw, 2005). This can be considered an inclusive corporate governance model and one which suggests the need to interact with stakeholders and to provide them with adequate disclosure regarding the company's performance (Rossouw, 2005). This is in line with an integrated reporting model (discussed in Section 2.1) which also stresses the need for holistic reporting.

Reporting to stakeholders

One of the guiding principles of the IIRC's Framework relates to stakeholder relationships and specifically states that an integrated report should provide insight into the nature and quality of the organisation's relationships with its key stakeholders, including 'how and to what extent the organisation understands, takes into account and responds to their legitimate needs and interests' (IIRC, 2013a, p5). The Framework goes on to state that the primary purpose of an integrated report is to 'explain to providers of financial capital how an organisation creates value over time' (IIRC, 2013a, p4) which suggests that the objective function of an organisation is to create value over time, which is reminiscent of Jensen's enlightened stakeholder theory (2002).

Reporting to a wide range of stakeholders and consideration of the need to report on environmental and social impacts may ensure that an organisation is profitable and has the requisite legitimacy to operate (Massa et al., 2015). This is emphasised in a study performed by Dulewicz & Herbert (2004) in which it could be seen that effective communication to stakeholders was paramount in the enhancement of company performance. In light of the recent increase in the prominence of corporate governance, this outcome is to be expected and further emphasises the increased preference of stakeholder theory over agency theory (Dulewicz & Herbert, 2004). This refers to the role to be played by external reporting, such as the integrated report, which caters for the needs of a wider range of stakeholders.

The importance of the organisation's communication strategies should not be underestimated as such strategies have the potential to differentiate the organisation from others within the industry, potentially contributing to an enhancement of an organisation's competitiveness (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2015). Adams identifies the need for further work to be done in attaining an understanding of internal processes used by organisations in communicating information (Adams, 2002).

Stakeholder theory requires an organisation to identify the system of relationships, of which it forms the centre (Waligo et al., 2013). This theory will now be considered in light of the acknowledgement of the existence of social, environmental and economic dimensions (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2015).

2.3. The origins of sustainability and eco-tourism

2.3.1. The rise of sustainable development

Since the occurrence of market failures, for example, the financial crisis of 2008, organisations have been forced to acknowledge the existence of social, environmental and economic dimensions. Sustainability is an ideology that requires such an acknowledgement (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2015). Sustainability will have a significant impact on business and in time will represent a new measure of quality in an organisation (Massa et al., 2015). The beginnings of the notion of 'sustainable development' can be traced to a 1987 'World Commission on Environment and Development' report called 'Our Common Future', known as the Brundtland Report. It was in this report that the term first appeared (Fletcher, 2011). The vision presented in the Brundtland Report was one in which economic development is not merely based on reaching maximum economic growth and economic efficiency but rather incorporates matters such as equality between generations and between stakeholders. Equality is required to transcend generations. It was emphasised that the ideals of intergenerational equality would not be possible to achieve unless the environmental impact of economic activity was addressed. Equality is also required to transcend different stakeholder groups and may be described as

intra-generational equality. Intra-generational equality is reminiscent of stakeholder theory and the consideration of a wide range of interests (Brundtland et al., 1987). In light of the ideal of equality, sustainable development was defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Anand & Sen, 2000, p2033).

The argument proposed by Pearce (1993) is that in order for the needs and wishes of today's generation to be met, it is inevitable that certain costs will be passed on to future generations. Such costs can be described as intergenerational costs and may take the form of a reduction of resources, especially but not limited to natural resources. If the adverse impact of the economic activity of today's generation is to be managed, Pearce (1993) suggests that today's generation must ensure that comprehensive compensation is made to future generations. Specifically, reference is made to 'stocks of capital assets' (Pearce, 1993, p15). These are comparable to the IIRC's concept of capitals. It is argued that the manner in which intergenerational equality should be maintained is through ensuring that current generations hand down a stock of capital assets which is not depleted in any way. This is described as the 'constant capital rule' (Pearce, 1993, p27). The constant capital approach is comparable to the sustainable development orientated approach described by McKercher (1993b) in terms of which wealth is calculated on the basis of both man-made and natural resources, and assumes that it is possible to achieve an optimal level of resource utilisation. A problem, presented by the constant capital rule lies in the determination of the composition of capital stock which is to be maintained (Pearce, 1993), and how opposing needs for the same resources can be resolved (McKercher, 1993b). It can be argued that the environment in which the economic activity takes place is made up of natural, man-made, social and cultural environments and each of these contributes to the resources on which the economic activity is based (Pearce, 1993).

McKercher (1993), in presenting the sustainable development orientated approach, stated that the total asset base should increase from one generation to the next. The natural asset stock may be permitted to decline, provided that its use generates alternate wealth. This introduces the notion of capital stock substitution, which is further explored by Pearce (1993) and McKercher (1993b). A debate arises about when and to what extent it is appropriate for compensation to result in capital stock substitution. Capital stock substitution should be considered in light of Jensen's enlightened stakeholder theory (2002) and the proposed objective function which is considered essential when making such decisions. There are views that natural capital should take precedence, specifically when it is proposed that it is replaced with man-made capital (Garrod & Fyall, 1998).

Despite the variety of views on what represents an appropriate capital maintenance rule, the success of all proposed approaches requires capital maintenance to be efficiently measured (Garrod & Fyall,

1998). Efficient and effective measurement presents a hurdle which must be overcome before the best approach to constant capital can be determined (Garrod & Fyall, 1998).

A possible approach to measurement of progress towards sustainable activity is the preparation of a 'sustainability balance sheet', in which capital stock and flows of capital stock, both man-made and natural are accounted for using standard accounting techniques (Garrod & Fyall, 1998, p205). Once the capital stock has been defined, using such a technique would make it possible to determine whether there has been no change or an increase in capital stock, indicating that the goal of sustainability has been achieved. A decrease in capital stock would, therefore, signify the existence of an unsustainable relationship. Inclusion of man-made capital stock in a 'sustainability balance sheet' would not pose a problem, as accounting frameworks have catered for this for some time. Inclusion, and consequently measurement of, natural capital stock presents a problem as there has been limited progress in the development of natural resource accounting systems (Garrod & Fyall, 1998). As a result, certain flows to and from natural capital stock may be neglected and not reported, resulting in misleading results (Garrod & Fyall, 1998).

Another approach which may be used to address the measurement conundrum takes the form of a cost-benefit analysis on an individual investment project level. Typically, however this methodology has focused on changes to man-made capital and tends to neglect the impact of the project on the natural environment (Garrod & Fyall, 1998). Both proposed approaches require a common unit of account to be established and, ideally, this should be a monetary one as this will facilitate comparison between various forms of man-made and natural capital (Pearce, 1993).

The measurement conundrum is addressed in a paper presented by Atkins et al., (2015). It has been mentioned that recent reports on climate change suggest that this is a concern which should be addressed as a matter of urgency. It is suggested that all organisations must increase efforts in managing climate change risks and in significantly reducing their carbon footprints where possible. This will be possible through the 'monetisation of the costs of climate change', which will in turn encourage integrated thinking and business models which are based on the notion of sustainability (Atkins et al., 2015, p665). It will, however, be necessary to rely on existing finance and accounting guidance and theory to stimulates environmental awareness on behalf of organisations and policy setters (Atkins et al., 2015).

Through the use of monetised costs of climate change, accounting and finance guidance and theory may be used in addressing significant environmental risks. New 'fields of visibility' for boards of directors can be created (Atkins et al., 2015, p665). Specifically, the technique which adjusts IFRS-based profits to reflect the costs of, for example, biodiversity loss and CO2 emissions is provided as an example (Atkins et al., 2015).

2.3.2. Sustainable tourism, and the emergence of eco-tourism

It can be seen from Sections 2.2 and Section 2.3.1 that sustainability and the need to consider needs of a wide range of stakeholders have become increasingly prominent since 1987. Sustainability is particularly relevant in the context of the tourism industry which is widely viewed as an economic activity which has potentially severe destructive impacts on its immediate environment. The tourism industry has, similarly, seen a significant growth in recent years.

The wealth of literature relating to tourism refers to the significant growth of the industry in recent years, and in many instances tourism is positioned as the largest industry in the world (Fletcher, 2011). Greenwood and Smith (1989) describe tourism as the 'largest scale of movement of goods, services and people that humanity has perhaps ever seen' (Greenwood & Smith, 1989, p171). Tourism is commonly considered to be controlled by the private sector, where investment decisions are based largely on the maximisation of profits (McKercher, 1993a) and thus provides support for the view held by Fletcher (2011) that the recent remarkable success of the tourism industry in recent years may be attributed to its role in sustaining capitalism (Fletcher, 2011). In discussing the role played by tourism in the creation of economic wealth, Fletcher (2011) refers to attempts by international development planners to enhance the industry as a policy for economic growth, particularly within less developed countries (Fletcher, 2011). Tourism is an industry that is dependent on natural resources, and one which is competitive. If profit maximisation is to be attained, the social and environmental needs of the host communities may be compromised (McKercher, 1993a).

Tourism can no longer be considered a commercial activity without a significant impact on natural, man-made, social and cultural environments in which it operates. Furthermore, this industry cannot be considered to be substantially different from industries involved in mineral extraction, for example (Garrod & Fyall, 1998). Tourism consumes resources, produces waste and has certain structural requirements so it can be considered an industrial activity (McKercher, 1993a). Such industries are often the subject of notable environmental concern. Researchers into tourism did not initially take to the notion of sustainability but in recent years the sustainability concern has received recognition as one of the most pivotal the industry has ever faced (Garrod & Fyall, 1998).

The tourism industry is known to make significant demands on a variety of resources, and as a result needs to be accountable for such usage (Lu & Nepal, 2009). In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the consensus of the importance of sustainability (Garrod & Fyall, 1998), and the rights of future generations to enjoy sustainable development (Tacconi & Bennett, 1995). The notion of sustainable development has become noteworthy, and the tourism industry is one of the main champions (McKercher, 1993b). As an industry that is dependent on natural resources, the future of the tourism industry requires continued access to, and use of, such resources. The obvious connection between tourism and the environment results in the need for the tourism industry to protect such

natural resources, and for this reason the importance of sustainable development (McKercher, 1993b). In a guide to sustainable tourism for policy makers, the significant role played by the environment in the economic dimension is emphasised (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP]), 2005). Furthermore, in literature related to tourism competitiveness, it is emphasised that it is possible to increase a tourism destination's competitiveness through the implementation of policies which are based on the development of sustainable tourism. The Calgary model which was developed by Crouch and Ritchie (1999), and Ritchie and Crouch (2000, 2003), is considered by other authors as important research in the area of tourism competitiveness. This model indicates that the environmental aspect of sustainability is not only essential in terms of the preservation of a destination's resources, but is also considered when planning the destination's short-, medium- and long-term activities, and determining its long-term strategy (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2015)

Tourism stands to gain significantly from the notion of sustainable development (McKercher, 1993b). Many of the resources on which the tourism industry is dependent do not enter the market and market prices are rarely associated with natural resources used in the tourism production process and, as a result a significant portion of the resources on which the tourism industry is so dependent is treated as if the resources are 'free goods' (Garrod & Fyall, 1998, p208). The social impact of a tourism organisation is typically not measured in a metric consistent or comparable with that used to measure economic impacts and, as such, economic considerations are inclined to dominate decisions regarding tourism planning and developments (Choy, 1991). Consequently, natural resources are overused and the detrimental impact on the environment becomes evident. There is a risk that this will continue to be ignored if those involved in the tourism industry and the stakeholders of the tourism industry continue to exclude such consequences when making decisions (Garrod & Fyall, 1998).

The notion of constant capital can be considered in the context of tourism and, in order to achieve this, the growth rate of development in this industry should take into account the community's ability to accommodate growth, while being able to restore depleted or damaged natural and cultural resources (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2015). This is supported by Tsaur, Lin and Lin (2006) who present the view that sustainable development in the tourism industry cannot be considered the process of attaining an ideal state of equilibrium but should be a constant process of development, to achieve the required balance between social, economic and environmental factors (Tsaur et al., 2006). In a similar vein, sustainable development may be described as a way of striking a balance between preservation and development of resources (Tsaur et al., 2006).

In the context of the tourism industry, eco-tourism is a logical component of sustainable development (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993) and is considered to be a tool for conservation and sustainable development (Tsaur et al., 2006). Fletcher describes eco-tourism as a variation of tourism development strategy which counteracts the problems arising from mass tourism and is considered to

be an opposing force to the standard capitalist misuse of resources via mass tourism (Fletcher, 2011). Ceballos-Lascurain, Lindberg & Hawkins (1993) indicate that significant threats will result from poorly managed or unregulated tourism, presenting serious dangers for the world's natural protected areas, and the many related cultural factors (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996): this is consistent with Fletcher's view of mass tourism (Fletcher, 2011). Recognition of mass tourism's negative impacts from a social and environmental perspective occurred in 1979 and it was at this time that the World Bank began the suspension of loans for tourism development (Fletcher, 2011). The notion of eco-tourism was proposed during the 1980's as an alternate form of tourism which would potentially act as a solution for harmful forms of tourism (Ceballos-Lascurain et al., 1993; Fletcher, 2011).

A specific definition for eco-tourism, provided by the World Conservation Union's Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, describes eco-tourism as:

> 'environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor negative impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations' (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993, p641).

This definition suggests that eco-tourism and involves the integration of many factors, as well as the consideration of the interests of a wide range of stakeholders. In order for tourism to survive the sustainability ideology, it is necessary for it to be proactive in the integration of the needs of all the stakeholders (McKercher, 1993b). The identification of stakeholders and the study of their various interests in the context of the tourism industry have resulted in a significant contribution to an enhanced understanding of sustainability (Waligo et al., 2013).

The tourism literature discusses different types of stakeholders and suggests that they can be categorised into six broad classes. These include tourists, industry, local communities, government, special interest groups and educational institutions. The literature indicates that these classes of stakeholders influence tourism development initiatives (Waligo et al., 2013). Murphy (1988) emphasises the need of creating connections with stakeholders and that 'mutually beneficial partnerships' are of paramount importance for tourism planning (Murphy, 1988, p99). This is reminiscent of the stakeholder theory which is based on the notion that an organisation is at the centre of a system of relationships which it has with a variety of different parties. As a result, it is essential to acknowledge stakeholders when managing tourism in order to achieve sustainability, and to take into account their differing views on the relevant issues and decisions to be made (Waligo et al., 2013).

