



TEPWE CONSULTANTS

STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS WITH A HEALING-CENTERED LENS

Restorative Governance and ESG Integration

A Justice-Centered Framework for Organizational Transformation

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Executive Summary

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks are now central to how organizations measure impact and accountability. Yet, conventional ESG approaches often fall short in centering equity, community voice, and cultural values. At Tepwe Consultants, we propose an expanded ESG model informed by Restorative Governance - an Indigenous-rooted, healing-centered approach that reimagines systems through relationship, responsibility, and repair.

This white paper outlines how restorative principles can enhance ESG practices by integrating cultural knowledge, community accountability, and systemic equity into how organizations operate, measure success, and engage with the world around them.

Introduction: The Call for a New Approach

In recent years, the ESG movement has gained traction as a standard for responsible business and institutional behavior. However, these frameworks are often technocratic, top-down, and limited in their ability to address historic harm, power imbalances, or the lived realities of frontline and BIPOC communities.

Restorative Governance offers a transformational pathway - one that moves ESG from compliance to community-led accountability. Rooted in Indigenous worldviews, this approach prioritizes relationships over transactions, healing over harm, and responsibility over reputation.

Defining Restorative Governance

Restorative Governance is a model of leadership, decision-making, and systems design that:

- Centers human dignity, cultural knowledge, and relational responsibility
- Promotes accountability through dialogue, trust-building, and community involvement
- Acknowledges and repairs harm through restorative practices
- Aligns policies with holistic well-being and environmental stewardship

This governance model draws from Indigenous frameworks of self-determination, communal care, and intergenerational equity - offering a powerful complement to ESG.

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Aligning Restorative Governance with ESG

Environmental (E) - Land, Legacy, and Stewardship

- Recognize Indigenous sovereignty and land rights as environmental priorities
- Integrate traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into sustainability plans
- Promote regenerative practices, not just emissions metrics

Social (S) - Community, Healing, and Justice

- Expand metrics to include community safety, healing, and self-determination
- Ensure equity in labor, procurement, and stakeholder engagement
- Address historical trauma and systemic oppression in organizational practices

Governance (G) - Trust, Transparency, and Transformation

- Redesign leadership models with shared, relational accountability
- Establish restorative processes for conflict, feedback, and organizational change
- Embed DEIJ, cultural integrity, and community voice into governance structures

Core Principles of ESG Integration through a Restorative Lens

1. Relational Accountability - Governance must be accountable to people, land, and future generations.
2. Cultural Integrity - Organizational practices should honor and uplift cultural knowledge and Indigenous frameworks.
3. Repair and Redress - ESG must include mechanisms to address and repair harm - environmental, social, and historical.
4. Participation and Power-Sharing - Communities must have agency in ESG design, evaluation, and decision-making.
5. Transparency as Healing - Open communication, truth-telling, and storytelling are key to authentic governance.

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Case Applications

- Tribal Nations: Integrating ESG into Tribal governance with a foundation of sovereignty and cultural values.
- Nonprofits and Foundations: Using restorative evaluation to guide ESG-aligned funding and community impact strategies.
- Corporations and Institutions: Redesigning internal governance structures to include restorative conflict processes, community accountability boards, and Indigenous consultation protocols.

Recommendations for Implementation

1. Conduct a Restorative ESG Readiness Assessment
2. Create a Community Accountability Council
3. Align Reporting with Indigenous and Justice-Based Indicators
4. Offer Ongoing Restorative Governance Training for Staff & Leadership
5. Integrate Restorative Language and Practices into Policies and Procedures

Conclusion

As ESG continues to shape the future of business and institutions, the moment calls for more than reform - it calls for restoration. By integrating Restorative Governance, organizations can build systems that are not only sustainable, but also just, healing, and rooted in relationship. At Tepwe Consultants, we are proud to walk alongside partners ready to build that future.

About Tepwe Consultants

Tepwe Consultants is an Indigenous-led firm that offers strategy, facilitation, and transformative solutions rooted in restorative justice, decolonization, and systems change. Our ESG services are guided by cultural knowledge, justice-centered values, and a commitment to collective healing.

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