**2021 – Best Communication of ESG**

***Categories:*** *Small-, Mid-, and Large-cap Listed Companies*

**IR Principles**

Please note that for all awards categories, companies need to emphasise how they 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 just 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. There is increasing focus from all stakeholders on climate change and social issues, and the steps companies are taking to address these issues**.** We believe that a real opportunity exists for companies to be proactive in setting out their long-term strategies against relevant reporting frameworks and through 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 reporting against TCFD or similar |
| **Social** | UN SDGs; safety; social impact; diversity and gender pay gap; supply chain; access to work (graduates, etc.) |
| **Governance** | Corporate social responsibility; reporting guidelines (UK Corporate Governance Code; FRC initiatives, etc.); succession planning, executive remuneration linked to non-financial KPIs |

**AWARD CRITERIA**

**Introduction**

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 most important elements of ESG to your company and investment proposition, and how have you addressed these in your communications?
2. Who is/are your target audience(s) for your ESG communications and why? Please provide supporting detail of where you have consulted with your target audience(s) on your ESG agenda/strategy/framework, if relevant.

**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. What collaboration is there between your sustainability, governance, finance, strategy, risk, compliance, senior management and the Board to define, measure and proactively communicate your company's ESG risks, opportunities and performance to mainstream as well as specialist ESG investors?
4. Which channel(s) do you use to communicate your ESG narrative, and how do you use your chosen channels?

[ ] Annual Report

[ ] Sustainability/CSR Report

[ ] Website

[ ] Roadshows

[ ] Presentations

[ ] Social Media

[ ] Others: please specify

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

[ ] SASB

[ ] CDP

[ ] TCFD

[ ] GRI

[ ] Integrated Reporting Framework (IIRC)

[ ] Own business framework

[ ] Others: please specify

1. Have you adapted your strategy or approach as a result of the pandemic?

 **Outcomes**

1. Please evidence how you are measuring the effectiveness of your long-term value creation communications aimed at strengthening investor relations and your company’s equity/investment story. This could be supported by quantifiable evidence (such as how KPIs and remuneration reflect the ESG agenda) or qualitative feedback from your investors or other stakeholders. 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.*

*Please note Small-cap, Mid-cap and Large-cap criteria will be comparable to FTSE 100, 250 and Small-cap/AIM market cap sizes as at March 30, 2021.*