

Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for Goldman Sachs Asset Management's Global Proxy Voting

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Table of Contents

PART I:	1
GOLDMAN SACHS ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON PROXY VOTING FOR INVESTMENT ADVISORY CLIENTS	1
A: Our Approach to Proxy Voting	1
B: The Proxy Voting Process	1
C: Implementation	2
D. Conflicts of Interest	3
PART II	4
GOLDMAN SACHS ASSET MANAGEMENT’S PROXY VOTING GUIDELINES SUMMARY	4
Region: Americas	4
1. Business Items	4
2. Board of Directors	5
3. Executive and Non- Executive Compensation	9
4. Shareholders Rights and Defenses	12
5. Strategic Transactions and Capital Structures	12
6. Environmental and Social Issues	15
Region: Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) Proxy Items	19
1. Business Items	19
2. Board of Directors	20
3. Remuneration	25
4. Shareholder Rights and Defenses	26
5. Strategic Transactions, Capital Structures and other Business Considerations	27
6. Environmental and Social Issues	29
Region: Asia Pacific (APAC) Proxy Items	33
1. Business Items	33
2. Board of Directors	34
3. Remuneration	39
4. Shareholder Rights and Defenses	40
5. Strategic Transactions, Capital Structures and other Business Considerations	40
6. Environmental and Social Issues	43
Region: Japan Proxy Items	47
1. Operational Items	47
2. Board of Directors	48
3. Compensation	51
4. Shareholder Rights and Defenses	52
5. Strategic Transactions and Capital Structures	52
6. Environmental and Social Issues	54

PART I:

GOLDMAN SACHS ASSET MANAGEMENT¹ POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON PROXY VOTING FOR INVESTMENT ADVISORY CLIENTS

A: Our Approach to Proxy Voting

Proxy voting and the analysis of corporate governance issues in general are important elements of the portfolio management services we provide to our advisory clients who have authorized us to address these matters on their behalf. Our guiding principles in performing proxy voting are to make decisions that favor proposals that in our view maximize a company's shareholder value and are not influenced by conflicts of interest. These principles reflect our belief that sound corporate governance will create a framework within which a company can be managed in the interests of its shareholders. We recognize that Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors can affect investment performance, expose potential investment risks and provide an indication of management excellence and leadership. When evaluating ESG proxy issues, we balance the purpose of a proposal with the overall benefit to shareholders.

To implement these guiding principles for investments in publicly traded equities for which we have voting power on any record date, we follow customized proxy voting guidelines that have been developed by our portfolio management and our Global Stewardship Team (the "Guidelines"). The Guidelines embody the positions and factors we generally consider important in casting proxy votes. They address a wide variety of individual topics, including, among other matters, shareholder voting rights, anti-takeover defenses, board structures, the election of directors, executive and director compensation, reorganizations, mergers, issues of corporate social responsibility and various shareholder proposals. Recognizing the complexity and fact-specific nature of many corporate governance issues, the Guidelines identify factors we consider in determining how the vote should be cast. A summary of the Guidelines is attached as Part II.

The principles and positions reflected in this Policy are designed to guide us in voting proxies, and not necessarily in making investment decisions. Our portfolio management teams (each, a "Portfolio Management Team") base their determinations of whether to invest in a particular company on a variety of factors, and while corporate governance may be one such factor, it may not be the primary consideration.

Goldman Sachs Asset Management has adopted the policies and procedures set out below regarding the voting of proxies (the "Policy"). The Global Stewardship Team periodically reviews this Policy to ensure it continues to be consistent with our guiding principles.

B: The Proxy Voting Process

Public Equity Investments

¹ For purposes of this Policy, "Global Sachs Asset Management" or "we" includes, collectively, to the public investing businesses of the following legal entities to the extent applicable:

Goldman Sachs Asset Management, L.P.; Goldman Sachs Asset Management International; Goldman Sachs Hedge Fund Strategies LLC; GSAM Stable Value, LLC; Goldman Sachs Asset Management (Singapore) Pte. Ltd; Goldman Sachs Asset Management (Hong Kong) Limited.; Goldman Sachs Asset Management Co. Ltd.; Goldman Sachs Asset Management (India) Private Limited; GS Investment Strategies Canada Inc.; Goldman Sachs Asset Management Australia Pty Ltd; Goldman Sachs Services Private Limited.; Goldman Sachs Bank Europe SE; Goldman Sachs Asset Management Fund Services Limited; Aptitude Investment Management L.P.; Rocatton Investment Advisors, LLC; GSAM Strategist Portfolios, LLC; Goldman Sachs Asset Management B.V.; Goldman Sachs Asset Management Belgium S.A.; Goldman Sachs Towarzystwo Funduszy Inwestycyjnych S.A.; and Goldman Sachs Investment Management (Singapore) Ltd.

Fundamental Equity Team

The Fundamental Equity Team views the analysis of corporate governance practices as an integral part of the investment research and stock valuation process. In forming their views on particular matters, these Portfolio Management Teams may consider applicable regional rules and practices, including codes of conduct and other guides, regarding proxy voting, in addition to the Guidelines and Recommendations (as defined below). For the managed portfolios that participate in a securities lending program, GSAM will seek to recall shares that are out on loan for the purpose of voting at shareholder meetings, recognizing that the handling of such recall requests is beyond the Portfolio Management Team's control and may not be satisfied in time for it to vote the shares in question.