Pulido-Fernandez et al. (2015) take the idea of sustainability one step further and suggest that management should not only ensure the review, design and implementation of sustainability policies

but should also consider the effectiveness of communication of these to the market. Reporting, as a mechanism to be used in achieving market communication, is considered a valuable tool for management wishing to entrench sustainability as a concept in the organisation's strategies and to ensure that such strategies are implemented effectively. Pressures to report to a wide range of stakeholders and the need to consider social, environmental and social impacts ensures that an organisation is profitable and has the requisite legitimacy to operate (Massa et al., 2015). Adams (2002) identifies the need for further work to be done in attaining an understanding of internal processes used by organisations in communicating information (Adams, 2002). The importance of the organisation's communication strategies should be emphasised with the intention of differentiating the organisation from others within the industry, potentially contributing to an enhancement of an organisation's competitiveness (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2015).

2.4. Mechanisms present in the implementation of regulatory prescriptions

The move to more integrated forms of reporting is not limited to one industry but, as discussed in Section 2.3.2, is especially relevant in the eco-tourism sector where the link between financial, environmental and social capital is often clearer to stakeholders (McKercher, 1993b). This does not, however, mean that the industry has been able to move seamlessly from financial-orientated corporate reporting to the integrated forms of stakeholder communication envisaged by the IIRC (see Section 2.1).

In order for changes to regulation to become a reality within organisations, a process of implementation, interpretation and adaptation is required (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). Implementation of regulation and the requisite change within an environment has been the subject of numerous studies, some of which draw on actor-network theory which is, in essence, a collection of work by a number of authors (Baker, Chiapello, Justesen & Mouritsen, 2011). The work of Bruno Latour is considered to have made the most significant contribution to the development of the actor-network theory and the majority of accounting studies motivated by Latour's work consider accounting in the context of change (Baker et al., 2011). The dynamics of accounting are considered to be a result of processes within which new accounting constellations (Miller, 1991) emerge because different components, such as various groups of people, different terminologies and several technologies, are momentarily linked together (Baker et al., 2011). For example, in the eco-tourism sector, a new constellation may be considered to have emerged as the notion of sustainability has developed. This new constellation has momentarily linked the activities of the tourism industry, the various groups of people impacted by such activities and the notion of sustainability (Garrod & Fyall, 1998).

Latour's introduction of the term 'translation', used in describing change implementation, was considered useful, specifically by Robson (1991, p551) who performed a study which drew on Latour's approach and analysed the emergence of the Accounting Standards Committee in the UK. Robson (1991) described translation in the context of accounting change as the process through which accounting techniques are expressed informally, in ways which create the individual's and group's concern for such techniques, and may at a later stage provide motivation for accounting change (Robson, 1991). Reference is made to 'institutional actors' and 'the institutional arena of the accounting profession', which is reminiscent of institutional theory (Robson, 1991, p557). Preston, Cooper and Coombs (1992) similarly focused on the notion of translation. The focus of Preston et al.'s study was to consider practically the new management budgeting system before the difficulties arising during its creation end and before the difficulties inherent in its operation cease (Preston et al., 1992). Alternately, the aim of Preston et al.'s (1992) study was to obtain empirical evidence regarding the new system before it was turned into Latour's 'black box', which Latour used to describe that which came into being without resistance, and acted as a whole (Baker et al., 2011, p170).

Trials of strength

Another study which is considered to have drawn on Latour's approach is that performed by Tremblay and Gendron (2011). The study was undertaken in order to deepen the understanding of how regulatory requirements are endorsed by the impacted environment. In Tremblay and Gendron's study, the reception of regulatory requirements by those expected to implement such requirements and whether reception was characterised by compliance or resistance, was considered, (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). This draws on actor-network theory, yet Tremblay and Gendron's view of the trials is wider than the scope typically proposed by actor-network theory (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). The actors involved in the trials of strength are not limited to the role of supporter or dissident, and the trials of strength include conflicts between compliance and resistance (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

The concept of trials of strength suggests that regulatory instructions are subjected to a number of vaguely related and casual tests taking place within the relevant community (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). Tremblay and Gendron (2011) include best practice pronouncements in the scope of requirements which will be subjected to trials of strength. Best practice is developed through the interactions of a number of parties (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

A methodological assumption of Tremblay and Gendron's study is that any requirement makes a specific assertion regarding the entity which it intends to oversee (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). Furthermore, it is indicated that in all situations, in which requirements are communicated, the process of implementation is a forceful and complex process which is subjected to constant challenge and transformation (Thompson, 1997). Sense-making is an inevitable part of the process of implementation, and the interpretation and implementation of requirements is largely at the discretion

of the actors (Cooper & Robson, 2006). The emphasis of Tremblay and Gendron's study is on informal trials which may also be described as a number of vaguely connected trials, taking place in a basically uncontrolled manner (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). Such trials represent confrontational moments that, in spite of a lack of co-ordination or control, embody a strength test of the related requirement. The trials are multifaceted and the individuals who are party to the trials contribute to the trial in its entirety. The varying opinions and attitudes which are demonstrated by the individuals are also an essential component of the trials. As a result, the trials are viewed as connecting people, dialogue and various forms of knowledge. The outcome of the trials is either a strengthening or a weakening of the requirement's acceptability and dominance over the intended target. The focus of the study is the statements and questions of 'targeted actors' (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011, p263) who interpret and execute the new requirements.

Once issued or communicated, the new requirements are subjected to Tremblay and Gendron's trials of strength, in terms of which the impacted community attempts to determine how such requirements should be interpreted and to what extent they should be implemented (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). As mentioned above, Tremblay and Gendron deviate from exact application of actor-network theory in that the actors are not limited to a definitive opinion, either reflecting compliance or resistance (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). Tremblay and Gendron's (2011) notion of trials of strength is comparable to Latour's concept of translation, in that both are a process to which regulatory requirements, for example, must be subjected before change may or may not take place.

The study is based on the notion that the audit committee, which is the affected community, is dependent on a network of relationships which includes informal relationships between community members. When requirements regarding the role of an audit committee are communicated, this gives rise to trials of strength that are vaguely connected within the audit committee community. The trials are not organised and take place in the context of the everyday activities of the members of the impacted community, when members are informed of the new requirements and reflect in isolation on the relevance of the requirement. Trials may also take place through discussion and evaluation of the appropriateness within small groups where such trials are not independent of previous or subsequent trials (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

Change may be the outcome of trials. An extreme view of compliance and resistance is taken in Tremblay and Gendron's study: compliance is indicated by significant and fundamental change, while resistance is viewed as support which is merely symbolic, and where the actors' ways of thought, processes and actions are not transformed as a result of the new requirement (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Superficial compliance by an audit committee, the aim of which is the creation of an illusion that the prescriptions have been substantially and fundamentally adopted, indicates resistance. The recurring reasons for failed implementation of prescriptions emerging from the study include general resistance

to governance prescription, implying 'lip-service implementation' (Tremblay & Gendron, p265). Furthermore, the use of pretentious strategies as rationale for resistance emerged. For instance, interviewees were of the opinion that accounting and audit failures are insulated and that the immediate environment is considered immune from such events and, to this end, the legitimacy of the new requirement is disputed (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). Interviewees also suggested that when changes do take place, they are relatively superficial and do not result in a change in mindset. In such instances, the need for the audit committee to comply with the requirements is acknowledged, yet the rational value of the requirements is often disputed (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

Tremblay and Gendron (2011) describe the implementation of prescriptions as a complicated and forceful process during which the 'actors in the field' gradually make sense of the exact nature of such prescriptions (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011, p262). Implementation is consequently characterized by an assessment of the claims which may or may not result in genuine change (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Tremblay and Gendron (2011) concluded that trials of strength, to which new requirements are subjected, demonstrate three characteristics: these include vague interrelatedness and contradiction, in that resistance and compliance may be generated concurrently. Trials of strength are also described as being secretive in that they take place confidentially (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

The requirement to prepare an integrated report in terms of the listing requirements for companies listed on the JSE may be considered to be a prescription in the form of a regulatory requirement. It may also be considered to be a prescription stemming from best practice pronouncements. The individuals involved in the various functions within an eco-tourism organisation, who are required to prepare an integrated report may be described as actors in the field in which integrated reporting has been implemented, and it is expected that such implementation is subject to similar tests of claims, the outcome of which may be genuine change, and the adoption of integrated thinking within the organisation.

For example, in the eco-tourism industry, it is necessary for the actors in the field gradually to make sense of the need to comply with the prescription of integrated reporting and the need for an organisation within this industry to adopt integrated thinking.

Push and pull mechanisms of change

In a study performed by Stubbs and Higgins (2014) the internal mechanisms of change employed by early adopters of integrated reporting in Australia are investigated. It appears that one of two strategies is used (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). A push strategy is one in terms of which the need to prepare an integrated report is used to drive the desired change within an organisation, and this typically results in superficial change.

Other organisations in the study are described as using a pull strategy where integrated reporting is seen as a result of an integrated business and genuine change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). The existence of deeper organisational change and, therefore, the Framework's concept of integrated thinking is suggested in instances where a pull mechanism is employed (IIRC, 2013b). Stubbs and Higgins (2014) propose that when changes in regulations are communicated, the appropriateness of the changes is considered by those impacted, and may be a push or a pull mechanism in nature (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). This is comparable to the process proposed by Tremblay and Gendron (2011) in which new requirements are subject to trials of strength, the outcome of which may or may not result in fundamental change. Specifically, a pull mechanism may be seen to be one which is characterised by resistance to governance prescription or acknowledgement of the need for compliance but dispute as to the rational of the required change, as noted by Tremblay and Gendron (2011).

In the eco-tourism industry, the need to prepare an integrated report may drive the need to change and adopt integrated thinking within the organisation. As mentioned in Section 2.3, the significant role played by the environment in the economic dimension of eco-tourism has recently been emphasised (UNEP, 2005). The same can be said of the social dimension (McKercher, 1993a). If this significant interdependence is not already part of an organisation's business model, it is unlikely that the need to prepare an integrated report will be sufficient in driving integrated thinking (McKercher, 1993a). Therefore, it is questionable whether this mechanism of change will result in a fundamental shift within the organisation and it is expected that implementation will not be successful. The operations of the organisations within the eco-tourism industry will continue as before. If however, organisations within this industry are able to employ a pull mechanism of change and draw on a business which acknowledges the roles to be played by various dimensions and the representative stakeholders when preparing an integrated report, successful implementation may be possible (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

Organisational decoupling

Meyer and Rowan (1977) argue that most organisations reflect the policies of institutionalised environments in which they operate, instead of the demands of their everyday operations. Alongside the products and services which such organisations create, professions and policies arise which force existing organisations to incorporate new practices and procedures so as to ensure the organisation's legitimacy. Such institutionalised policies and programs form 'powerful myths' which are adopted by organisations as a matter of course (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p340). This conformist behaviour by organisations often conflicts with the organisation's ability to operate efficiently and policies are incorporated, regardless of whether they improve the efficiency of the organisation's operations. The objective of efficient operations may undermine the organisation's ability to actually conform to institutional policies and programs. In order to maintain legitimacy in the face of conflict between operational efficiency and institutional conformance, gaps arise between the structure in terms of

which the organisation should function and the structure in terms of which it does function and this may be considered to be organisational decoupling. Meyer and Rowan emphasise that the more institutionalised the environment in which the organisation operates, the more effort must be expended in managing the organisation's image. Meyer and Rowan (1977) conclude that the need to attend to the organisation's operations and the need to ensure legitimacy in terms of policy compliance are at odds (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Organisational decoupling typically occurs when implementation of changes has not taken place and it is necessary for the organisation to develop separate structures which support either the need for efficient operations or the need to manage the image of the organisation. It would occur as a result of a push mechanism of change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014) or a compliance based implementation (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). In the context of the eco-tourism industry, organisational decoupling would be necessary where, in spite of an attempt to integrate the business, the various components of the business, such as finance, investor relations, human resources and environmental management, operate separately and without awareness of the value creation story communicated to stakeholders in the integrated report.

Tremblay and Gendron (2011) consider the implementation and interpretation of audit committee prescriptions and adaptation within an entity in order to obtain an understanding of the effectiveness of prescription implementation. Stubbs and Higgins (2014) propose two mechanisms with which regulatory changes are approached, each of which presents differing results in terms of fundamental change within an entity. Meyer and Rowan (1977) suggest that an organisation's objective is to operate efficiently. The need to adopt and implement institutionalised policies in order to ensure legitimacy is at odds with its objective and as a result, true implementation is difficult to achieve.

This study considers the implementation and interpretation of, and adaptation to, the IIRC's requirement to prepare an integrated report, in order to obtain an understanding of problems encountered by those charged with the preparation. Tremblay and Gendron (2011) identified possible reasons for failed implementation through the application of the trials of strength notion. This notion was considered in combination with the push and pull mechanisms of change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014) and resultant organisational decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). These notions have in this study formed the theoretical framework for the analysis of the problems encountered by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report.

2.5. Challenges faced by preparers of integrated reports

Despite the potential of integrated reporting, a number of challenges have been identified (Cheng, Green, Conradie, Konishi & Romi, 2014). Some of these challenges include the subjective nature of

the capitals which are essential in understanding the notion of value, and a lack of connectedness between various aspects of the integrated report. A lack of guidance in the form of prescriptive reporting standards is also identified as a challenge.

The challenges can be interpreted in terms of difficulties in the implementation of a prescription which has been subject to trials of strength (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011), organisational decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) or a push mechanism of change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). The challenges are discussed below. Table 2.1 summarizes the various challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of an integrated report.

Differing views on the role of integrated reporting

A study undertaken by Higgins et al. (2014) identifies two descriptions of the role of integrated reporting as perceived by managers. Integrated reporting is considered to have a 'story-telling' function which describes the manner in which management determines the organisation's strategy, overcomes challenges and protects investors' interests. The alternate purpose of integrated reporting is to meet expectations (Higgins et al., 2014). The activities carried out by organisations are not necessarily logical or strategic. Rather, such activities are to meet expectations or to imitate the activities of credible organisations (Massa et al., 2015).

As the actions taken by the organisation do not take place with the deliberate intention of facilitating integrated reporting, it is suggested that successful implementation has not taken place and that the actors in the field have responded with resistance to the demand to implement integrated reporting. This may be due to general resistance to governance prescriptions or a dispute as to the need for this particular prescription (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). The fact that there are differing views which may well exist within an organisation is in line with Tremblay and Gendron's study in which they note that the actors in the field are not limited to a definitive opinion (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011)

This view echoes Meyer and Rowan's organisational decoupling. Integrated reporting may be seen as yet another form of institutionalized policy which is adopted by organisations as an attempt to manage the organisation's image in order to ensure the organisation's legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This is comparable to a push mechanism of change by which the need to prepare an integrated report is used to drive the change and the report itself is not an outcome of the desired change within an organisation (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). This apparent lack of genuine change is in line with the outcome suggested by the application of Tremblay and Gendron's trials of strength, in terms of which it could be seen that successful implementation was unlikely to have taken place.

