**2020 – Best Communication of ESG**

***Categories:*** *FTSE100, FTSE250, Small Cap & AIM, and International*

**IR Principles**

Please note that for all awards categories, companies need to emphasise how you have successfully addressed the following IR principles:

* Having an equity story and investment case that are clearly communicated across all stakeholders and deliver long-term value creation
* Helping investors, analysts and others to understand the growth and value drivers of a company, such that there is a fair and orderly market in its shares
* Meeting or exceeding all regulatory requirements around disclosure and focusing on greater transparency of information both internally and externally

**Award Description**

For this award we are looking for evidence a of year-round communication approach to investors and wider stakeholders. It should provide insight into how environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks and opportunities are identified, understood and proactively managed and measured to contribute to a business' competitive advantage, as well as having a positive impact on the employees, associated communities and operational partners.

We recognise that this is a developing area for many companies and each will be at different stages of their journey. We would like to see businesses demonstrate that their internal approaches are changing and that the ownership of the ESG communication does not rest with one department or team. But that a cross section of departments works together to deliver a consistent and holistic communication approach to ESG.

Businesses are expected to adopt a more thoughtful approach to wider value and evidence mounts for the importance of governance and overall stewardship to investors. We believe that a real opportunity exists for companies to be proactive in setting out their long-term strategies against a defined reporting framework and including ESG issues when engaging with the investment community, and we encourage companies to move in this direction.

Overall, judges will be looking for evidence of a clearly defined approach, with a consistent and proactive point of view on material ESG issues and long-term value creation across all communications with investors.

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| **Some of the relevant ESG elements could cover but are not limited to:** | |
| **Environment** | Climate change, water, waste and potential reporting against TCFD or similar |
| **Social** | UN SDGs; safety; social impact; diversity and gender pay gap; supply chain; access to work (graduates etc.) |
| **Governance** | Socially responsible investing policies; initiatives (UK Stewardship Code, UK Corporate Governance Code etc.); succession planning, Exec Rem linked to non-financial KPIs |

**AWARD CRITERIA**

**Introduction**

We have simplified our award submission process this year by moving from an essay format to a Q&A format. Please provide concise but insightful answers to all questions below, keeping in mind the IR principles and individual awards description, and paying particular attention to what the judges are looking for. It would be helpful if you could highlight innovations, what you have done differently, and most importantly any evidence of success.

**Overview**

1. What are the key objectives for your ESG communications this year? (For example, to communicate a new sustainability strategy or programme that you have implemented this year or to increase engagement to communicate your current plans, etc.)
2. How do your objectives support your overall long-term value creation business strategy and investment proposition?
3. Who is your target audience for your ESG communications and why? Please include instances where you consulted with your target audience on your ESG agenda/strategy/framework, if applicable.

**Strategy & Approach**

1. What are the principal elements of your ESG narrative, and how do they support your long term value creation story to investors?
2. How have your ESG communications evolved in the context of your investment proposition and business model?
3. Has there been any collaboration between your CR, IR and other teams (such as risk, finance and strategy) to define, measure and proactively communicate your company's ESG risks, opportunities and performance to mainstream as well as specialist SRI investors?
4. Which channel(s) do you use to communicate your ESG narrative, and how do you use your chosen channels?

Annual Report

ESG Report

Website

Roadshows

Presentations

Social Media

Others: please specify

1. Which reporting frameworks do you use, and why?

SASB

SDG

TCFD

GRI

Own business framework

Others: please specify

**Outcomes**

1. Please evidence how you are measuring the effectiveness of your long-term value creation communications at strengthening investor relations and your company’s equity/investment story. This could be supported by quantifiable or anecdotal results or unexpected outcomes. Results should be relevant to your initial objectives and the context of your business.
2. Please evidence how your ESG story has had a positive effect on your company’s relations with other stakeholders.

*Alongside your submission, please include a hard copy of any reports, and links to any relevant supporting materials.*