Quantitative Investment Strategies ("QIS") and Quantitative Equity Strategies ("QES") Portfolio Management Teams

The QIS and QES Portfolio Management Teams have decided to generally follow the Guidelines and Recommendations based on such Portfolio Management Teams' investment philosophy and approach to portfolio construction, as well as their participation in the creation of the Guidelines. The QIS and QES Portfolio Management Teams may from time to time, however, review and individually assess any specific shareholder vote. For managed portfolios that participate in a securities lending program, GSAM generally will not recall shares that are out on loan for the purpose of voting at shareholder meetings.

Fixed Income and Private Investments

Voting decisions with respect to client investments in fixed income securities and the securities of privately held issuers generally will be made by the relevant Portfolio Management Teams based on their assessment of the particular transactions or other matters at issue. Those Portfolio Management Teams may also adopt policies related to the fixed income or private investments they make that supplement this Policy.

External Investing Group ("XIG") and Externally Managed Strategies

Where we place client assets with managers outside of Asset Management, for example within our XIG business unit, such external managers generally will be responsible for voting proxies in accordance with the managers' own policies. XIG may, however, retain proxy voting responsibilities where it deems appropriate or necessary under prevailing circumstances. To the extent XIG portfolio managers assume proxy voting responsibility with respect to publicly traded equity securities they will follow the Guidelines and Recommendations as discussed below unless an override is requested.

C: Implementation

We have retained a third-party proxy voting service (the "Proxy Service") to assist in the implementation of certain proxy voting-related functions, including, without limitation, operational, recordkeeping and reporting services. Among its responsibilities, the Proxy Service prepares a written analysis and recommendation (a "Recommendation") of each proxy vote that reflects the Proxy Service's application of the Guidelines to the particular proxy issues. In addition, in order to facilitate the casting of votes in an efficient manner, the Proxy Service generally prepopulates and automatically submits votes for all proxy matters in accordance with such Recommendations, subject to our ability to recall such automatically submitted votes. If the Proxy Service or Goldman Sachs Asset Management becomes aware that an issuer has filed, or will file, additional proxy solicitation materials sufficiently in advance of the voting deadline, we will generally endeavor to consider such information where such information is viewed as material in our discretion when casting its vote, which may, but need not, result in a change to the Recommendation, which may take the form of an override (as described below) or a revised Recommendation issued by the Proxy Service. We retain the responsibility for proxy voting decisions. We conduct an annual due diligence meeting with the Proxy Service to review the processes and procedures the Proxy Service follows when making proxy voting recommendations based on the Guidelines and to discuss any material changes in the services, operations, staffing or processes.

Our Portfolio Management Teams generally cast proxy votes consistently with the Guidelines and the Recommendations. Each Portfolio Management Team, however, may on certain proxy votes seek approval to diverge from the Guidelines or a Recommendation by following a process that seeks to ensure that override decisions are not influenced by any conflict of interest. As a result of the override process, different Portfolio Management Teams may vote differently for particular votes for the same company. In addition, the Global Stewardship Team may on certain proxy votes also seek approval to diverge from the Guidelines or a Recommendation and follow the override process described above that seeks to ensure these decisions are not influenced by any conflict of interest. In these instances, all shares voted are generally voted in the same manner.

Our clients who have delegated voting responsibility to us with respect to their account may from time to time contact their client representative if they would like to direct us to vote in a particular manner for a particular solicitation. We will use commercially reasonable efforts to vote according to the client's request in these circumstances, however, our ability to implement such voting instruction will be dependent on operational matters such as the timing of the request.

While we seek to vote at all eligible shareholder meetings, from time to time, our ability to vote proxies may be affected by regulatory requirements and compliance, legal or logistical considerations. As a result, from time to time, we may determine that it is not practicable or desirable to vote at certain shareholder meetings.

We disclose our voting publicly each year in a filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission and on our website for all Goldman Sachs Asset Management US registered mutual funds. We also generally disclose our voting publicly on a quarterly basis on our website for company proxies voted according to the Guidelines and Recommendations.

D. Conflicts of Interest

Goldman Sachs Asset Management has implemented processes designed to prevent conflicts of interest from influencing its proxy voting decisions. These processes include information barriers as well as the use of the Guidelines and Recommendations and the override process described above in instances when a Portfolio Management Team is interested in voting in a manner that diverges from the initial Recommendation based on the Guidelines. To mitigate perceived or potential conflicts of interest when a proxy is for shares of The Goldman Sachs Group Inc. or a Goldman Sachs Asset Management managed fund, we will generally instruct that such shares be voted in the same proportion as other shares are voted with respect to a proposal, subject to applicable legal, regulatory and operational requirements.

PART II

GOLDMAN SACHS ASSET MANAGEMENT'S PROXY VOTING GUIDELINES SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the material Proxy Voting Guidelines (the "Guidelines"), which form the substantive basis of our Policy and Procedures on Proxy Voting for Investment Advisory Clients (the "Policy"). As described in the main body of the Policy, one or more Portfolio Management Teams and/or the Global Stewardship Team may diverge from the Guidelines and a related Recommendation on any particular proxy vote or in connection with any individual investment decision in accordance with the Policy.

Region: Americas

The following section is a summary of the Guidelines, which form the substantive basis of the Policy with respect to North, Central and South American public equity investments of operating and/or holding companies. Applying these guidelines is subject to certain regional and country-specific exceptions and modifications and is not inclusive of all considerations in each market.