Integrated Reporting: merely the next phase in sustainability reporting

Stubbs and Higgins (2014) conclude that the adoption of integrated reporting has not necessarily resulted in new innovations in the organisation's systems of disclosure. As a result, the preparation of a quality integrated report is difficult. Furthermore, it appears that any changes which take place could be considered to be incremental changes to systems previously supporting sustainability reporting (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). Interviewees in this study indicate that integrated reporting is viewed as the next phase in sustainability reporting and that there is no evidence of fundamental change to the underlying activities of the organisation (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

Reporting entities are finding that a significant change in reporting requires a meaningful understanding of the components of the entity's value creation, and should not merely concentrate on the end product i.e. the report (PwC, 2015). This is similar to the push mechanism described by Stubbs and Higgins (2014) in which the end product of the change is used to drive the required change, and the outcome will not result in fundamental change to the organisation. Furthermore, if this is considered in light of Meyer and Rowan's theory (1977), it may be suggested that if an organisation focuses on the end product alone, and does not focus on value creation, organisational decoupling may result. In such an instance, implementation will fail as a result of a disconnect between the various structures within the organisation (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

As with any new idea, the initial focus is on the end product. If this approach is used in the implementation of integrated reporting, this may result in an inadequate focus on the required inputs, such as time and resources, and the processes surrounding such inputs, which will not result in the requisite integrated thinking (PwC, 2015).

Missing pieces of the puzzle

Certain studies have indicated that certain pieces of information are typically not provided in integrated reports. In a study performed by PwC (2013b), it can be seen that the disclosure provided by the top 50 Dutch companies failed to clarify how resources were going to be allocated to achieve the organisation's strategy (PwC, 2013b) which calls into question the ability of the integrated report to tell the organisation's value creation story (EY, 2014).

Findings also indicated that the Dutch top 50 companies tended to avoid providing information relating to their social, environmental and economic impact (PwC, 2013b). EY (2014) similarly found that, in a review of the integrated reports of South Africa's top 100 JSE-listed companies, the impact of the environment on the entity, and not merely the reverse, was lacking (EY, 2014).

EY (2014) suggests that an integrated report should present a balanced picture of the organisation. It appears that companies generally avoid providing information surrounding the negative aspects and

tend to focus on the positive issues (EY, 2015). Similarly, focus remains on historical data with companies avoiding the topic of future strategy and future risks (PwC, 2013b).

This lack of information is indicative of the absence of a pull mechanism of change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014) and refers to the difficulty faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report when required to provide information which is not available from within the organisation.

The absence of information within the integrated report may be due to a number of reasons, such as a lack of available information or the need to exclude information so as to manage the image of the organisation. Lack of available information may be interpreted in terms of the push mechanism of change proposed by Stubbs and Higgins (2014). In this context, the exact information which is required to fill the integrated report is determined only on preparation of the report and has not been collected during the year. The focus is on the output and not on the underlying principle of integration. It seems that the information does not have value beyond what it is able to contribute in terms of the integrated report and, as a result, is not available.

A lack of available information suggests a failed implementation of integrated reporting, which may be interpreted in terms of the trials of strength framework of Tremblay and Gendron (2011). The systems required to produce the information may be fully implemented because the actors in the field view integrated reporting as yet another governance prescription, which is, as a matter of course, resisted.

If the absence of information is due to the need to exclude information so as to manage the image of the organisation, this suggests the applicability of Meyer and Rowan's (1977) organisational decoupling in terms of which integrated reporting is adopted merely to ensure the organisation's legitimacy and there is a difference between the reality of everyday operations and the image portrayed in the integrated report.

Lack of the quality of 'connectedness'

The existence of a significant lack of understanding of the relationships between the essential elements of reporting has been suggested. While certain relevant information is provided, it lacks the essential quality of 'connectedness' which is fundamental to the notion of integrated reporting (PwC, 2013a).

The concept of connectedness may extend to the relationships between the various business functions involved in the reporting process. Responding in a meaningful way to the Framework's requirement to develop a new way of thinking about and managing a business will require greater and more regular interaction among a number of different business functions such as investor relations,

environmental, health and safety, finance and public relations (Soyka, 2013). New processes and methods of communication will be required internally and externally, and it is likely that most organisations will have to develop stronger links between corporate strategy, execution, performance measurement and reporting (Soyka, 2013). Such processes require a pull mechanism of change to be in place, in terms of which an integrated business is a pre-requisite for an integrated report (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

If the quality of connectedness is lacking, integrated reporting has not been implemented to the extent envisaged by the IIRC. In terms of the trials of strength theory, a prescription must be subjected to trials of strength by actors in the field before compliance is possible (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). If the outcome is not one of compliance, but rather one of resistance, this may be due to the actors in the field disputing the appropriateness of the prescription, or alternately the actors who are responsible for implementation have not been informed of the prescription (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). In an organisation, reporting managers are typically allocated the responsibility for developing appropriate reporting policies and procedures with respect to integrated reporting while such managers are not responsible for the organisation's strategy and are unlikely to institute changes to the core of the organisation through this reporting initiative (Higgins et al., 2014). In such an instance, the actors considering the appropriateness of the prescription are not responsible for the requisite change (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011) and while they can make the reporting requirements known to the various divisions within the organisations, they are unable to enact change within those divisions (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

A lack of connectedness indicates organisational decoupling, as this takes place when there is a disconnect between the structures within an organisation (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Gaps between such structures arise when an organisation is faced with the need to conform with a concept, such as integrated reporting and the need to continue efficient operations. The need to continue with everyday operations may undermine the organisation's ability to actually conform to institutional policies and programs such as integrated reporting. Accordingly, if these needs are considered to be conflicting, gaps arise between the structure in terms of which the organisation should function and the structure in terms of which it does function in order to maintain legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Lack of prescriptive reporting standards

Integrated reporting is at an early stage and the lack of any forms of reporting standards may be inhibiting (De Villiers et al., 2014a). In the study performed by Stubbs and Higgins (2014) it was suggested that staff members from a financial reporting background are accustomed to complying with financial reporting standards and may be discouraged by the lack of rules. As a result of the lack of standards, comparability across organisations' integrated reports is limited, which reduces the usefulness of the information provided (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). This is a challenge faced only by

those charged with the preparation of the integrated report and should not impede the implementation of genuine change within the organisation. Identification of a lack of prescriptive reporting standards as a challenge suggests that the organisations in the study performed by Stubbs and Higgins (2014) are employing a push mechanism of change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

The role players in the corporate reporting environment should ideally work to streamline and decrease the number of contending reporting frameworks and standards which entities are required to consider and with which they are expected to comply (EY, 2015). Corporate reporting developments are taking place in national jurisdictions across the world. In May 2015, the IIRC introduced an initiative called the Corporate Reporting Dialogue (CRD), the intention of which is to promote consistency and comparability between the various corporate reporting frameworks, reporting standards and other reporting requirements relevant to integrated reporting (IIRC, 2015). This initiative may, in time, remove the challenge arising from a lack of prescriptive reporting standards (EY, 2015).

Non-financial information

An entity's financial statements and annual report have been a principal form of stakeholder communication. Reporting on a broader scope of capitals, as recommended by the Framework, has historically been of significantly less importance (EY, 2015).The six capitals discussed by the Framework have been criticised, as they are considered to be subjective notions which create difficulties for companies when explaining their capitals and the result is the use of descriptions which are considered inadequate (Cheng et al., 2014). The notions of value creation and capitals are inextricably linked (Soyka, 2013). In a study performed by PwC, in which the annual reports of the top 50 Dutch companies were analysed, it appeared that definition of companies' non-financial value and measurement of the creation of this value is deficient (PwC, 2013b). These findings support those of Cheng et al. (2014), emphasizing the difficulty experienced by companies in defining forms of capital and telling the organisation's value creation story (EY, 2014).

Difficulty in defining and conveying the manner in which an organisation creates value suggests use of integrated reporting as a mechanism through which the organisation's image is managed, as opposed to one which reflects a true understanding of the operations of the organisation so there are gaps between the organisation's structures (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Van Blommel (2014) states that firms are of the view that the integrity, reliability and robustness of the processes surrounding non-financial data needs to be the same as that of the processes surrounding financial data and that as a result, one of the first changes to be made to an organisation's system should be this (Van Bommel, 2014). This suggests the need for a pull mechanism of change, in terms of which the integrated report is able to draw on already existing systems which produce non-financial

information which is already used for a variety of purposes within an organisation. This information's relevance is as a result not limited to the extent to which it is included in the integrated report (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). Preparation of the integrated report is thus able to draw on existing resources and structures, suggesting a successful implementation and genuine change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

The view that the integrity, reliability and robustness of the processes surrounding non-financial data need to be the same as those of the processes surrounding financial data should also be viewed in the context of assurance. The aspect of the assurance of integrated reporting cannot be ignored. Cheng et al. (2014) questions whether stakeholders of an organisation are likely to place emphasis on an integrated reporting which has not been subject to assurance and, in light of this, questions whether integrated reporting can be expected to survive without the introduction of an element of assurance (Cheng et al., 2014).

The identification of non-financial information as a contributor to the challenges faced by those preparing the integrated report suggests that a push mechanism of change is currently employed. The information needs of the integrated report are dictating the systems which should be in place and so the ability of this non-financial information to enhance integration within the organisation is limited (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

Within the realm of integrated reporting, there are instances when it is not possible to assign a value (De Villiers et al., 2014b). The IIRC's proposals and the majority of mainstream research tends to ignore methods such as interactive modeling and scenario analysis which contribute to the difficulties encountered by those charged with the preparation of an integrated report. Furthermore research into such alternate methods can assist in drawing attention to a wider range of social and political perspectives and issues, yet research of this type is lacking (De Villiers et al., 2014b). When the need to comply with integrated reporting is subjected to trials of strength by the actors within the field, the lack of guidance relating to non-financial information measurement and inclusion may result in hesitation and lack of buy-in on behalf of such actors, being those charged with the preparation of the non-financial information.

Table 2.1 summarizes the various challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of an integrated report, according to the existing literature.

Table 2.1 – Challenges faced by preparers of integrated reports

Broad categories of challenges	Specific challenges faced by preparers of integrated reports
Lack of understanding of the role of and need for integrated reporting	• Differing opinions on the role of and need for integrated reporting within the organisation, which result in difficulties when trying to implement genuine change.
Integrated reporting seems merely to be the next phase in sustainability reporting and there is limited evidence of integrated thinking	• The layout traditionally used for the annual report is still used, and adoption of integrated reporting has not necessarily resulted in innovations in the organisation's systems of disclosure.
Lack of prescriptive reporting standards and guidance on the specific information to be included	• Staff members from a financial reporting background are accustomed to complying with financial reporting standards and may be discouraged at the lack of rules; • The capitals are difficult to define; • It is difficult to convey the impact of the organisation activities on the notion of value, and how the organisation creates such value; and • It is difficult to indicate how the organisation's resources have been allocated in achieving the organisation's strategy.
Lack of the requisite quality of 'connectedness'	• Business functions such as financial reporting and investor relations are typically separated and it is difficult to obtain information as current systems and processes do not support

	the required links between corporate strategy, execution, performance measurement and reporting; • There is little involvement of individuals from the finance division of the organisation in the preparation of the integrated report, suggesting that disclosure of non-financial information is typically confined and developments in integrated reporting have not been communicated to the organisation's financial reporting function; and • Reporting managers are typically allocated the responsibility for developing appropriate reporting policies and procedures with respect to integrated reporting, while such managers are not responsible for the organisation's strategy.
Challenges specific to non-financial information	• Non-financial value is difficult to measure; • There are instances when it is not possible to assign a probability, value or priority to a business activity and there is little guidance on the methods to use in such instances; • It is difficult to assess the environment's impact on the entity and this is often not disclosed; • New systems supporting non-financial data are required. The processes surrounding the preparation of non-financial data are not the same as those surrounding financial data and, as a result, it is difficult to place reliance on this data; and • Reliability of non-financial data may come into question if such data has not been subjected to some form of assurance.

Dominance of economic value	Certain indicators of value and appraisal processes are subordinated in favour of those which support financial capital.

The challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report, as suggested by existing literature relating to integrated reporting, have been identified and, in order to create an understanding of why such challenges exist, they have been discussed in the context of literature relating to the implementation of new prescriptions or institutionalised policies within an organisation.

The challenges identified above and the studies performed by Tremblay and Gendron (2011), Stubbs and Higgins (2014) and Meyer and Rowan (1977) will be considered in the context of a case study and the challenges faced by a case entity in the preparation of an integrated report.

3 Methodology

This chapter presents the three elements of this thesis's research framework: the philosophical assumptions regarding what constitutes knowledge (Section 3.1.1.), the general research procedures or strategies of enquiry (Section 3.1.2.) and detailed procedures of data collection, analysis and discussion (Section 3.1.3.). Ethical requirements are discussed in Section 3.1.4. Validity and reliability considerations of the study are presented in Section 3.2, followed by the description of the limitations of the study in Section 3.3.

3.1. Research method

3.1.1. Research paradigm and approach

The research adopts a social constructivist ontology and is grounded in an interpretive epistemology (Ryan, Scapens & Theobald, 2002). This study has considered the existing body of literature on sustainability, integrated reporting and eco-tourism. Specifically, it relies upon the push and pull mechanisms (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014) and notions of trials of strength (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011) as a theoretical framework for exploring the challenges encountered by a case organisation when preparing its integrated report.

Social constructivism, which is often combined with interpretivism, includes the assumption that individuals aim to obtain an understanding of the world in which they exist. Subjective meanings of their experiences are developed (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, social constructivism includes the assumption that meaning stems from interaction among humans in a social setting.

The goal of research which adopts a social constructivist ontology and, therefore, this particular study is to rely on, to as great an extent as possible, the participants' views of the situation under consideration (Creswell, 2009).

3.1.2. Research design

If limited research has taken place with respect to a particular concept or phenomenon and a deeper understanding is desired, Creswell (2009) recommends that a qualitative approach must be used. A case study represents a strategy that is associated with a qualitative approach, with which a researcher investigates an event, an activity or a process (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Furthermore, an exploratory case study design is often used to obtain an understanding of how social processes work (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

This study takes the form of a qualitative case study given the absence of a large body of specific literature (Sundin, Granlund & Brown, 2010). This study is exploratory in nature as the researcher sought to understand a social phenomenon. As stated by Yin (2013), the need for case study research arises from the need to understand a complicated social phenomenon (Yin, 2013) or to describe a phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). A case study enables the researcher to focus on a particular case while maintaining a real-world perspective. Furthermore, the case study is the preferred method when examining present-day events (Yin, 2013). This is further emphasised by De Massis and Kotlar (2014) in stating that a case study is a valuable method to be used in describing complex phenomena, developing a new theory or refining existing theories (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

An example of research using a case study to identify challenges faced by those acting within a social phenomenon is the study performed by Giovanni and Pia Maraghini (2013). An exploratory qualitative case study was performed to explore some of the challenges involved in the development of integrated performance measurement systems within a medium-sized Italian family firm, and may be considered comparable to a study which seeks to identify some of the challenges involved in the preparation of an integrated report (Giovannoni & Pia Maraghini, 2013). Data for this study was obtained through semi-structured interviews, informal discussions and analysis of relevant documents (Giovannoni & Pia Maraghini, 2013).

