

## DQS - Independent Assurance Statement

### To the Management and Stakeholders of Symrise AG

DQS has been engaged by Symrise AG to provide independent assurance over the Symrise Sustainability Report 2014 (*Sharing Values*) published in hard copy and online PDF on the Symrise website. The engagement took place from February 04<sup>th</sup> to February 27<sup>th</sup> 2015.

### Scope of assurance

The assurance encompassed the entire report and focused on all figures, statements and claims related to sustainability during the reporting period January 2014 to December 2014, as well as historical figures where relevant.

The assurance engagement was performed in accordance with a Type 2 assurance of the AA1000 Assurance Standard (AA1000AS 2008), which consists of:

- Evaluating the company's sustainability framework and processes using the inclusivity, materiality and responsiveness criteria of the AA1000 AccountAbility Principles (AA1000APS 2008), and
- Evaluating the quality of the reported sustainability performance information.

To assess the quality of the disclosures, DQS used the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G4 Reporting Principles, which include: reliability, accuracy, balance, comparability, timeliness, clarity, sustainability context and completeness.

### Level of assurance and limitations

A moderate level of assurance under AA1000AS was provided for this engagement. Information and performance data subject to assurance is limited to the content of the Sustainability report.

The assurance did not cover financial data, technical descriptions of buildings, equipment and production processes or other information not related to sustainability or already supported by existing documents, such as third-party audits or certifications, the Symrise Annual Report and previous Symrise Sustainability Reports.

### Independence and Competences of the Assurance Provider

The DQS group is a leading certification and audit company with offices in 66 countries. DQS confirms their independence from Symrise AG. DQS is unbiased, and there are no conflicts of interest with the organization, its subsidiaries or any other related organizations. The assurance team has been compiled on the basis of knowledge, experience and qualifications for this task.

The management of Symrise was responsible for the preparation of the Sustainability Report and all statements and figures contained within it. The responsibility of DQS is to provide the assurance, to express conclusions in relation to the agreed scope and to prepare this assurance statement for the management of Symrise alone and

for no other purpose. DQS has not been involved in the development of the report or the disclosed management processes. DQS is not responsible for any actions taken by other parties as a result of the findings presented in this assurance statement.

## Assurance methodology

DQS has certified the management systems of Symrise AG for quality, environment, energy and safety, as well as the social and ethical management of Symrise AG according to ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001:2004, ISO 50001:2011, OHSAS 18001:2007 and SMETA.

The financial data have not been reviewed in the examination process.

The assurance procedures and principles used for this engagement were drawn from the International Standard AA1000 and methodology developed by DQS, which consists of the following steps:

1. Identify statements and data sets, which are classified according to the relevant data owners and the type of evidence required for the verification process.
2. Carry out interviews with key functional managers and data owners at Symrise AG office in Holzminden (Germany) as well as verification of all Symrise sites globally.

Data verification included the following:

- Enquiring about the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the report disclosures, including performance information, policies, procedures and underlying management systems.
  - Requesting evidence of the data sources and explanation of relevant collection and calculation methods to substantiate the figures and claims.
  - Challenging the claims made in the report and, where possible, confirming the presented evidence, including calculation methods, criteria and assumptions, with multiple data owners and other documentation from internal and external sources.
  - Crosschecking data with previous Symrise sustainability reports and the latest published financial results.
3. Assess the collected information and provide recommendations for immediate correction where required or for future improvement of the report content.

## Positive Developments

- Transition to GRI 4 was successfully mastered.
- Quantity and quality of reporting have been significantly increased compared to last year.

## Key observations and recommendations for 2015

- Communication between persons involved in the data gathering process should be improved.
- All data concerning the newly acquired DIANA group shall be included in next year's report. Targets for 2020 and baselines should be adapted accordingly.
- External data verification of global sites should be continually increased.

## Evaluation of the adherence to AA1000 AccountAbility Principles

**Inclusivity** - *How the organization engages with stakeholders and enables their participation in identifying issues and finding solutions.*

The assurance confirms that diverse stakeholder engagement activities have been undertaken by Symrise. For employees, these include regular group discussions with top management and other feedback channels to share their concerns. There is also evidence of meetings with union representatives organized during the year. Other stakeholder groups, such as suppliers and community partners are also given the possibility to provide feedback through group events and training sessions.

**Materiality** - *How the organization recognizes issues that are relevant and significant to itself and its stakeholders.*

Consideration and management of sustainability issues across the Group are evidenced by the Symrise Sustainability Team and the group-level risk management structure that covers human capital, environment, health & safety and fraud and corruption. Remuneration of key executives is tied to key performance indicators covering the same topics. The assurance also confirms the existence of underlying measurement and verification mechanisms, such as internal reporting and regular audits (e.g. under the ISO 50001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 certification schemes). These are used to regularly assess sustainability performance and can eventually lead to the identification of new issues.

However, there is less evidence of similar mechanisms for assessment of material issues beyond environment and safety categories, which could be more specific and material for overseas units. For example, procedures to identify and assess key human rights issues in the global supply chain of Symrise are still not observed for the countries prone to human rights risks.

**Responsiveness** - *How the organization responds to stakeholder issues and feedback through decisions, actions, performance and communication.*

Over recent years, continuous improvements in responding to environmental and safety issues have been observed. These include proactive adaptation of company policies, processes and key performance indicators to comply with requirements from new regulations or certification standards.

Overall, the direct responses of Symrise to the concerns of stakeholders appear to be most common when it comes to employees and customers. Significant decisions or actions that directly emanate from engagement with other stakeholder groups during the reporting period have not been observed.

The company offers multiple channels and events to inform and educate stakeholders on material issues and the company's performance. These include online portals, newsletters, emails, reports, conferences and awareness programs.

## Conclusion

On the basis of a moderate assurance engagement according to the above-listed criteria, nothing has come to our attention that causes us not to believe that, in all material respects, the Symrise Sustainability Report 2014

- Provides a credible and fair representation of the organization's sustainability profile and a reasonable application of the AA1000 AccountAbility Principles.
- Includes statements and figures that achieve an adequate level of reliability and accuracy.

The assurance findings also provide confidence that the Report has been prepared in accordance with the GRI G4 Reporting Principles.

On behalf of the assurance team  
February 27, 2015  
Frankfurt, Germany



**Dr. Sied Sadek**  
CEO, DQS CFS