1. Business Items

Auditor Ratification

Vote FOR proposals to ratify auditors, unless any of the following apply within the last year:

- An auditor has a financial interest in or association with the company, and is therefore not independent;
- There is reason to believe that the independent auditor has rendered an opinion that is neither accurate nor indicative of the company's financial position;
- Poor accounting practices are identified that rise to a serious level of concern, such as: fraud; misapplication of GAAP; or material weaknesses identified in Section 404 disclosures; or
- Fees for non-audit services are excessive (generally over 50% or more of the audit fees).

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals asking companies to prohibit or limit their auditors from engaging in non-audit services or asking for audit firm rotation.

Reincorporation Proposals

We may support management proposals to reincorporate as long as the reincorporation would not substantially diminish shareholder rights. We may not support shareholder proposals for reincorporation unless the current state of incorporation is substantially less shareholder friendly than the proposed reincorporation, there is a strong economic case to reincorporate or the company has a history of making decisions that are not shareholder friendly.

Exclusive Venue for Shareholder Lawsuits

Generally vote FOR on exclusive venue proposals, taking into account:

- Whether the company has been materially harmed by shareholder litigation outside its jurisdiction of incorporation, based on disclosure in the company's proxy statement;

- Whether the company has the following governance features:
 - Majority independent board;
 - Independent key committees;
 - An annually elected board;
 - A majority vote standard in uncontested director elections;
 - The absence of a poison pill, unless the pill was approved by shareholders; and/or
 - Separate Chairman CEO role or, if combined, an independent chairman with clearly delineated duties.

Virtual Meetings

Generally vote FOR proposals allowing for the convening of hybrid* shareholder meetings if it is clear that it is not the intention to hold virtual-only AGMs. Generally vote AGAINST proposals allowing for the convening of virtual-only* shareholder meetings.

* The phrase “virtual-only shareholder meeting” refers to a meeting of shareholders that is held exclusively through the use of online technology without a corresponding in-person meeting. The term “hybrid shareholder meeting” refers to an in-person, or physical, meeting in which shareholders are permitted to participate online.

Public Benefit Corporation Proposals

Generally vote FOR management proposals and CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals related to the conversion of the company into a public benefit corporation.

Amend Articles of Incorporation to Provide for Officer and Director Exculpation

Generally vote FOR management proposals to amend the company's certificate of incorporation to reflect new Delaware law provisions regarding officer and director exculpation.

Transact Other Business

Vote AGAINST other business when it appears as a voting item.

Administrative Requests

Generally vote FOR non-contentious administrative management requests.

2. Board of Directors

The board of directors should promote the interests of shareholders by acting in an oversight and/or advisory role; should consist of a majority of independent directors and/or meet local best practice expectations; and should be held accountable for actions and results related to their responsibilities. Vote on director nominees should be determined on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Voting on Director Nominees in Uncontested Elections

Board Composition

We generally believe diverse teams have the potential to outperform and we expect the companies that we invest in to focus on the importance of diversity. When evaluating board composition, we believe a diversity of ethnicity, gender and experience is an important consideration. We encourage companies to disclose the composition of their board in the proxy statement and may vote against members of the board without disclosure. See below how we execute our vote at companies that do not meet our diversity expectations.

Vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from members of the Nominating Committee:

- At companies that do not meet the board diversity requirements of local listing rules, corporate governance codes, national targets, or is not representative relative to the board composition of companies in their market; and
- At companies within the S&P 500, if, in addition to our gender expectations, the board does not have at least one diverse director from a minority ethnic group;

Vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from the full board at companies incorporated in the US that do not have any woman directors.

Vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from individual directors who:

- Sit on more than five public company boards;
- Are CEOs of public companies who sit on the boards of more than two public companies besides their own--withhold only at their outside boards.

Vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from members of the Nominating Committee if the average board tenure exceeds 15 years, and there has not been a new nominee in the past 5 years.

Director Independence

At companies incorporated in the US, where applicable, the New York Stock Exchange or NASDAQ Listing Standards definition is to be used to classify directors as inside directors, affiliated outside directors, or independent outside directors.

Additionally, we will consider compensation committee interlocking directors to be affiliated (defined as CEOs who sit on each other's compensation committees).

Vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from inside directors and affiliated outside directors (as described above) when:

- The inside director or affiliated outside director serves on the Audit, Compensation or Nominating Committees; and
- The company lacks an Audit, Compensation or Nominating Committee so that the full board functions as such committees and inside directors or affiliated outside directors are participating in voting on matters that independent committees should be voting on.

Director Accountability

Vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from individual directors who attend less than 75% of the board and committee meetings without a disclosed valid excuse.

Generally, vote FOR the bundled election of management nominees, unless adequate disclosures of the nominees have not been provided in a timely manner or if one or more of the nominees does not meet the expectation of our policy.

Other items considered for an AGAINST vote include specific concerns about the individual or the company, such as criminal wrongdoing or breach of fiduciary responsibilities, sanctions from government or authority, violations of laws and regulations, the presence of inappropriate related party transactions, or other issues related to improper business practices.

Vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from members of the full board or appropriate committee (or only the independent chairman or lead director as may be appropriate in situations such as where there is a classified board and members

of the appropriate committee are not up for re-election or the appropriate committee is comprised of the entire board) for the below reasons. New nominees will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Extreme cases may warrant a vote against the entire board.

