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**ASSURANCE ENGAGEMENTS CONCERNING SUSTAINABILITY
REPORTS: CASE OF TURKEY****Abstract:**

The concept of sustainable development, defined as the ability to meet today's needs without sacrificing the opportunities to be used to meet the needs of future generations, requires businesses to be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable when viewed from the viewpoint of businesses. In addition, it is necessary to pay regard to social and economic elements, in which the business operates, in order to make long-term forecasts regarding the business. Sustainability reports allow businesses to share economic, environmental and social information related to their operations with the society. Today, the number of sustainability reports, published both in line with the benefits they provide to businesses and the increasing demands of business-related parties, is also increasing. Sustainability reports are prepared on voluntary basis in Turkey. In order to obtain the anticipated benefit from these reports, verification of the reports by an independent third party is of vital importance. This research aims to examine the changes in the sustainability reports published by the businesses operating in Turkey and in the assurance engagements regarding these reports over the years. Assurance engagements constitute new areas of activity for accounting professionals. Another aim of this research is to determine the extent to which local Turkish companies operate within the scope of assurance engagements provided for sustainability reports and to make some suggestions so that they can improve their field of activity.

This research contains sustainability reports prepared by businesses included in the BIST sustainability index of November 2017 - October 2018 period, sustainability reports registered in the database of the Global Reporting Initiatives and in Turkey's Sustainability Portal. In the research, 365 sustainability reports prepared by a total of 120 businesses were examined between the years of 2005 and 2017. Out of these reports, 59 were provided with external assurance engagement. Out of the 59 sustainability reports for which assurance engagements were provided, 51 were prepared in accordance with the GRI guidelines. 50.85% of the sustainability reports were prepared by businesses operating in the manufacturing sector. 57.63% of these assurance engagements were conducted by four major audit firms.

Keywords:

Sustainability Reports, Assurance, Assurance Engagements

JEL Classification: M14, M49, M40