Similarly, Sartorius, Trollip and Eitzen, (2010) made use of a case study when determining whether a performance measurement framework of a state owned research organisation could be adapted to the Balanced Scorecard (Sartorius, Trollip & Eitzen, 2010).

The study performed by Buys (2008), in which the use of eXtensive Business Reporting Language (XBRL) in a South African context was considered, is a further example of case study research. The aim of this study was to consider how the financial reporting supply chain may potentially benefit from the use of XBRL, and the case entity a major South African retirement fund administration (Buys, 2008).

Once the case study method has been selected, the next step is the identification of the unit of analysis which is described as a particular phenomenon occurring in a specific context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The unit of analysis in the previously mentioned case studies research is the integrated performance measurement system, the performance measurement framework and the financial reporting supply chain. For the purposes of this specific study, the unit of analysis is the process of the preparation of the integrated report.

3.1.3. Data collection and analysis

Data collection

Interviews are often the first and foremost source of data in case study research as they are a focused, discerning and proficient manner in which to obtain abundant empirical data when the phenomenon of interest i.e. the unit of analysis, is intermittent and out of the ordinary (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

A grounded theory approach was used for the purposes of this study. Data collection and analysis was iterative, with the researcher moving continuously between interviews and the prior literature (O'Dwyer, Owen & Unerman, 2011). The body of literature relating to sustainability, integrated reporting and eco-tourism, as well as that relating to the implementation and internalisation of regulatory changes within an organisation, were used to develop a semi-structured interview agenda (refer to Appendix A). Open-ended questions stemming from each of the broad categories of challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated reports, which were identified through a review of the related literature (refer to Table 2.1). For example, one of the challenges identified through the analysis of existing literature is that of differing views about the purpose of an integrated report. An individual's opinion may suggest a lack of understanding and, as a result, a lack of support for the process, which in itself presents the preparation of the integrated report with a challenge. To this end, the interview agenda includes a question which asks the interviewees what their view of the integrated report's purpose is. Another challenge presented is the lack of the necessary systems to ensure availability and integrity of non-financial data. As such, the interview agenda includes a question which asks the interviewee whether there were any instances where information, which was required for the purposes of the integrated report, was not available.

The proposed interview agenda was subject to a review by the researcher's supervisors at the University of the Witwatersrand (O'Dwyer et al., 2011).

The case entity is a leading South African eco-tourism company. Contact was made with the case entity's Group Sustainability Manager. This manager oversees the entire integrated reporting process. The data analysed for the study was collected from 7 semi-structured interviews, with staff members involved at an executive and senior management level in various aspects of the process surrounding the preparation of the integrated report. The intention was to obtain an understanding of the broad process applied in the preparation of the organisation's integrated report and, subsequently, an understanding of the problems encountered.

The table below provides the list of interviewees, and their respective positions within the organisation.

Table 3.1: Staff members to be interviewed	
Position	*Description of role in the preparation of the integrated reporting process*
Chief Sustainability Officer	Author of introductory chapters as well managing the board of directors' approval of the integrated report
Chief Financial Officer	Author of a chapter in the integrated report
Group Sustainability Manager	Author of a chapter in the integrated report and project manager of the integrated reporting process and GRI compliance.
Group Community Manager	Author of a chapter in the integrated report
Group Conservation Manager	Author of a chapter in the integrated report
Group Human Resources Manager	Author of a chapter in the integrated report
Company Secretary	Author of a chapter in the integrated report

Interviewees were provided with an overview of the nature and purpose of the research and invited to participate in the study and confidentiality was guaranteed. The questions were open-ended, reducing the risk of predetermined responses (O'Dwyer et al., 2011), and as a result, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study.

Interviews were conducted in person, either face to face or over the phone with, where necessary, further questions which were addressed via e-mail (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Leedy & Ormond, 2010; O'Dwyer et al., 2011). The researcher started each interview by establishing rapport with the respondent. It was at this stage that the researcher emphasised the need for complete openness and the fact that there are no 'correct' or 'incorrect' responses. The researcher ensured confidentiality. The interviews were then guided by introducing the various themes of the interview agenda. While the order in which questions were posed may have varied across the interviews, the themes discussed in each interview were consistent (Alvesson, 2003; Rowley, 2012)

Interviewees were asked for permission to record the interview. This ensured that accurate transcripts could be made and avoided the researcher having to make detailed notes which could distract respondents, and allowed tone and non-verbal cues to be studied in more detail during the interview. Several reviews of the recordings were also facilitated (O'Dwyer et al., 2011). Such a thorough

method of collecting and processing data resulting from the interviews enhanced the quality of the findings (Rowley, 2012).

To add to the reliability of the study, transcripts were made available to interviewees on request to verify that accurate transcripts were produced and used to generate findings. Furthermore, interviewees were subsequently contacted via email if further clarification was required. The interviewees were allowed to discontinue recordings or withdraw from the study at any stage. There were, however, no instances of this occurring. The interviews were recorded using a smartphone application. The interviews were subsequently manually transcribed using Windows Media Player and Microsoft Word 2010. All electronic copies of the interviews and the transcripts were backed up onto an external hard drive.

The case entity made all minutes of 'sustainability meetings' and 'sustainability work-shops' available to the researcher. These included minutes from a sustainability workshop in 2011. It was at this workshop that Safaris Group's integrated reporting experience during 2010 was discussed. The challenges experienced and proposed solutions were discussed. A further sustainability workshop was held during 2014 and the minutes were also made available and subject to review by the researcher. Minutes from a conservation workshop in 2014 were also provided. In addition, the researcher was able to access and review the independent assurance report provided with respect to the entity's 2012 integrated report.

Data analysis

The challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report, as suggested by existing literature relating to integrated reporting, were identified through a literature review. The challenges have been presented in Table 2.1. in Chapter 2.

A review of literature relating to implementation of new prescriptions or institutionalised policies within an organisation was also undertaken. In order to develop an understanding of why such challenges exist, these were considered in the context of literature relating to the implementation of new prescriptions or institutionalised policies within an organisation.

The review of the literature relating to integrated reporting, the implementation of new prescriptions or institutionalised policies, and the analysis of challenges identified through the former in the context of the latter informed the identification of themes and resulted in the formation of an interview agenda based on such themes. Examples of the themes are a 'lack of reliable non-financial information' and 'dominance of financial information'.

Accordingly, the prior literature provided a basis for analysing the detailed interviews and grounding this thesis's results, as discussed in Chapter 5.

The transcripts were analysed at least 6 times using a three-step process. The first step was that of data reduction which was followed by a process of data display, and finally, conclusions were drawn (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013). A content analysis was used to assemble or reduce the data (Sartorius et al., 2010). A summary table was then prepared for each transcript which indicated the existence of, and explained the nature of, these themes (O'Dwyer et al., 2011).

A coding system was developed for each identified theme and specific attention was paid to the suggestion of any contradictions within the interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The coding process required the aggregation of the transcripts into small categories of information, and each code was assigned a label (Creswell, 2012). Codes might be *in vivo* in nature and might represent exact names used by the interviewees; alternately they might be developed by the researcher in describing the information (Creswell, 2012)[2]. The researcher developed codes which were descriptive of the underlying challenge faced by the preparer.

This approach allowed each transcript to be effectively dis-aggregated to highlight key themes, and facilitated the comparison of the interviews with the findings in the prior literature. Where interview content was seemingly contradictory, follow-up questions were raised via e-mail or telephone (Leedy & Ormond, 2010; O'Dwyer et al., 2011)

It must be noted that no formal effort was made to contrast directly the different interviewees' views as this is not the aim of this research. The sample sizes were also too small to carry out a meaningful analysis of the different experiences of individuals in supporting the preparation of the integrated report.

3.1.4. Ethical considerations

The interviewees were guaranteed complete anonymity so as to ensure that the researcher was able to obtain full and complete explanations from interviewees[3]. Any quotations that could result in the identification of the interviewee by a reader were either paraphrased or amended with changes clearly indicated. Interviewees were interviewed in familiar environments in which they felt comfortable.

[1] The application used is called Dictaphone, developed by Appmobix Limited.
[2] It is recommended that the researcher defines what that theme concerns and describes how to identify when such theme occurs (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008).
[3] This data will not be given to any researcher or 3rd party. The data will be kept for a period of 1 year from the date of this thesis and then destroyed.

Furthermore, interviewees could stop the interview at any time which ensured their willingness to be open and forthcoming (Creswell, 2009). All interviewees were offered a copy of the final report. As interviews may represent a 'moral enquiry', it was necessary to obtain ethics clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand (Appendix B). Furthermore, advice was obtained from experienced researchers and supervisors with regard to the questions asked to ensure that these did not pose any ethical dilemmas for interviewees. No material threats to research ethics were noted.

3.2. Validity and reliability

3.2.1. Validity

Validity in qualitative research refers to measuring what one intends to measure, which requires one to select an appropriate method for a specific question and to apply that method in a coherent, justifiable and rigorous manner (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008). Through face-to-face, semi structured interviews, the researcher will be able to clarify ambiguous answers and seek follow-up information where necessary to ensure the validity of the resultant data in drawing conclusions (Leedy & Ormond, 2010). Researchers should then share transcripts with interview participants in order to achieve consistency and accuracy and, finally, researchers should share the transcripts and initial drafts of the case study research reports with other investigators (Yin, 2013).

Internal validity is relevant to the stage at which the data obtained is analysed (Yin, 2003) and refers to the formation of fundamental relationships between certain variables and results. The researcher aimed to establish these fundamental relationships through the application of thorough logical reasoning that is sufficiently conclusive to support any research conclusions reached (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). In order to enhance internal validity, researchers should establish a postulated set of causal links. The researcher should then, through a process of 'pattern matching', compare observed patterns to predicted patterns (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

The selected method is an explorative qualitative case study and this is considered to be an appropriate method in obtaining a deeper understanding of the challenges presented by the social phenomenon of integrated reporting (Yin, 2013). This provides a measure of external validity (Leedy & Ormond, 2010), in that it will be possible for generalisation from the empirical observations to the particular theory to take place (Yin, 2003).

Eisenhardt (1989b) suggested that when performing single-case study research, researchers should make use of theory to increase the overall generality of the emerging theory describing the researched phenomenon. The case entity is a leader in integrated reporting. While it is not possible to generalise

statistically the results of this exploratory case study (Yin, 2003), it is the aim of the researcher to make analytical and theoretical generalisations to the existing body of academic literature regarding the challenges faced by an entity in the preparation of an integrated report. The study of these challenges will enable academics and practitioners alike to enhance their understanding of the difficulties encountered by similar entities, deepening their understanding of the process required to successfully implement integrated reporting.

3.2.2. Reliability

Reliable qualitative methods consistently produce descriptions of phenomena which are complete and significant (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008). In order to ensure that all data was reliably recorded, the researcher wrote up a rich, detailed account of the interviews, and checked the transcripts for obvious mistakes (Creswell, 2009). Any apparent contradictions were discussed with the relevant interviewee and clarification was obtained either via email or over the telephone (Sartorius et al., 2010).

Reliability of results has also been ensured through the use of a triangulation strategy, involving three data sources: interviews (primary data source); review of the minutes of internal meetings (secondary data); review of the assurance report relating to the 2011 integrated report (tertiary data). In addition, the interviewees represent people in significantly different roles across the case entity i.e. financial reporting, environmental management, community development, conservation, human resources and governance.

3.3. Limitations

Despite safeguards to ensure reliability and validity of the research, a number of inherent limitations should be noted:

- When performing detailed interviews, the researcher inevitably becomes a part of the data collection instrument, which suggests that the results are not necessarily suited to reproduction or generalisation. This is however, not the aim of this exploratory case study (Creswell, 2009).
- The responses provided by the interviewees may be rehearsed. Alternately the commentary may be modified as a result of the need to conform with the views of the employer, or social pressures (Alvesson, 2003)[4]. This was managed by guaranteeing anonymity of the case entity and the interviewees.
- This represents a single- entity case study which limits transferability of the results.

[4] The fact that interviewees' responses were frequently critical implies that this was not a material threat to the quality of this study.

3.4. Summary

The aim of this research is to explore the challenges encountered during the preparation of the integrated report. A qualitative method, taking the form of a case study was employed as a deeper understanding of integrated reporting is desired yet limited research has been done with respect to this 'phenomenon'. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather new perspectives on challenges faced during the practical implementation of integrated reporting. The interview agenda consisted of open-ended questions stemming from each of the broad categories of challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated reports identified through a review of the related literature. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewees to explore the subject matter fully. The exploratory potential of the interviews, combined with the fact that there was no indication of interviewees providing prepared interpretations, served as an important validity check in an interpretive sense. Minutes of internal meetings and an assurance report provided with respect to the 2011 integrated report served the purpose of triangulation of data, ensuring reliability of results. This was complemented by a rigorous coding of the data, basing the interpretation of interviews in the prior literature and on the use of follow-up sessions where needed.

Chapter 4 provides the background of the case entity and Chapter 5 discusses the results of the study.

4 Background of the case entity

The aim of this chapter is to provide insight into the background of the case entity and the reason for the selection of this specific entity for the purpose of this research. Furthermore, the intention is to present an overview of the case entity's business, which will facilitate greater understanding of the interviewees' responses and the discussion in Chapter 5.

Selection of the case entity

As indicated by De Massis and Kotlar (2014), cases are selected when performing research because they serve the purpose of highlighting a phenomenon; single cases are chosen because they are y informative or because they offer opportunities for the performance of rare research (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

The case entity for this study is Safaris Group Limited (Safaris Group)[5]. Safaris Limited ('Safaris') is the holding company of a group which owns certain eco-tourism brands and includes non-profit trusts. Safaris is a well-established responsible tourism businesses

Safaris Group's integrated report for the 2013 financial year received acclaim and was recognised as amongst the best in the world for 2014. This honour was bestowed by a body which is renowned as a primary global reference point for corporate responsibility reports and resources worldwide. The aim of this body is to present the best of responsible annual reporting practices around the globe in order to help drive change and to develop a sense of cohesion and shared direction in reporting

Overview of Safaris Group's business

Safaris Group provides its guests with packages which incorporate some or all of the following elements:

- As safari camps, lodges and mobile explorations form the basis of the business, these are offered by a network of camps, in different African countries;
- Guests, staff and camp/lodge supplies are transported to and between the camps using air and ground transfers. In order to achieve this, the group's flying business owns and leases numerous aircraft; and

[5] The name of the case entity has been changed for ethical reasons and to ensure anonymity of the entity. For the purposes of this study the case entity shall be referred to as Safaris Group Limited ('Safaris Group'). All information relating to the case entity was sourced from its company website and its integrated report. The detail of such sources has been withheld to ensure anonymity of the entity.