- Material failures of governance, stewardship, or fiduciary responsibilities at the company including but not limited to violations of global norms principles and/or other significant global standards;
- Failure to disclose material environmental, social and governance information;
- Egregious actions related to the director(s)' service on other boards that raise substantial doubt about his or her ability to effectively oversee management and serve the best interests of shareholders at any company;
- The board failed to act on a shareholder proposal that received approval of the majority of shares cast the previous year (a management proposal with other than a FOR recommendation by management will not be considered as sufficient action taken); an adopted proposal that is substantially similar to the original shareholder proposal will be deemed sufficient; (vote against members of the committee of the board that is responsible for the issue under consideration). If we did not support the shareholder proposal,, we may still vote against the committee member(s).
- The company's poison pill has a dead-hand or modified dead-hand feature for two or more years. Vote against/withhold every year until this feature is removed; however, vote against the poison pill if there is one on the ballot with this feature rather than the director;
- The board adopts or renews a poison pill without shareholder approval, does not commit to putting it to shareholder vote within 12 months of adoption (or in the case of a newly public company, does not commit to put the pill to a shareholder vote within 12 months following the IPO), or reneges on a commitment to put the pill to a vote, and has not yet received a withhold/against recommendation for this issue;
- The board failed to act on takeover offers where the majority of the shareholders tendered their shares;
- The company does not disclose various components of current emissions, a proxy for a company's dependency on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gasses (Scope 1, Scope 2, Scope 3 emissions), material to the company's business
- If in an extreme situation the board lacks accountability and oversight, coupled with sustained poor performance relative to peers.

Committee Responsibilities and Expectations

Companies should establish committees to oversee areas such as audit, executive and non-executive compensation, director nominations and ESG oversight. The responsibilities of the committees should be publicly disclosed.

Audit Committee

Vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from the members of the Audit Committee if:

- The non-audit fees paid to the auditor are excessive (generally over 50% or more of the audit fees);
- The company receives an adverse opinion on the company's financial statements from its auditor and there is not clear evidence that the situation has been remedied;
- There is excessive pledging or hedging of stock by executives;
- There is persuasive evidence that the Audit Committee entered into an inappropriate indemnification agreement with its auditor that limits the ability of the company, or its shareholders, to pursue legitimate legal recourse against the audit firm; or
- No members of the Audit Committee hold sufficient financial expertise.

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on members of the Audit Committee and/or the full board if poor accounting practices, which rise to a level of serious concern are identified, such as fraud, misapplication of GAAP and material weaknesses identified in Section 404 disclosures.

Examine the severity, breadth, chronological sequence and duration, as well as the company's efforts at remediation or corrective actions, in determining whether negative vote recommendations are warranted against the members of the Audit Committee who are responsible for the poor accounting practices, or the entire board.

Compensation Committee

See section 3 on Executive and Non-Executive compensation for reasons to withhold from members of the Compensation Committee.

Nominating/Governance Committee

Generally vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from the members of the Nominating/Governance Committee if:

- A company maintains a classified board structure without a sunset provision, has opted into, or failed to opt out of, state laws requiring a classified board structure or has a capital structure with unequal voting rights
- At the previous board election, any director received more than 50% withhold/against votes of the shares cast and the company has failed to address the underlying issue(s) that caused the high withhold/against vote;
- The board does not meet our diversity expectations;
- The board amends the company's bylaws or charter without shareholder approval in a manner that materially diminishes shareholders' rights or could adversely impact shareholders.

Voting on Director Nominees in Contested Elections

Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis in contested elections of directors, e.g., the election of shareholder nominees or the dismissal of incumbent directors, determining which directors are best suited to add value for shareholders.

The analysis will generally be based on, but not limited to, the following major decision factors:

- Company performance relative to its peers;
- Strategy of the incumbents versus the dissidents;
- Independence of board candidates;
- Experience and skills of board candidates;
- Governance profile of the company;
- Evidence of management entrenchment;
- Responsiveness to shareholders;
- Whether a takeover offer has been rebuffed; and
- Whether minority or majority representation is being sought.

Proxy Access

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder or management proposals asking for proxy access.

We may support proxy access as an important right for shareholders and as an alternative to costly proxy contests and as a method for us to vote for directors on an individual basis, as appropriate, rather than voting on one slate or the other. While this could be an important shareholder right, the following factors will be taken into account when evaluating the shareholder proposals:

- The ownership thresholds, percentage and duration proposed (we generally will not support if the ownership threshold is less than 3%);
- The maximum proportion of directors that shareholders may nominate each year (we generally will not support if the proportion of directors is greater than 25%); and
- Other restricting factors that when taken in combination could serve to materially limit the proxy access provision.

We will take the above factors into account when evaluating proposals proactively adopted by the company or in response to a shareholder proposal to adopt or amend the right. A vote against governance committee members could result if provisions exist that materially limit the right to proxy access.

Reimbursing Proxy Solicitation Expenses

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on proposals to reimburse proxy solicitation expenses

Other Board Related Proposals (Management and Shareholder)

Independent Board Chair (for applicable markets)

We will generally vote AGAINST shareholder proposals requiring that the chairman's position be filled by an independent director, if the company satisfies 3 of the 4 following criteria:

- Two-thirds independent board, or majority in countries where employee representation is common practice;
- A designated, or a rotating, lead director, elected by and from the independent board members with clearly delineated and comprehensive duties;
- Fully independent key committees; and/or
- Established, publicly disclosed, governance guidelines and director biographies/profiles.

Proposals Regarding Board Declassification

We will generally vote FOR management and shareholder proposals regarding the adoption of a declassified board structure.

Majority Vote Shareholder Proposals

We will vote FOR proposals requesting that the board adopt majority voting in the election of directors provided it does not conflict with the state law where the company is incorporated. We also look for companies to adopt a post-election policy outlining how the company will address the situation of a holdover director.

Cumulative Vote Shareholder Proposals

We will generally vote FOR shareholder proposals to restore or provide cumulative unless:

- The company has adopted (i) majority vote standard with a carve-out for plurality voting in situations where there are more nominees than seats and (ii) a director resignation policy to address failed elections.

3. Executive and Non- Executive Compensation

Pay Practices

Good pay practices should align management's interests with long-term shareholder value creation. Detailed disclosure of compensation criteria is preferred; proof that companies follow the criteria should be evident and retroactive performance target changes without proper disclosure is not viewed favorably. Compensation practices should allow a company to attract and retain proven talent. Some examples of poor pay practices include: abnormally large bonus payouts without justifiable performance linkage or proper disclosure, egregious employment contracts, excessive severance and/or change in control provisions, repricing or replacing of underwater stock options/stock appreciation rights without prior shareholder approval, and excessive perquisites. A company should also have an appropriate balance of short-term vs. long-term metrics and the metrics should be aligned with business goals and objectives.

If the company maintains problematic or poor pay practices, generally vote:

- AGAINST Management Say on Pay (MSOP) Proposals; or

- AGAINST an equity-based incentive plan proposal if excessive non-performance-based equity awards are the major contributor to a pay-for-performance misalignment.
- If no MSOP or equity-based incentive plan proposal item is on the ballot, vote AGAINST/WITHHOLD from compensation committee members.

Equity Compensation Plans

We will generally vote FOR management proposals on equity-based compensation plans. Evaluation takes into account potential plan cost, plan features and grant practices. While a negative combination of these factors could cause a vote AGAINST, other reasons to vote AGAINST the equity plan could include the following factors:

- The plan permits the repricing of stock options/stock appreciation rights (SARs) without prior shareholder approval; or
- There is more than one problematic material feature of the plan, which could include one of the following: unfavorable change-in-control features, presence of gross ups and options reload.

Advisory Vote on Executive Compensation (Say-on-Pay, MSOP) Management Proposals

Vote FOR annual frequency and AGAINST all proposals asking for any frequency less than annual.

We will generally vote FOR management proposals for an advisory vote on executive compensation considering the context of each company’s specific circumstances and the board’s disclosed rationale for its practices.

Pay practices that may result in a vote AGAINST management proposals for an advisory vote on executive compensation may include:

- A disconnect between pay and performance based on a quantitative assessment of the following: pay vs TSR (“Total Shareholder Return”) and company disclosed peers;
- Lack of transparent disclosure of compensation philosophy and goals and targets, including details on short-term and long-term performance incentives;
- Long term incentive awards consisting of less than 50% performance-based awards;
- Long term incentive awards evaluated over a time period of less than three years;
- The Board used discretion without sufficient disclosure;
- The Board changed the targets and/or performance metrics during the pay period;
- The Board awarded a multi-year guaranteed cash bonus or non-performance equity award;
- The Board retested performance goals or awarded a pay for failure pay plan;
- Lack of the Board’s response to failed MSOP vote the previous year;
- The plan allows for the single trigger acceleration of unvested equity awards and/or provides excise tax gross ups;
- Abnormally large bonus payouts without justifiable performance linkage or proper disclosure;
- Egregious employment or retention contracts;
- Excessive perquisites or excessive severance and/or change in control provisions;
- Repricing or replacing of underwater stock options without prior shareholder approval;
- Egregious pension/SERP (supplemental executive retirement plan) payouts;
- Extraordinary relocation benefits;
- Internal pay disparity; and
- The Board has adopted other pay practices that may increase risk to shareholders.

Other Compensation Proposals and Policies

Employee Stock Purchase Plans -- Non-Qualified Plans

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on nonqualified employee stock purchase plans taking into account the following factors:

- Broad-based participation;
- Limits on employee contributions;

- Company matching contributions; and
- Presence of a discount on the stock price on the date of purchase.

Option Exchange Programs/Repricing Options

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on management proposals seeking approval to exchange/reprice options, taking into consideration:

- Historic trading patterns--the stock price should not be so volatile that the options are likely to be back “in-the-money” over the near term;
- Rationale for the re-pricing;
- If it is a value-for-value exchange;
- If surrendered stock options are added back to the plan reserve;
- Option vesting;
- Term of the option--the term should remain the same as that of the replaced option;
- Exercise price--should be set at fair market or a premium to market;
- Participants--executive officers and directors should be excluded.

Vote FOR shareholder proposals to put option repricings to a shareholder vote.

Stock Retention Holding Period

Vote FOR shareholder proposals asking for a policy requiring that senior executives retain a significant percentage of shares acquired through equity compensation programs if the policy requests retention for two years or less following the termination of their employment (through retirement or otherwise) **and** a holding threshold percentage of 50% or less.

Also consider whether the company has any holding period, retention ratio, or officer ownership requirements in place and the terms/provisions of awards already granted.

Elimination of Accelerated Vesting in the Event of a Change in Control

Vote AGAINST shareholder proposals seeking a policy eliminating the accelerated vesting of time-based equity awards in the event of a change-in-control.