- Integrated itineraries are developed and booked through a tour operating and reservations business operating out of six offices in four countries.

These operating elements are supported by a finance and asset management segment. Over 2,000 staff members are employed in these businesses, from more than 20 different ethnic groups. The business is currently supported by international and local markets and has a value proposition of selling original experiences in the wilderness to discerning international travellers. Safaris Group sells these experiences to the consumers, their guests, largely through the travel trade, and their clients.

Safaris based out of both fixed and mobile camps are offered in three tiers of camps which differ according to the level of luxury and type of experience offered. These are supported by the travel trade and travel agents specialising in the booking and arranging of African travel. Lodge and camp operations are supported by the group's flying business which facilitates guest transport from major cities to the various camps and between camps.

Safaris Group's goal is to share the wild areas of Africa with guests from all over the world while, at the same time, helping to ensure the future protection of Africa's spectacular wildlife heritage and to share the benefits of tourism with local communities.

Operating a significant number of safari camps and lodges and various scheduled overland safaris in a variety of African countries Safaris Group hosts approximately 35,000 guests from around the world each year. Safaris Group operates on almost three million hectares of Africa's wilderness reserves, and the private concessions that Safaris Group manages offer some of Africa's most impressive and untouched wildlife experiences.

Defining the content of the integrated report

The introduction to Safaris Group's integrated report discusses the group's sustainability strategy and describes it as being based on four pillars; being commerce, conservation, community and culture, which are collectively described as 'the 4C's' This strategy was first implemented in 2010, at which time the content of the integrated reports that followed was also established. The integrated report of Safaris Group describes sustainability as being 'built into the very DNA' of Safaris Group. Sustainability specialists across the 4C's are employed at both regional and group levels. Such specialists are responsible for defining the content of the report, based on the aspects they believe to be most material in their respective areas. At the outset, this process was also overseen and advised on by an independent consultant specialising in sustainable eco-tourism.

The stakeholders of Safaris Group were identified and defined at the outset. In preparing the integrated report, aspects are considered material and are included in the report if, from the process

described above, they are believed to have a significant impact on the business or on one or more of their stakeholders and their respective engagements with Safaris Group.

Safaris Group has facilitated regular sustainability workshops since 2010 to ensure that they continue to re-evaluate their materiality definition process. The various co-ordinators are responsible for prioritising the material issues within their respective C. This has been approved by the group's Sustainability Committee which has been tasked by the group's board of directors to provide supervision in all sustainability issues. In preparation of the 2015 integrated report, a more objective materiality process has been undertaken, but it did not result in any significant changes to the aspects covered by the report.

5 Findings

This chapter documents the findings from the semi-structured interviews, the minutes of internal sustainability meetings and work-shops, and an independent assurance report provided with respect to the organisation's 2011 integrated report. This evidence was considered in the context of Tremblay and Gendron's (2011) trials of strength, Meyer and Rowan's (1977) organisational decoupling and Stubbs and Higgins' (2014) push and pull mechanisms of change. All of these notions may be used to explain how change, such as the implementation of integrated reporting requirements, and integrated thinking, is internalized by the entity. The interview agenda has been provided in Appendix A. The findings of the semi-structured interviews will be discussed in terms of the themes identified in Chapter 2.

5.1. Lack of genuine understanding of the role of, and need for, integrated reporting

As explained by Atkins and Maroun (2015), a compliance-based implementation of regulatory prescriptions is a useful strategy for securing legitimacy in the short-term but in the medium- to long-run fails to co-opt the support of employees and promote an integrated approach to business management. One of the challenges faced in the preparation of the integrated reporting, as identified by the interviewees, related to a lack of genuine understanding of the role of, and need for integrated reporting.

> 'You know, if they can see a point to this, if there is some kind of a feedback, if they can see a point to what they are doing, then it's easier. But if they're just filling in forms to send to somebody else and they don't know where this data goes and what it's for and whatever, it's very hard to keep people going on mundane data gathering processes. So maintaining, keeping, the enthusiasm was a bit of a problem' (I1).

In Safaris Group, employees were requested to collect and submit data, yet as such employees, involved in the day-to-day operations in the various regions, do not fully comprehend the need for an integrated report, and as suggested by Atkins and Maroun (2015), it is difficult to obtain their buy-in. This is supported in the following extract from the minutes of a sustainability workshop held during 2014:

> 'Environmental staff members need to also take full responsibility, to be part of the solution rather than simply handing over reports to operations management.'

The employees lose enthusiasm if they do not fully understand the purpose for which this additional information is required, or if they do not see the value that this information will add to the organisation.

> 'That's when we had to start asking the camps to separate the waste and then put it together again but there was no recycling in some of the regions. Even if we separate waste at camp, there was no facility in the towns where the waste was processed, so we were separating in camp and it was all getting mixed together back in (the local town). So we literally, now we had to start separating and weighing, and you try and explain to people that they must separate the waste, weigh it and it's all going to get mixed together in a landfill. You haven't given them a lot of motivation to do highly accurate recordings and to weigh every single bag.'(I6)

While this process is necessary to obtain the information, which is then submitted to head office and used and analysed in obtaining an understanding of the patterns of waste production, the value cannot be seen from the perspective of someone who is not involved in the preparation of the integrated report. The process seems inefficient as once the waste has been separated and weighed, it is mixed together once again in a landfill. It is clear that these employees do not see the value of this process.

> 'They're just trying to provide a good safari in the middle of nowhere, basically. Now you've got to suddenly tell people, whose jobs really are to make sure that Mr. and Mrs. Joe Soap are happy, have had a good meal, a good game drive, a comfortable bed, and now suddenly you're asking them that they send their diesel numbers in.' (I4)

The employees are employed for a specific task which they are accustomed to doing. Integrated reporting represents a change, which is being resisted, and subjected to trials of strength. Completion of forms and submission of data may take place but this represents compliance and not a fundamental shift towards an integrated business (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

> 'So maintaining [keeping] the enthusiasm was a bit of a problem and related to that, as the enthusiasm waned, the quality of the data gathering suffered as well, and so we started to get data that was clearly junk but it didn't become apparent that it was junk until you consolidated it and then tried to analyse it and then you realised 'hang on, this doesn't make any sense' but in quite a few of those situations, unless you find out that the data is junk quite quickly, the horse has gone, in terms of going back and finding and re-collating that.'(I1)

> '…when they send in financial information, and I can see it's clearly wrong, and you go back to them. I don't think they understand the importance sometimes of the integrity of the data.'(I2)

> 'Unless the people in the regions see the value in doing it, they're not going to do it, and you know, unless you threaten them on pain of death with doing something, and even then if they do it, they're going to do it grudgingly and the quality of it is going to suffer, and, you're always going to have to be on their cases about it.' (I1)

Tremblay and Gendron (2011) note that a compliance-based approach to implementation results in the symbolic adoption of regulations while, in practice, there is little actual change. The completion of this task may provide head office with the requisite information but the existing processes do not cater for this data output, nor have the existing processes been altered to ensure efficient inclusion of this data collection.

It can be seen from the above interview extracts that a consequence of a lack of enthusiasm and an implementation which is a compliance exercise alone is a compromise of the quality of such data. (I1, I2, I6).

A lack of quality of data is indicated in the minutes of the sustainability workshop held during 2011. One of the recommendations for the process going forward was to 'improve quality of data for some datasets such as water consumption, waste totals etc.' The poor quality of data is further supported in a recommendation in the independent assurance statement where the following is indicated:

> 'The reporting of performance against [certain indicators] continues to require either data quality improvements (including enhanced trend data) or further detail in disclosure'.

A lack of resources adds to a culture of resistance. This is seen in the minutes of the 2011 sustainability workshop, that collection of data 'took people away from other tasks, which was time consuming because systems were not in place to collect information'. This indicates a lack of systems in place to collect certain information, specifically non-financial information, which is discussed in further detail in Section 5.5. This does, however, point to the strain on resources experienced by employees, resulting in resistance to an increased workload as a result of integrated reporting.

> 'It was hard to get data from accountants due to timing, because auditors were in the offices at the same time, which took precedence.'

This suggests, first, the need to carry on with 'business-as-usual', and, second, the fact that data collection for the purposes of the integrated report has resulted in additional work for employees and has created resistance. Responses from the interviewees suggested that the preparation of the integrated report is administratively challenging which, in turn, suggests that it has been added to the existing, rigid reporting structure, and the workload of employees within the entity. This has led to a strain on existing resources which suggests a lack of a pull mechanism of change and an absence of genuine change. (I2, I4, I5, I7)

> 'I think our challenge when it comes to the integrated report is that it involves a lot of people, so just the co-ordination part of it is a real challenge. So when you start thinking about it, well, you effectively employ people just to do the integrated report, so then you start questioning even more. How much value are we actually getting out of this? ...if [preparing the integrated report is] such a burden on you, there's something wrong in the process.' (I4)

> 'The problem is that it's often the same person and it's quite a lot of work for them. We're trying to set up structures within the organisation that will give them support for that, and I think that will make it simpler' (I5).

The above comments suggest that there is a rigid reporting system in place and that there is no real commitment to change the reporting structure, with the result that information collection and management takes place at a regional level, and flows up to head office where it is then interpreted. Rather, the current structure, in fact, results in head office dictating informational demands to the regions. The current reporting system does not cater for the additional information requirements and this puts pressure on the staff members that are required to meet these additional information requirements. This is due to a lack of existing systems that are designed to produce the desired data. Tasks required to prepare a high quality report are interpreted as an administrative burden with the result that there is a limited sense of commitment to integrated reporting and management, as called for by the IIRC.

Staffs, at a senior management level, consider integrated reporting desirable and believe that it should change the manner in which the organisation operates, something which represents the use of a push mechanism of change. Evidence of this can be seen in the minutes from the sustainability workshop held in 2011. The challenges experienced during the preparation of Safaris Group's first integrated report during 2011 were discussed. Specifically it is mentioned that:

> '[Group Sustainability Officer] wanted to use the first integrated report as the basis for charting a way forward'

This extract suggests that the integrated report and the informational needs, and challenges experienced in acquiring this information, were used to drive improvements in the process. This is further example of the push mechanism of change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

It can be seen that only on preparation of the report is the data reviewed, and as such the information has no relevance other than in the context of the integrated report. Specifically in the context of the waste separation, referred to above, this task is undertaken only to meet the information needs of the integrated report, and does not appear to add any further value to the organisation. The employees involved in the waste separation and measurement will not use the data obtained, and it is likely that this information is not used at all within their teams in the regions.

This is emphasised in the minutes of the same sustainability workshop where proposed improvements of the process going forward include 'source data earlier', which addresses the challenge presented by data which is collected at the last minute so as to meet the information needs of the integrated report and is not an automatic output of already embedded systems (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). Furthermore, the following was noted at the 2011 sustainability workshop:

> 'We want to systemize it so that data is collected over the year. For example, executive meetings are once a month, and can be used to present data, so that it is ready and it is easy to find it'

This is consistent with the limitations of the push mechanism described by Stubbs and Higgins (2014). There is evidence of compliance with the prescriptions of the IIRC by the organisation which is collection of the different types of non-financial information but employees passively resist (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

It can be seen that change is superficial and there is a disconnection between the vision of senior management and actual operations. This is in line with the limitations of a push mechanism of change. The employees have complied with integrated reporting only in appearance (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

The disconnection between the aims of the 2011 strategy session and the manner in which integrated reporting requirements are actually being applied results in decoupling. The tasks which must be undertaken to ensure efficient operations are not linked to those required to comply with integrated reporting. There is a disconnection between the structures which support the different tasks and, as a result, it can be said that the preparation of the integrated report is an act in image management (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). As indicated by an interviewee:

> '…but I'm not quite sure the purpose that we're doing it. Is it just to win an award?' (I3)

The above suggests that the adoption of integrated reporting is a more symbolic adoption with little evidence of actual application to, and impact on, the operations of the organisation. This can be directly linked to organisational image management which Meyer and Rowan (1977) refer to and a lack of genuine stakeholder engagement (Carels et al., 2013).

> 'I'm still a little on the fence as to how relevant some of it is because you have to be very cognizant of the amount of resources one spends getting some information, as opposed to putting that directly into specific positive-outcome projects.' (I6)

The interviewee is not convinced that integrated reporting adds value, and feels that the need to comply and prepare an integrated report is in conflict with the everyday operations of the organisation. The existence of conflict between the operations of Safaris Group and the preparation of the integrated report illustrates organisational decoupling. In such instances Meyer and Rowan (1977) note that it is necessary for an organisation to continue efficient operations while taking actions to ensure legitimacy of the organisation. Accordingly, structures to support an institutionalized policy such as integrated reporting are created. Such structures are separated from those required to support efficient operations so the integrated report initiative is limited to being a compliance-based, image management exercise.

Organisational decoupling occurs to resolve the misalignment between operations and reporting. This is evidenced by the lack of necessary internal controls or structures in relation to the collection of data from the regions. The need for such controls is heightened in light of the employees' lack of buy-in and enthusiasm. If the lack of buy-in is counteracted through the implementation of mitigating controls, the poor quality of the data may be addressed, yet this does not encourage any form of creativity or innovation or integrated approach to the business as a whole. Lack of creativity or innovation is a consequence of a compliance-based implementation and a limitation of a push mechanism of change (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

This finding is supported by the 'independent assurance statement', in which the following was noted:

> '[Safaris Group] relies heavily on its sites to provide accurate and reliable sustainability performance data, yet some locations have not yet initiated the control and/or sign-off procedures required to offer full reliability of data.'

Such mitigating internal controls would not, however, be necessary if the employees had a clear understanding of what is required of them, the importance of the integrity of the data and the broader value added by their role, all of which would be possible if a pull mechanism of change had been employed. The integrated report would be an output of an already integrated business, and controls ensuring such fundamental integration would be in place. As a result, it would not be necessary to put

in place additional internal controls to ensure that specific information is obtained as such information would already be integral to business operations (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

5.2. Lack of integrated business operations and reporting

Higgins et al. (2014) refer to instances where those charged with the preparation of the integrated report are those typically in a financial reporting role and not involved in the operations of an entity. They are, as a result, unable to make decisions and changes regarding the entity's strategy, resulting in an absence of integrated thinking. The challenge presented by separated operation and reporting functions as suggested by Higgins et al. (2014) is comparable to that described by the interviewees. It is indicated that those charged with the collection of data are not responsible for decision making, as this is typically done at a centralized point in the head office of the case entity (I1, I3).