Performance-based Equity Awards and Pay-for-Superior-Performance Proposals

Generally vote FOR unless there is sufficient evidence that the current compensation structure is already substantially performance-based. We consider performance-based awards to include awards that are tied to shareholder return or other metrics that are relevant to the business.

Say on Supplemental Executive Retirement Plans (SERP)

Generally vote AGAINST proposals asking for shareholder votes on SERP.

Compensation Committee

Vote AGAINST or WITHHOLD from the members of the Compensation Committee if:

- We voted against the company’s MSOP in the previous year, the company’s previous MSOP received significant opposition of votes cast and we are voting against this year’s MSOP;
- The board implements a MSOP on a less frequent basis than the frequency that received the plurality of votes cast

4. Shareholders Rights and Defenses

Shareholder Ability to Act by Written Consent

Generally vote FOR shareholder proposals that provide shareholders with the ability to act by written consent, unless:

- The company already gives shareholders the right to call special meetings at a threshold of 25% or lower; and
- The company has a history of strong governance practices.

Special Meetings Arrangements

Generally vote FOR management proposals that provide shareholders with the ability to call special meetings.

Generally vote FOR shareholder proposals that provide shareholders with the ability to call special meetings at a threshold of 25% or lower if the company currently does not give shareholders the right to call special meetings. However, if a company already gives shareholders the right to call special meetings at a threshold of at least 25%, vote AGAINST shareholder proposals to further reduce the threshold.

Generally vote AGAINST management proposals seeking shareholder approval for the company to hold special meetings with 14 days notice unless the company offers shareholders the ability to vote by electronic means and a proposal to reduce the period of notice to not less than 14 days has received majority support.

Advance Notice Requirements for Shareholder Proposals/Nominations

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on advance notice proposals, giving support to proposals that allow shareholders to submit proposals/nominations reasonably close to the meeting date and within the broadest window possible, recognizing the need to allow sufficient notice for company, regulatory and shareholder review.

Shareholder Voting Requirements

Vote AGAINST proposals to require a supermajority shareholder vote. Generally vote FOR management and shareholder proposals to reduce supermajority vote requirements.

Poison Pills

Vote FOR shareholder proposals requesting that the company submit its poison pill to a shareholder vote or redeem it, unless the company has:

- a shareholder-approved poison pill in place; or
- adopted a policy concerning the adoption of a pill in the future specifying certain shareholder friendly provisions.

Vote FOR shareholder proposals calling for poison pills to be put to a vote within a time period of less than one year after adoption.

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on management proposals on poison pill ratification, focusing on the features of the shareholder rights plan.

In addition, the rationale for adopting the pill should be thoroughly explained by the company. In examining the request for the pill, take into consideration the company's existing governance structure, including: board independence, existing takeover defenses, and any problematic governance concerns.

5. Strategic Transactions and Capital Structures

Reorganizations/Restructurings

Vote reorganizations and restructurings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Mergers and Acquisitions

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on mergers and acquisitions taking into account the following based on publicly available information:

- Valuation;
- Market reaction;
- Strategic rationale;
- Management's track record of successful integration of historical acquisitions;
- Presence of conflicts of interest; and
- Governance profile of the combined company.

Dual Class Structures

Vote FOR resolutions that seek to maintain or convert to a one-share, one-vote capital structure.

Vote AGAINST requests for the creation or continuation of dual-class capital structures or the creation of new or additional super voting shares.

Share Issuance Requests

General Issuances:

Vote FOR issuance requests with preemptive rights to a maximum of 100% over currently issued capital or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Vote FOR issuance requests without preemptive rights to a maximum of 20% of currently issued capital or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Specific Issuances:

Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis on all requests, with or without preemptive rights.

Increases in Authorized Capital

Vote FOR non-specific proposals to increase authorized capital up to 100% over the current authorization unless the increase would leave the company with less than 30% of its new authorization outstanding, or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Vote FOR specific proposals to increase authorized capital to any amount, unless:

- The specific purpose of the increase (such as a share-based acquisition or merger) does not meet guidelines for the purpose being proposed; or
- The increase would leave the company with less than 30% of its new authorization outstanding after adjusting for all proposed issuances or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Vote AGAINST proposals to adopt unlimited capital authorizations.

Reduction of Capital

Vote FOR proposals to reduce capital for routine accounting purposes unless the terms are unfavorable to shareholders.

Vote proposals to reduce capital in connection with corporate restructuring on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Preferred Stock

Vote FOR the creation of a new class of preferred stock or for issuances of preferred stock up to 50% of issued capital unless the terms of the preferred stock would adversely affect the rights of existing shareholders.

Vote FOR the creation/issuance of convertible preferred stock as long as the maximum number of common shares that could be issued upon conversion meets guidelines on equity issuance requests.

Vote AGAINST the creation of a new class of preference shares that would carry superior voting rights to the common shares.

Vote AGAINST the creation of blank check preferred stock unless the board clearly states that the authorization will not be used to thwart a takeover bid.

Vote proposals to increase blank check preferred authorizations on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Debt Issuance Requests

Vote non-convertible debt issuance requests on a CASE-BY-CASE basis, with or without preemptive rights.

Vote FOR the creation/issuance of convertible debt instruments as long as the maximum number of common shares that could be issued upon conversion meets guidelines on equity issuance requests.