> 'For the last few years, we've been consciously trying to devolve authority and decision making to the regions and to change the roles of all of the people here in [head office] and we're trying to get away from a situation where [head office] tells the regions what to do. We've tried to [change] make the roles of all of these [head office] based people [to] that of advisers and supporters on technical matter to the people in the regions who are responsible for implementation, and you know, that's a difficult change in mind set to achieve but it's a really important one. I've been on the receiving end of [head office] making decisions on your behalf, in many situations where [head office] doesn't understand the realities on the ground as well.' (I1)

The above interview extract indicates that there is a distinct separation of decision-making power from the responsibility for change implementation. Decision-making power is held by head office and this centralized point of control appears difficult to dissipate. It is the IIRC's vision that integrated thinking will lead to integrated decision-making (IIRC, 2013a). A lack of the Framework's envisaged integrated decision-making suggests a compliance-based implementation of integrated reporting (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

Tremblay and Gendron (2014) consider how audit committee prescriptions impact the power held by various parties, and how such power changes and devolving of authority were resisted through trials of strength (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). To this end, the disconnected decision-making process presents a hurdle to the fundamental implementation of the spirit of integrated reporting. The resistance to changes in decision-making power may be due to a concern that, should authority be decentralized to the regions, poor decisions may be made, suggesting uncertainty regarding the existence of required

skills and expertise within the regions. The reason for such resistance may also be due to the nature of reporting systems.

If the regions are given more freedom in the area of data collection and management, conformity of information may be compromised and integration of the information made difficult. It is unlikely that head office is able to visit each region and so isolated decision-making power and a rigid reporting system both present a challenge to integrated thinking and business.

The need for decentralized decision-making is indicated in the minutes of a sustainability workshop held in 2011:

> 'High priority items from country level need to be attended to without having been approved at group level [i.e. head office] provided the country stays within parameters. If it's beyond the parameters, that is when the group will need some explanation for approval'

Perhaps as a result of this policy development, some of the operational sites have started to take a keener interest in the integrated report:

> '[Region X] has a serious desire to participate in the integrated report on all levels but expressed a desire for a simple methodology.'

This emphasises the existence of a centralized decision-making structure and possibly the beginnings of decentralization, which would represent a move towards the IIRC's envisaged integrated decision making and also a significant change which is often resisted as a matter of course (cf Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). It also indicates a lack of flexibility in decision-making structures. Decisions made by those at head office may not result in the best outcome, as realities 'on the ground' have not been taken into account. This is especially true, given the rural and dispersed locations in which many of the group's operations are located.

> 'So what happens? People that actually were doing the right thing are now put off because of these other requirements, now that they've been told, 'You must do X, Y and Z'. So now there's this resistance internally which, when you think about it, should never happen.'(I3)

Those required to collect the information are not involved in decisions which are fundamentally based on the data collected. Furthermore, those with the necessary insight are not involved in the decision-making process. Employees engaging with the customer at the Safaris Group's different operations act in the best interest of Safaris Group and take an integrated approach to business management. They are aware, for example, of the economic pressures as well as the importance of managing natural capital at

the lodges and engaging with local communities on whom the organisations are dependent. Paradoxically, the introduction of formal reporting prescriptions gives rise to resistance and actually undermines the integrated outlook. There are several reasons for this.

As discussed in Section 5.1, employees do not always understand the reasons for preparing the integrated report and are disinclined to participate. Where decisions are made by head office, this compounds the problem. The decision-making processes which are far removed from operational challenges are contributing to the lack of understanding and encouraging resistance to enforcement of policy without consultation. The push approach to change that has been used in this instance is indicated by the reporting demands made by head office which are filtered down to the employees in the regions. It is not possible to make use of a pull mechanism as an integrated business does not exist (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). In the study performed by Stubbs and Higgins (2014) it was concluded that the adoption of integrated reporting had not necessarily resulted in innovations in the organisation's systems of disclosure. As a result, the preparation of a quality integrated report is difficult. Furthermore, it appeared that any changes which had taken place could be considered to be incremental changes to systems previously supporting sustainability reporting (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

In line with the principle of decoupling, there is no mention of substantive changes to business processes as a result of the introduction of integrated reporting. Instead, the interviewees felt that integrated reporting is simply an extension of the image of sustainability created by the sustainability report (I4), or something which can be used to create the appearance of a formal rational structure (I6). The company's official position is that the integrated report is 'not just an academic exercise' (Sustainability Workshop, 2011) but it has proved difficult to realise the objective: 'monitoring and reporting translate into operational improvements' (Sustainability Workshop, 2011).

The below extract from the 2011 sustainability workshop indicates Safaris Group's notion of an ideal state, post implementation and refers to the separate structure used to support external reporting when integration has not been implemented successfully.

> '…we do not want a parallel process. We want to see the significant information reported by management, and to be part of the day-to-day tracking of operations. This should be completely integrated into what we are doing.'

The need to comply with integrated reporting and to ensure the organisation's legitimacy has resulted in what could almost be considered a parallel reporting system. It does not leverage off existing systems and such systems have not been altered to support the additional data needs. A push mechanism of change has been used to instil senior management's vision of integrated reporting which has resulted in a misalignment between operations and reporting. As a result, organisational

decoupling has occurred, where head office subscribes to a view that they are developing reporting policies to promote integrated reporting and thinking, while those at the operational level complain of administrative challenges (Section 5.1), and argue that there is a lack of direction. They acknowledge that they are only paying lip-service to head office policy. Integrated reporting presents a certain image of the organisation, yet the actual reporting system remains unchanged (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). It was noted in the minutes of the 2011 sustainability workshop that in order to implement integrated thinking, 'the data needs to be inclusive'.

The change required on transition from sustainability reporting to integrated reporting is not, however, limited to changes expected on the adoption of yet another reporting mechanism. It is required that integrated thinking is also adopted (De Villiers et al., 2014a) Where it appears that integrated thinking is not evident, it may be that integrated reporting is viewed as yet another reporting mechanism and that fundamental change within the organisation is not essential (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). Interviewees suggested that this was the case at Safaris Group:

> 'Whereas when integrated reporting came in, it was just the next level of sustainability reporting.'(I4)

> 'No, I don't think so. I think the whole core of [Safaris Group] has pretty much stayed the same, it's just now that it's a bit more formalised.'(I6)

The following extract from an interview suggests a lack of understanding of the required change on adoption of integrated reporting.

> 'I think that was our biggest challenge is to try and understand what you can report on realistically without… because often a discussion would happen… we need to report on (a particular performance indicator):…we need to weigh individually all waste leaving camps, and we did try to do that but we would have to hire additional people purely to do that amount of work and that would make us less sustainable and be able to do less conservation, so it would have had a negative impact on our sustainability and conservation, by trying to physically weigh every single bag of trash, recyclable or non-recyclable, and bag of compost, and every piece of firewood we burnt… and those were the requirements in the GRI.' (I6)

This suggests that the difficulty is faced, at all levels, in determining how the additional information they are collecting forms part of their value chain and contributes to the generation of sustainable returns. This suggests that the employees see integrated reporting as an extension of sustainability reporting.

Responses from the interviewees suggested that the case entity looks to the GRI's reporting guidelines for sustainability reporting when determining the content of their integrated report (I1, I2, I4, I6).

> 'I think that's the one thing that the refinements of GRI [have] been really, really helpful and I think the GRI also acknowledging that they don't want there to be a checklist approach to reporting the data.' (I1)

The interviewee is suggesting that the GRI's guidelines are the paramount source of guidance when preparing an integrated report. This may indicate that Safaris Group has not progressed beyond sustainability reporting.

> 'So we sort of inherited this very GRI heavy way of writing a report, so even the headings, you know, when I look at our biodiversity section with [X] I get frustrated because [X] keeps using the heading 'Habitats protected and rehabilitated' and that's very much an industrialised … You know, GRI want that because they want to know how mines deal with their habitats…it's a heading that doesn't quite suit our business and we've got into this thing of using this because of the GRI.' (I4)

> 'We really did try to tick every single box in the initial reports and it was extremely challenging because that whole GRI thing is definitely not customised for our industry in any way' (I6)'

This response was provided in the context of determination of the content of an integrated report and suggests that the frustrations felt when preparing the integrated report were in line with those experienced in the preparation of sustainability reports prepared in terms of the GRI guidelines. This indicates that a clear transition from sustainability reporting and related guidelines to integrated reporting and the Framework has not been made. It further suggests that the existing structure designed to produce a sustainability report is being used to produce an integrated report. This illustrates a push mechanism of change in terms of which demands are made of existing systems as a result of the need to prepare an integrated report (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

Interviewees also indicated that compliance with the GRI is considered to be important, emphasising a compliance-based approach to reporting. However, it is also indicated that attempts to analyse and consider the relevance of the GRI requirements in the context of Safaris Group's operations are taking place, something which is taking implementation beyond mere compliance (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

5.3. Absence of the requisite quality of 'connectedness'

Responses from interviewees suggest that, because of a lack of connectedness, people from different professional backgrounds do not appreciate the importance of information (I3, I4, I5).

> 'We used to have a 4 C's workshop for a couple of years but now we separated them out. So, 'community' we just had a regional workshop just with community, conservation has regional workshop. It also worked out that the community people in the regions didn't necessarily want to know about conservation or solar panels and sewerage systems and so it was a lot of wasted time in these workshops because the guys were talking and arguing about whether to have above ground sewerage or underground sewerage, and community wasn't interested. So we've separated them out. So that in a way has made them less interactive.'(I5)

The interviewee has indicated that, at first, a combined integrated reporting workshop was organised, yet resistance to the combined workshop arose. This could be attributed to the perceived lack of relevance of C-specific information to the other 'C's' (refer to Chapter 4). The workshops presented a forum where members of the '4C's' were able to interact. Since the discontinuation of these workshops, the employees involved in the preparation of the integrated report have disengaged, and interaction amongst the '4C's' is limited. This suggests that the employees in each 'C' are more comfortable operating within their own sphere.

While the point of the workshop was to discuss integrated reporting, the topics discussed were still quite specific to each of the 'C's', and did not present an integrated agenda. This was in turn perceived as a waste of time and the value of such a workshop was limited. The workshops may have been held in an attempt to encourage integrated thinking yet, once again, this is an example of a push mechanism of change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). In order to ensure legitimacy, an image of compliance is created (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Furthermore, the planning and occurrence of workshops to discuss integrated reporting is an example of compliance in appearance but the examples of the agenda items provided above belie the existence of fundamental change, implementation of integrated thinking and connectedness (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011)

Information prepared for the purposes of one function within the case entity does not always cater for the information needs of another function (I4). People from different professional backgrounds who are involved in different aspects of the case entity, interact to a varying degree, ranging from limited interaction at senior management level (I3) to non-existent interaction 'on the ground' (I3, I4, I6).

> ‘So from a financial perspective, it’s quite easy for me to talk about sustainability, when you’re in back office because, if you continuously make profits, there’s your sustainability but you don’t actually know what damage you could have caused.’(I3)

The interviewee is suggesting that those employees engaged in financial reporting and not involved in operations may not truly understand the importance of sustainability, and may even have their own interpretation of this concept so they do not question the impact of Safaris Group’s operations on facets of business, other than financial reporting. This is an example of an absence of connectedness. Employees are not aware of the broader activities of Safaris Group, and operate within very separate silos. This is emphasised in the minutes of the 2011 sustainability workshop where it was noted that staff would like to be aware of what the organisation is doing environmentally.

The following interview extract refers to the same point:

> ‘So, they have that understanding at a high level but once we get down to the guys on the ground here, they don’t. So CFO level and financial directors in each region. That’s the only level at which these guys are connected in terms of the 4 C’s.’(I4)

> ‘I think in some cases, on the country level, we could probably do a little bit more co-ordination between the C’s.’ (I6)

Another interviewee (I4) indicated that connectedness is only present at a very high level within Safaris Group. It is at this same level that decisions are made and communicated to the regions. The impact of a centralised decision making structure is discussed in Section 5.2. If the only indication of connectedness is at board level, it cannot be said that connectedness is pervasive.

In ‘independent assurance report’ the following issues were noted:

> ‘While the safety and security of both staff and guests at the camps, and within [the flying business] , is tightly monitored and managed, the systems for reporting data do not allow for ease of review, particularly at the camps.’

> ‘While energy consumption data is closely scrutinised at all of the sites visited, particularly within [the flying business], the systems for reporting data do not allow for ease of review, particularly at the camps.’

Access to information, which is used in making decisions at a head office level, is limited in the regions, and it is not possible for any employees at the camps to review the data collected. This enforces the centralised decision-making model noted and, as a result, the quality of connectedness is not present (Section 5.2).

In the minutes from a sustainability-workshop held in February 2014 it was noted that head office will be required to work closely with the regions as a matter of quality control. This emphasises that the disconnection between head office and the regions has been noted, as well as the need for the head office to interact on a regular basis with the regions. In the same workshop it was indicated that the role of head office needs to be more hands-on and supportive. This supports the views expressed by I4 and I6 that there is a lack of connectedness in the regions.

The lack of connectedness may lead to 'double accounting' of certain pieces of information, limiting the efficiency of the integrated reporting process (I3, I4).

> 'Another one on that question though, is the other trouble we still have is that we've got a bit of a miscommunication happening with financial. So you'll get [Employee X], for instance, will put together the contributions that we make to all the community leases or government leases that we have for all our reserves that we work in, but now if I take [Employee X's] and I compare it to [Employee Y's], [Employee Y] says like, 'Well where did [Employee X] get this from?' It might not match because what she does, she doesn't go to [Employee Y].'(I4)

A certain piece of information may meet numerous information needs, yet due to a lack of knowledge of the existing systems by employees who previously never had to collect such data, the information is recollected. This is an indicator of a lack of communication and connectedness within Safaris Group.

> 'I also found there's a lot of repetition. You know, like we would show, revenue, and then they'll show revenue in some other format, in another silo. They got to read it 4 times, you know.'(I3)

I3 has indicated that information relating to Safaris Group's revenue is presented in different areas of the integrated report. Similarly I4 suggests that information is often needed by different parts of the business yet due to a lack of communication, the information is collected numerous times by different employees.

Inefficient use of information may suggest that different areas of the business are possibly unaware that such information is actually reported elsewhere. Alternately, they are aware of its repetition but are of the opinion that their own specific information needs are not conveyed adequately. It could be concluded they do not interact sufficiently to find one common measure or one manner of presentation which would address all related needs. This emphasises the lack of connectedness and its negative impact on the efficiency of the reporting process and the conciseness of the integrated report which is one of the guiding principles of the Framework (IIRC, 2013a).

The fact that certain information, and sometimes its collection, is duplicated suggests that existing processes are not leveraged off in every instance. As a result of a push mechanism of change, the integrated report is not able to pull on one source of information which addresses all of its information needs relating to that item at once (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).This indicates that there is a gap between structures supporting efficient operation within an organisation and structures put in place to ensure legitimacy through integrated reporting (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

A result of the lack of connectedness 'on the ground' and in the regions is the use of different reporting and measuring mechanisms, in this way limiting the consistency and comparability of the information used in preparing an integrated report (I5).

> 'When you've got regions all over, who have different ways of measuring stuff, or accounting for stuff, it can be quite a mission to get. And community people are not necessarily at all financial. Asking them to get financial information is difficult.'(I5)

It is suggested above that the measurement bases used within the different regions are not consistent. This emphasises the lack of connectedness. It also suggests that the information in question has a limited purpose other than as a part of the integrated report. If it served an alternative purpose, such as integrated business and integrated thinking, such measurement inconsistencies would be reduced and would enhance the value of such information.

5.4. Difficulty in the determination of materiality

Interviewees indicate that a lack of prescriptive reporting standards and guidance on the specific information to be included (I3, I5, I6) leads to significant difficulty in determining the nature and quantity of information to be included in the integrated report (I1, I2, I3, I5, I6). This may, however, be due other factors such as a lack understanding of the organisation's value creation story, and inadequate materiality determination in the context of stakeholder engagement.

Financial accountants are accustomed to reporting in accordance with prescriptive reporting standards and the absence of guidelines results in significant and confusion as to what should be included (I3).

> 'They just need rules and regulations and the minute there isn't they don't know which way to go. So yes I think it's unfortunate but to make it easier, they definitely need the rules.'(I3)

The interviewee suggests that financial accountants are fixed in the way they operate. Furthermore, current financial reporting standards, such as International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), in

terms of which compliance is emphasised, are so prescriptive that any creativity or ability to make use of common sense has been discouraged. Financial accountants involved in the preparation of the integrated report are likely to approach integrated reporting in a manner which is similar to that used when applying IFRS. Compliance is considered important and so genuine change and, therefore, integrated thinking is inhibited (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

As indicated by Atkins and Maroun (2015), a check box approach to reporting diminishes the usefulness of the reports and inhibits the development of an integrated thinking culture. While financial accountants may consider a lack of prescriptive reporting standards in the context of integrated reporting a challenge, the challenge is presented by the difficulty experienced by preparers in adopting integrated thinking. If integrated thinking and effective stakeholder engagement were genuinely adopted, preparers may find that the need for prescriptive reporting standards and guidelines will fall away. Prescriptive reporting standards and guidelines govern the output of a reporting process. Indication that a lack of such guidance presents a challenge to preparers suggests that the focus of the implementation of integrated reporting is the output (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

The lack of guidance relating to the format to be used, in combination with what appears to be a lack of integrated thinking (discussed in Section 5.2), has contributed to 'fatigue' of the preparers of the integrated report as use of a prior year's format may be frowned upon and the use of a new format tends to imply improvement (I1, I2).

> 'We did make it harder for ourselves by saying the second year, 'Please just don't give me last year with the dates (numbers) changed' and some of the authors took that a little to heart, and basically rewrote the whole thing from the beginning, and that wasn't what I meant.'(I1)

The above interview extract indicates that the preparers of the integrated report were changing the format used in the said report for the sake of change. It is indicated that use of a new format suggests improvement, and this suggestion of improvement, regardless of whether the operations of the organisation have changed in any way, seems to be important. This is an example of image management, and organisational decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Whether there have been any improvements in the underlying operations of Safaris Group is not considered by the preparers when compiling their section of the report. The message communicated within Safaris Group during the preparation of the integrated report may be considered to be image management.

Lack of prescriptive reporting standards and guidance on the specific information to be included has also resulted in a reduction of comparability between the case entity and other entities (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014), and consistency in year-on-year reporting within Safaris Group (I3, I5).

> ‘I think human beings like the easy way and they want to have comparability, so it’s much nicer to say, ‘the way you’ve measured your carbon dioxide is the same as another company’, and then you can compare easily and, unfortunately, it does give more meaning. You know, when you can compare to something, there’s far more value, but I’m actually one against rules and against those type of things that sort of put you in a box and, as you mentioned, like a tick-off, a check-list type thing, but, you know, maybe it will help in reaching out to the community that we actually want to.’ (I3)

> ‘Ja, the problem for me has also been that over the years the guys have reported things differently, so the figures aren’t always comparable. Ja, I’m an economist and I want things to be comparable and data to be consistent, so it’s rather frustrating but for [community project] sometimes they included salaries, sometimes they didn’t. So the figures from one year to the next for [community project] reporting changed considerably, and I only noticed this when I tried to do an analysis the other day.’ (I5)

These interviewees are both referring to the importance of comparability of information between Safaris Group and other entities. I5 indicates that users of integrated reports may place emphasis on the need to compare year-on-year information, and on the enhancement of the usefulness information, if it is comparable. I3 is specifically describing the need for comparability but also refers to the possibility that in attempting to achieve comparability, flexibility may be compromised.

Comparability was identified as a challenge and one which stems from a lack of prescriptive reporting standards. It can be seen, however, that achievement of comparability across entities may reduce integrated reporting to a check box exercise or a compliance based exercise (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011), and as a result inhibit integrated thinking (Atkins & Maroun, 2015).

As indicated by an interviewee:

> ‘So one of the interesting things, just to divert, is one of those early versions of our integrated report (might’ve been the first one). It was the second one, when measured for GRI compliance, I think it said, I think it came out that we were first or second of (or peers) in terms of the level of GRI compliance. You know, we ticked more boxes than anybody else. So we ticked all of these boxes, but when you ask yourself, “Ok, but what’s the quality of the report?” it was, well, not as good as that ranking would suggest because all we’d done was tick all of these boxes, and produced this data, but without any asking ourselves whether the data was meaningful or material, or whether

> we are leaving out other stuff that's probably more important, but hasn't been picked up as GRI reporting requirement.' (I1)

The above interview extract indicates that a compliance-based approach to reporting does not necessarily result in a quality report. While a lack of prescriptive reporting standards may present preparers with a challenge, provision of such guidance would not necessarily enhance the quality of the integrated report.

The interviewee mentions materiality and indicates that, in order for a quality report to be produced, materiality must be considered and understood. The Framework states that in order to be most effective, the materiality determination process should be integrated into the organisation's management processes. It should also include regular engagement with providers of financial capital and others to ensure the integrated report meets its primary purpose. This suggests that materiality and stakeholder engagement are inextricably linked. If materiality determination does not take place effectively, it is suggested that stakeholder engagement may not be taking place to the necessary extent (IIRC, 2013a). According to the 2011 sustainability workshop:

> '….[Safaris Group] needs a process to identify our stakeholders. So far [Safaris Group] is just listing them but we need perspectives from others too on who they are and how to engage with them.'

The above indicates that stakeholder engagement may not be happening to the extent it should. To this end, the integrated reporting process can be interpreted as being undertaken to ensure legitimacy of the organisation (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), rather than as an exercise in genuine stakeholder engagement (Raemaekers et al., 2015). As recommended by the 'independent assurance statement' provided with respect to the Safaris Group 2011 integrated report, Safaris Group should ensure that stakeholders are actively engaged, so as to assess whether or not the information contained within the integrated reports meets their information needs.

An example of where Safaris Group has implemented genuine stakeholder engagement is in relation to carbon emissions. In determining whether or not this is a priority to the business, guests were requested to participate in a survey, so that Safaris Group would be able to assess the importance of carbon emissions, and offsetting of carbon credits, to that particular group of stakeholders.

Effective stakeholder engagement will result in an understanding of what information is relevant, and the notion of materiality is therefore addressed. In the 2011 sustainability workshop minutes, the following was identified as a challenge:

> ‘How far down the chain do you measure? For example, when pilots in town are using taxis to travel from the airport, or when lodges are receiving a delivery from outside the company.’

As indicated by an interviewee:

> ‘Finding ways in which to communicate exactly what we do in a brief a way as possible, but saying…and trying to show from year to year how we’ve improved. I find sometimes that quite challenging.’(I2)

The extract from same workshop minutes is provided in the context of collecting data relating to fuel usage, and the extent to which this needs to be measured, is questioned. The interviewee is referring to the notion of ‘materiality’ and the desire to avoid inclusion of information which does not contribute to Safaris Group’s value creation story.

The materiality determination process does not appear to be robust, suggesting a lack of genuine stakeholder engagement, which is a limitation of the push mechanism of change. In terms of the push mechanism, it is not possible to consider all aspects, and because all parts of the organisation are not engaged, and stakeholders are not exhaustively considered, determining the link between different indicators and firm value is difficult.

5.5. Challenges specific to non-financial information

As suggested by Van Blommel (2014), one of the first improvements to be made to an organisation's system should be to ensure the integrity, reliability and robustness of the processes surrounding non-financial data as these need to be the same as those relating to financial data.

The interviewees suggested that the collection of non-financial information presents a challenge due to the lack of established systems in place within Safaris Group's systems (I1, I3, I6). This was reiterated in the 2011 Sustainability Workshop where feedback received from an external sustainable development expert emphasised that the biggest challenge faced by most companies is presented by environmental management data which was previously not collected, such as waste and water data.

> 'Yeah, so getting the systems in place and maintaining the enthusiasm was important. In order to achieve that firstly we had to get a whole lot more realistic in terms of what we were asking for and we had to also get in place the systems, and I think we're doing ok in that regard, but you know it's one of those things where if you sit back and don't pay attention, things will slip again quite quickly. The problem being that, obviously, your normal annual reporting process focuses on your financials, and your financials have been gathered as a matter of course all the time and all companies are disciplined in that regard. Problem is here, you're asking all of the other questions that the business had never reported previously and so, whereas your systems for gathering and analysing your financial data are well established, you're inventing the wheel with regard to a lot of the sustainability stuff…so getting over that system hump was a bit of a hassle for us.' (I1)

Required non-financial information is not readily available, and the collection of such information presents a challenge to those who require it for the purposes of the integrated report (I1, I3). This is due to the initial absence of systems which are able to produce the required data. This is supported by a statement in the 'independent assurance statement', in which the following issue is noted:

> 'Systems for collecting, collating and reporting key sustainability data, either for specific indicators, or for specific operations / locations, require additional process improvement to enhance the overall quality of the Groups' sustainability report'

A system called the Environmental Management System (EMS) website was introduced as mechanism to collect all environmental related data. The employees in the regions are required to interact with it, and those at head office are able to access this system and the stored data at any point. The EMS does, however, present certain challenges such as the need to train staff members on how to

use the system, and the need for staff to interact with the system on a regular basis. The lack of readily available non-financial information may also be due to lack of staff training in the area of data extraction to support integrated reporting.

The systems which support the everyday operations of Safaris Group have apparently not been altered to support the integrated reporting process. As such a gap exists between the structures which support every day operations and those which have been created to support integrated reporting (cf Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The everyday operations are currently able to continue much as before and have not been impacted by the implementation of integrated reporting, suggesting that integrated reporting has been approached as a compliance exercise, and change has been in appearance alone (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

> 'So maintaining [keeping] the enthusiasm was a bit of a problem and related to that, as the enthusiasm waned, the quality of the data gathering suffered as well, and so we started to get data that was clearly junk but it didn't become apparent that it was junk until you consolidated it and then tried to analyse it and then you realised 'hang on, this doesn't make any sense' but in quite a few of those situations, unless you find out that the data is junk quite quickly, the horse has gone, in terms of going back and finding and re-collating that.' (I1)

It can be seen that, as a result of the lack of established systems supporting non-financial information collection, the quality of the information collected is often questionable (I1). Furthermore, once it has been ascertained that the non-financial information is of a poor quality, the entity is faced with the challenge that it is not possible to re-collect the information, as the circumstances and conditions to which the information relates have changed, and there is no 'second chance'. (I1). The role of internal controls in light of a compliance-based implementation is discussed in Section 5.1.

It is suggested that the information in question is only used for the purposes of integrated reporting and is not a result of an already existent process. This indicates a push mechanism of change, whereby it is not possible for the integrated reporting process to pull the required information from an already integrated business (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

The guiding principles of the Framework include 'reliability' (IIRC 2013a). The need to report information which can be considered reliable, in conjunction with the difficulty faced in obtaining such information is a challenge encountered in the preparation of the integrated report (I3).

This inevitably leads to a question of assurance of non-financial information (I1, I5). As suggested by Cheng et al. (2014), the aspect of the assurance of integrated reporting cannot be ignored, in particular

whether or not stakeholders of an organisation are likely to place emphasis on an integrated reporting which has not been subject to assurance (Cheng et al., 2014). The cost versus the benefit of assurance of non-financial information is apparently difficult to justify as the benefit of the assurance is not perceived as being sufficiently significant to justify the cost incurred (I1).

> 'We did (I can't remember whether it was the first, maybe the first 2 of our annual reports), we actually had them externally verified, to an extent anyway. You know, they looked at our reporting systems and they looked at some of the data and asked whether it made sense and whatever. We actually stopped doing that after [I think it was after] 2 years because, to be honest, because up until then it had been done for us for no charge. This assurance completed and to charge us for it, we couldn't really see the corresponding value. I mean, there was no evidence that having an external assurance of your sustainability data, as you do with an audit of your financial information, was adding anything in terms of credibility to the document, and we certainly… It came at a time when the business was battling a little as well, and we certainly weren't going to throw a whole lot of money at something like that, and rightly so.' (I1)

Safaris Group, in this instance, was faced with a trade-off between the cost and the benefit of assurance. It was determined that cost exceeded the benefit and assurance was deemed unnecessary. This decision was based on the assumption that stakeholders would not see the value of assurance. This is indicative of a difficulty in determining what is considered to be material, which is a result of a lack of genuine stakeholder engagement (Section 5.4). Section 5.1 discusses the role of internal controls in the integrated reporting process.

The cost versus benefit debate does not only take place in the context of assurance of non-financial information but also in the context of the cost of implementing systems and making use of resources so that the requisite data may be collected.

> 'That's where it got a bit ridiculous initially, where we were trying to set up systems purely to produce the figures needed to go into the tick boxes. Things like water recording and that was something we'd been working on and we just had to make sure that each region had sufficient water meters, although the challenge there was that they only last 2 months. So you were talking like R25,000 every 3 months on a water meter at one lodge. You could hire 5 extra staff for that so one needs to sort look at the priorities of how important is that…you know, those figures and how crucial are they.' (I6)

It can be seen that the interviewee is of the opinion that in certain instances, as desirable as the information is, the cost of collection cannot be justified (I4, I6). Such 'cost versus benefit' debates are reminiscent of capital stock substitution, described in Section 2.3.1. There are views that natural capital should take precedence (Garrod & Fyall, 1998) yet the need to consider cost versus benefit is evident from the interviewees' responses. This is again indicative of a difficulty in determining what is considered to be material, which would be a result of a lack of genuine stakeholder engagement (Section 5.4).