Vote FOR proposals to restructure existing debt arrangements unless the terms of the restructuring would adversely affect the rights of shareholders.

Increase in Borrowing Powers

Vote proposals to approve increases in a company's borrowing powers on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Share Repurchase Plans

We will generally recommend FOR share repurchase programs taking into account whether:

- The share repurchase program can be used as a takeover defense;
- There is clear evidence of historical abuse;
- There is no safeguard in the share repurchase program against selective buybacks;
- Pricing provisions and safeguards in the share repurchase program are deemed to be unreasonable in light of market practice.

Reissuance of Repurchased Shares

Vote FOR requests to reissue any repurchased shares unless there is clear evidence of abuse of this authority in the past.

Capitalization of Reserves for Bonus Issues/Increase in Par Value

Vote FOR requests to capitalize reserves for bonus issues of shares or to increase par value.

Reorganizations/Restructurings

Vote reorganizations and restructurings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Reincorporation Proposals

Vote reincorporation proposals on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Related-Party Transactions

Vote related-party transactions on a CASE-BY-CASE basis, considering factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- The parties on either side of the transaction;
- The nature of the asset to be transferred/service to be provided;
- The pricing of the transaction (and any associated professional valuation);
- The views of independent directors (where provided);
- The views of an independent financial adviser (where appointed);
- Whether any entities party to the transaction (including advisers) is conflicted; and
- The stated rationale for the transaction, including discussions of timing

Common and Preferred Stock Authorization

Generally vote FOR proposals to increase the number of shares of common stock authorized for issuance.

Generally vote FOR proposals to increase the number of shares of preferred stock, as long as there is a commitment to not use the shares for anti-takeover purposes.

6. Environmental and Social Issues

Overall Approach

Proposals considered under this category could include, among others, requests that a company:

- Publish a report or additional information related to the company's business and impact on stakeholders;
- Disclose policies related to specific business practices and/or services;
- Conduct third party audits, reports or studies related to the company's business practices, services and/or impact on stakeholders

When evaluating environmental and social shareholder proposals, the following factors are generally considered:

- Whether the subject of the proposal is considered to be material to the company's business;
- The company's current level of publicly available disclosure, including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- The proponent of the proposal;
- If the company has implemented or formally committed to the implementation of a reporting program based on the International Sustainability Standards Board's Sustainability Accounting Standards, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board's (SASB) standards, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure's (TCFD) recommendations, or a similar standard;
- Whether adoption of the proposal is likely to enhance or protect shareholder value;
- Whether the information requested concerns business issues that relate to a meaningful percentage of the company's business;
- The degree to which the company's stated position on the issues raised in the proposal could affect its reputation or sales, or leave it vulnerable to a boycott or selective purchasing;
- Whether the company has already responded in some appropriate manner to the request embodied in the proposal;
- What other companies in the relevant industry have done in response to the issue addressed in the proposal;
- Whether the proposal itself is well framed and the cost of preparing the report and/or the implementation is reasonable;
- Whether the subject of the proposal is best left to the discretion of the board;
- Whether the proposal is legally binding for the board;

- Whether the company has material fines or violations in the area and if so, if appropriate actions have already been taken to remedy going forward;
- Whether providing this information would reveal proprietary or confidential information that would place the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Environmental Issues

Climate Transition Plans

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on management proposed climate transition plans. When evaluating management proposed plans, the following factors are generally considered:

- If the company has detailed disclosure of the governance, strategy, risk mitigation efforts, and metrics and targets based on the TCFD’s recommendations, or a similar standard;
- If the company has detailed disclosure of their current emissions data based on the SASB materiality framework; and
- If the company has detailed disclosure in line with Paris Agreement goals.

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting climate transition plans. When evaluating these shareholder proposals, the following factors are generally considered:

- The company’s current level of publicly available disclosure including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- If the proposal asks for detailed disclosure according to the TCFD’s recommendations;
- If the proposal asks for detailed disclosure of the company’s current emissions data based on the SASB materiality framework;
- If the proposal asks for long-term targets, as well as short and medium term milestones;
- If the proposal asks for targets to be aligned to a globally accepted framework, such as Paris Aligned or Net Zero;
- If the proposal asks for targets to be approved by the Science Based Target Initiative (“SBTi”);
- If the proposal seeks to add reasonable transparency and is not onerous or overly prescriptive; and
- Whether the proposal is binding or non-binding.

Environmental Sustainability Reporting

Generally vote FOR shareholders proposals requesting the company to report on its policies, initiatives and oversight mechanisms related to environmental sustainability, including the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. The following factors will be considered:

- The company’s current level of publicly available disclosure including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- If the company has implemented or formally committed to the implementation of a reporting program based on the International Sustainability Standards Board’s Sustainability Accounting Standards, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board’s (SASB) standards, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure’s (TCFD) recommendations, or a similar standard;
- If the company’s current level of disclosure is comparable to that of its industry peers; and
- If there are significant controversies, fines, penalties, or litigation associated with the company’s environmental performance.

Other Environmental Proposals

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on the following shareholder proposals if relevant to the company:

- Seeking information on the financial, physical, or regulatory risks a company faces related to climate change on its operations and investment, or on how the company identifies, measures and manages such risks;
- Calling for the reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions;
- Seeking reports on responses to regulatory and public pressures surrounding climate change, and for disclosure of research that aided in setting company policies around climate change;
- Requesting an action plan including science based targets and a commitment to net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier;
- Requesting a report/disclosure of goals on GHG emissions from company operations and/or products;
- Requesting a company report on its energy efficiency policies; and
- Requesting reports on the feasibility of developing renewable energy resources.