> 'Ja, so people doing CSR, and they're building a library, and it cost X amount and they can measure how many visitors, or kids come to the library every day. That's measurable, so you can with community but as I say, putting a water pump in a village with a solar panel, is not that measurable unless, I mean you could measure the people coming every day but I mean that's just a waste of time in general life.' (I5)

As indicated in Section 2.3.1., many of the resources used in the eco-tourism industry do not enter the market and market prices are rarely associated with natural resources used in the tourism production process (Garrod & Fyall, 1998). This was supported by the responses of the interviewees, and it was indicated that a greater amount of judgement has to be employed in the collection of non-financial information (I3), and that it is not always possible to assign an objective value to a piece of information (I5). Furthermore, it has not been acknowledged that, within the realm of integrated reporting, there are instances when it is not possible to assign a 'probability, value or priority' (De Villiers et al., 2014b).

The guiding principles of the Framework also include comparability and consistency (IIRC 2013a). Within the case entity, in an attempt to 'measure' non-financial information, differing techniques are used within an entity and across the industry, reducing the consistency and comparability of reporting (I5). Furthermore, once received, it is not always possible to interpret the information, and to understand truly the basis on which it was prepared (I3).

Collection of non-financial information presents a challenge as the requisite systems are not in place. Furthermore, the systems used for such a purpose may not be established and, as a result, produce data which is neither reliable nor comparable. This is indicative of a compliance-based approach to implementation. Compliance is achieved through the preparation of an integrated report and legitimacy is ensured (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The integrated report however, needs to make use of information which is not readily available and not necessary for any other process within the organisation. As a result, it is likely that the operations of the organisation will continue, regardless of the success of the implementation of integrated reporting, and so the organisation has not

fundamentally changed (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Change is appearance alone (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011)

The evident trade-off between the cost incurred to obtain non-financial information and the limited perceived benefit of the provision of such information is reminiscent of the dominance of economic value described in Section 5.5, and further indicates that the actors in the field have not fundamentally changed (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

By nature the compilation of a report which includes non-financial information will require a greater degree of judgement. It is not always possible to assign a value or measure certain information and guidance on models which could be used in such instances is limited. A significant challenge is, as a result, presented to those required to provide and present non-financial information in a meaningful, user-friendly way.

5.6. Dominance of economic value

Responses from the interviewees in this case study suggest that the usefulness of the integrated report is limited because the investor community does not value the integrated report as a whole and places more emphasis on the financial statements of Safaris Group (I1, I3, I4, I5, I7).

> 'I think, second or thirdly, basically we don't really care what level of GRI compliance we achieve because it doesn't actually mean anything. It certainly hasn't translated into any kudos out of the investment community. In fact if anything, it's led to the investment community saying to us, 'Are you sure that you're trying to make money here? And that you aren't actually trying to save the world, or that you're a conservation NGO, instead of a listed company?' (I1)

The interviewee suggests the providers of financial capital do not find the integrated report particularly useful. In fact, it appears that the lack of emphasis on the financial statements and reference to the other capitals in the integrated report has caused concern for the investors.

> 'If I look at the investors, there's no doubt they will go straight to the financial statements, it's easily identifiable.'(I3)

> 'There are quite a few conflicts and I see it in the board packs… who are just concerned about whether we're going to pay a decent dividend this year, so that is the challenge.' (I4)

> ‘For an investor, obviously, I think the first and foremost what they look at is the numbers before they make a decision whether they want to invest in this company. First of all they look at the numbers, your returns.’(I7)

All of the above interviewees have indicated that investors do not see the value of an integrated report and are primarily interested in the financial statements of Safaris Group. The implementation of integrated reporting is also subject to trials of strength within the investor community. The use of an integrated report, as opposed to the annual financial statements of an organisation, represents a change and, as suggested by Tremblay and Gendron (2014), such a change is going to be resisted. This resistance may be due to the reduced focus on information presented in the traditional financial statements and the need to consider a broader set of information regarding the organisation. Furthermore, the notion of value is no longer limited to financial wealth but now includes the IIRC’s capitals. As a result, the investors resist the use of the integrated report alone and revert to use of the annual financial statements. They may acknowledge that organisations need to comply with integrated reporting but would nevertheless dispute the value provided when it comes to investment related decisions. Change in the investor community is appearance alone and investors will more than likely refer to the financial statements which are prepared in the language to which they are accustomed (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

The fact that employees are of the opinion that investors do not value the integrated report may be an example of a reason to justify resistance (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). Beyond the opinion of the investor community, the dominance of the economic impact of certain tasks is evident. For example, I3 and I6 both cite financial impact as reasons for reconsidering the need to undertake certain tasks, which are necessary parts of the integrated reporting process.

> ‘You know, I think when an investor now grabs our integrated report, in their mind they think, ‘Gee how much money did they spend in producing this report?’ (I3)

It is suggested that investors do not see the value of the information within the report, and are more concerned about the economic cost of producing and printing the report. This, once again, refers to the insubstantial reasons provided by actors in the field when justifying the reason for resistance (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011).

> ‘Exactly, we’d need very specific resources to be measured and that’s where we had to go through the debate of getting that information purely for the report, would have a negative impact and take necessary resources away from the positive things we were trying to do. It wouldn’t make sense.’(I6)

The above interview extract suggests it would be necessary to incur additional expenditure if additional information was required. It seems that this information is used for the purposes of the integrated report alone and is not produced in the normal course of operations (Section 5.1). The information may be obtained, once certain additional costs are incurred, but this information is not available as a result of an integrated business, nor has it been subjected to integrated thinking (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

The opinion that investors do not value the integrated report but continue to look to the financial statements for information to inform investment decisions is one which disputes the need for, and value of, an integrated report and, to this end, is capable of reducing enthusiasm and creating an attitude of scepticism. This in itself presents a challenge and may be linked to the challenge noted in Section 5.1 in which it was indicated that a lack of understanding of the purpose of the requested information, and the ultimate integrated report, results in lack of enthusiasm and buy-in.

6 Conclusion

6.1. Summarising comments

This thesis explores the challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report and adopts a constructivist ontology and is grounded in an interpretive epistemology (Section 3.1.1.). The push and pull mechanisms of change (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014), notions of trials of strength (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011) and organisational decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) are used as a theoretical framework for exploring the challenges encountered by a case organisation when preparing its integrated report. A qualitative case study was undertaken in which the role-players in the preparation of the integrated report of the case entity were interviewed.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the interviews which were analysed, in light of challenges identified by the existing body of literature (refer to Table 2.1). Analysis of the interviewees' responses indicated various examples of the use of a push mechanism of change, lack of a pull mechanism of change and operations in which the actors in the field have not fundamentally changed the way in which they operate. In such instances, a misalignment between the reporting mechanism and the organisation's operations occurs and organisational decoupling is evident.

A lack of understanding of the need for and the value of an integrated report presents a challenge to the preparation process. The existence of this challenge suggests a push mechanism of change as the activities are brought about typically to meet expectations or imitate the activities of credible organisations (Higgins et al., 2014), and possibly receive recognition through accolades. There is evidence of a need to comply with prescriptions, such as those of the IIRC. Due to a lack of understanding, however, resistance arises (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). Tasks required to prepare a high quality report are interpreted as an administrative burden, with the result that there is a limited sense of commitment to integrated reporting and management. The overall effect is that the organisation prepares an integrated report which addresses most of the recommendations of the IIRC and King-III but these are decoupled from the actual activities of the organisation which continue almost unaffected by a 'paradigm shift' in corporate reporting philosophy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Integrated reporting tends to be merely the next phase of sustainability reporting and there is limited evidence of integrated thinking. Those involved in the day-to-day operations, who understand the reality of the organisation's activities, are not involved in decision making. This decentralised decision-making structure of Safaris Group presents challenges to the implementation of integrated thinking and, as such, integrated reporting. The existent decision-making structure results in the use of a push mechanism of change, in terms of which the vision of head office results in information demands being made on the regional operations, yet the reporting systems, do not support such change. Misalignment between the structures required to manage the organisation's image from the

perspective of stakeholders, and those which support the everyday operations, inevitably arises. Integrated reporting is viewed as fundamentally similar to sustainability reporting and the need to adopt integrated thinking has not yet been acknowledged (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

Another result of the push mechanism of change is a lack of connectivity within the case entity's business. A lack of connectedness may be as a result of a lack of integrated thinking. A lack of connectedness results from the use of a push mechanism of change where the information needs of an integrated report dictate the data required from the regions (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). As a result, the data may not have been provided in certain contexts previously and, in such instances, is recollected in spite of the existence of a system which may already cater for it. This suggests the use of structures to support an image management exercise, which differ significantly from those structures which support efficient operations of the organisation (cf Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

It can be seen that the presentation of the same information in different contexts within the integrated report results as a lack of connectedness within the organisation. A lack of understanding of what information the integrated report should contain is a further challenge faced during preparation. A lack of prescriptive reporting standards and guidance on the specific information to be included in an integrated report may result in an 'information overload'. The materiality determination process should include regular engagement with providers of financial capital and others to ensure the integrated report fulfils its primary purpose. Materiality and stakeholder engagement are, therefore, inextricably linked. It can be seen that preparers are looking for guidance on what information to include, and how much, yet this is an indication that the stakeholders are not adequately engaged, and so it is not possible to determine what information is relevant. As a result, the materiality determination process does not appear to be robust, suggesting a lack of genuine stakeholder engagement: this is a limitation of the push mechanism of change. In terms of this mechanism, it is not possible to consider all aspects and, because all parts of the organisation are not engaged and stakeholders are not exhaustively considered, determining the link between different indicators and firm value is difficult. While a lack of prescriptive reporting standards may present preparers with a challenge, this is merely the symptom of ineffective stakeholder engagement, which is the challenge faced.

Determination of the content of an integrated report presents a challenge. Collection of non-financial information supporting such content similarly presents a challenge. The order in which these two challenges were explored is of significance as it seems that the content of the integrated report tends to drive the information needs of the organisation when a push mechanism is used. The systems used for such a purpose may not be established and, as a result, data is produced which is neither reliable nor comparable. This is indicative of change which has been imposed but which not is truly integrated. The evident trade-off between the cost needed to be incurred to obtain non-financial information and the limited perceived benefit of the provision of such information is reminiscent of

the dominance of economic value and further indicates that the 'actors in the field' have not fundamentally changed. By nature the compilation of a report which includes non-financial information, will require a greater degree of judgement. In addition, it is not always possible to assign a value, or to measure certain information, and guidance on models which could be used in such instances is limited. A significant challenge is presented to those required to provide and present non-financial information in a meaningful, user-friendly way.

In addition, the continued dominance of economic value suggests that not only is there a lack of genuine change within the case entity, but also within the investor community, the impact of which is felt by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report. This, in itself, presents a challenge and may be linked to the lack of understanding of the purpose of the requested information and the ultimate integrated report, compounding a lack of enthusiasm and buy-in. Once again, this emphasises that a push mechanism of change has been employed and that neither those preparing the report nor those using the report have fundamentally changed (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014).

When changes in regulatory prescriptions are communicated, the process through which such changes are internalized by an organisation includes due consideration of the appropriateness of the required changes by those impacted and may be a push or a pull mechanism in nature (Stubbs & Higgins, 2014). A push mechanism is unlikely to result in genuine change. Similarly, when 'actors in the field' are not seen to have changed the way in which they operate and have merely changed in appearance, genuine change cannot take place (Tremblay & Gendron, 2011), and organisational decoupling results (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The lack of genuine change on implementation of integrated reporting within the case entity is largely responsible for the numerous challenges described above, faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report.

6.2. Contribution of the thesis

Integrated reporting is a new area of policy and practice which has developed at a significant pace (Humphrey et al., 2013). As a result, this thesis has provided insight into the impact on a reporting entity, and acceptance by the reporting entity of reporting regulations over a period, which is shorter than that typical in the case of financial reporting standards (De Villiers et al., 2014a). While there is a wealth of research relating to integrated reporting, there is limited research relating to the challenges experienced by those preparing the integrated report. This thesis has provided further understanding of the challenges faced by organisations in the preparation of an integrated report, providing insight into how preparers are interpreting and applying the guidelines found in the integrated reporting frameworks and codes on corporate governance. This insight is provided in the context of the eco-tourism industry but the challenges faced are not specific to this industry, and this insight may be

applied across a variety of industries. Insight into the challenges faced in the preparation of the integrated report may provide a platform on which to base research into how such challenges may be overcome, whether it is through the provision of additional guidance by regulatory bodies or through consideration of how the various challenges are possibly dealt with in different industries.

South Africa is a pioneer in the implementation of integrated reporting (De Villiers et al., 2014a). As such the findings of this thesis reflect the challenges faced by an entity that has been preparing an integrated report for a number of years. The challenges may therefore be considered to be ones which are likely to be experienced by other entities, and are not 'once-off' occurrances.

This thesis represents an academic documentation of initial developments in integrated reporting and has the capability of providing valuable insights to inform further development of policy and practice. Furthermore, academic documentation of initial developments in integrated reporting may provide academics with a foundation on which to develop further research (De Villiers et al., 2014a).

6.3. Limitations and areas for future research

This thesis does not consider the usefulness of the integrated report from the perspective of the providers of capital but discusses the impact of the perception that such users do not find the integrated report useful on the preparation of the integrated report. The opinion of the investor community of the integrated report and the value added could present an area for future research.

Furthermore, this thesis does not consider the role played by assurance of the integrated report; it considers how a lack of assurance of certain non-financial information impacts the preparation of the integrated report. The role to be played by the providers of assurance, from the perspective of the investor community and from the perspective of those involved in the preparation of an integrated report could present an area for future research (Atkins & Maroun, 2015).

Finally, this thesis considers the challenges faced by those charged with the preparation of the integrated report in the specific context of the eco-tourism industry. It may be interesting to perform a similar study in other industries, such as the financial services industry or the mining industry, as it is likely that different and possibly additional challenges will be evident. An understanding of these challenges would further inform an understanding of how the notion of integrated reporting is being approached and implemented. An understanding of how different industries are interpreting and applying integrated reporting may also assist in addressing challenges faced in certain industries.

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III Appendices

Appendix A - Interview Agenda

1) What is your view of the purpose of integrated reporting? Is it necessary?
2) How is integrated reporting different to sustainability reporting?
3) What is your understanding of 'value creation'?
4) What is the role and responsibility of financial accountants in the arena of integrated reporting?
5) What is the role and responsibility of sustainability managers in the arena of integrated reporting?
6) Are the roles and responsibilities isolated? Is there sufficient interaction between the roles?
7) Have there been instances where information required for the integrated report has not been available?
8) Have there been notable changes to the internal reporting systems so as to cater for the non-financial information needs of integrated reporting?
9) Has there been significant change to the fundamental nature of the organisation since the commencement of integrated reporting?
10) What are the main challenges faced during the preparation of the integrated report?

Appendix B – Ethics Clearance

Ethics Clearance was granted by the University of the Witwatersrand. The Ethics Clearance reference is CACCN/1071.