Social Issues

Board and Workforce Demographics

A company should have a clear, public Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement and/or diversity policy. Generally vote FOR proposals seeking to amend a company's EEO statement or diversity policies to additionally prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Generally vote FOR proposals requesting reports on a company's efforts to diversify the board, unless:

- The gender and racial minority representation of the company's board meets our board composition expectations; and
- The board already reports on its nominating procedures and gender and racial minority initiatives on the board.

Gender Pay Gap

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on proposals requesting reports on a company's pay data by gender, or a report on a company's policies and goals to reduce any gender pay gap, taking into account:

- The company's current policies and disclosure related to both its diversity and inclusion policies and practices and its compensation philosophy and fair and equitable compensation practices;
- Whether the company has been the subject of recent controversy, litigation or regulatory actions related to gender pay gap issues; and
- Whether the company's reporting regarding gender pay gap policies or initiatives is lagging its peers.

Labor, Human and Animal Rights Standards

Generally vote FOR proposals requesting a report on company or company supplier labor, human, and/or animal rights standards and policies, or on the impact of its operations on society, unless such information is already publicly disclosed considering:

- The degree to which existing relevant policies and practices are disclosed;
- Whether or not existing relevant policies are consistent with internationally recognized standards;
- Whether company facilities and those of its suppliers are monitored and how;
- Company participation in fair labor organizations or other internationally recognized human rights initiatives;
- Scope and nature of business conducted in markets known to have higher risk of workplace labor/human rights abuse;
- Recent, significant company controversies, fines, or litigation regarding human rights at the company or its suppliers;
- The scope of the request; and
- Deviation from industry sector peer company standards and practices.

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting reports about a company's use of mandatory arbitrations in employment claims, taking into account the company's existing policies and disclosures of policies.

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting reports on the actions taken by a company to prevent sexual and other forms of harassment or on the risks posed by the company's failure to take such actions, taking into account the company's existing policies and disclosures of policies.

Racial Equity Audit

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting the board oversee a racial equity audit. While we believe the decision to initiate an independent audit is best left to management judgment under the oversight of the board of directors, the following factors are generally considered:

- The degree to which existing relevant policies and practices are disclosed;
- Recent, significant company controversies, fines, or litigation regarding human rights at the company or its suppliers; and
- The gender and racial minority representation of the company's board.

Political Contributions and Trade Association Spending/Lobbying Expenditures and Initiatives

We generally believe that it is the role of boards and management to determine the appropriate level of disclosure of all types of corporate political activity. When evaluating these proposals, we consider the prescriptive nature of the proposal and the overall benefit to shareholders along with a company's current disclosure of policies, practices and oversight.

Generally vote AGAINST proposals asking the company to affirm political nonpartisanship in the workplace so long as:

- There are no recent, significant controversies, fines or litigation regarding the company's political contributions or trade association spending; and
- The company has procedures in place to ensure that employee contributions to company-sponsored political action committees (PACs) are strictly voluntary and prohibits coercion.

Generally vote AGAINST proposals requesting increased disclosure of a company's policies with respect to political contributions, lobbying and trade association spending as long as:

- There is no significant potential threat or actual harm to shareholders' interests;
- There are no recent significant controversies or litigation related to the company's political contributions or governmental affairs; and
- There is publicly available information to assess the company's oversight related to such expenditures of corporate assets.

We generally will vote AGAINST proposals asking for detailed disclosure of political contributions or trade association or lobbying expenditures.

We generally will vote AGAINST proposals barring the company from making political contributions. Businesses are affected by legislation at the federal, state, and local level and barring political contributions can put the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Region: Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) Proxy Items

The following section is a broad summary of the Guidelines, which form the basis of the Policy with respect to EMEA public equity investments of operating and/or holding companies. Applying these guidelines is subject to certain regional and country-specific exceptions and modifications and is not inclusive of all considerations in each market.

1. Business Items

Financial Results/Director and Auditor Reports

Vote FOR approval of financial statements and director and auditor reports, unless:

- There are serious concerns about the accounts presented, audit procedures used or audit opinion rendered; or
- The company is not responsive to shareholder questions about specific items that should be publicly disclosed.

Appointment of Auditors and Auditor Fees

Vote FOR the re-election of auditors and proposals authorizing the board to fix auditor fees unless:

- There are serious concerns about the accounts presented, audit procedures used or audit opinion rendered;
- There is reason to believe that the auditor has rendered an opinion that is neither accurate nor indicative of the company's financial position;
- Name of the proposed auditor has not been published;
- The auditors are being changed without explanation;
- Non-audit-related fees are substantial, or are in excess of standard annual audit-related fees, or in excess of permitted local limits and guidelines; or
- The appointment of external auditors if they have previously served the company in an executive capacity or can otherwise be considered affiliated with the company.

Appointment of Internal Statutory Auditors

Vote FOR the appointment or re-election of statutory auditors, unless:

- There are serious concerns about the statutory reports presented or the audit procedures used;
- Questions exist concerning any of the statutory auditors being appointed; or
- The auditors have previously served the company in an executive capacity or can otherwise be considered affiliated with the company.

Reincorporation Proposals

Vote reincorporation proposals on a CASE-BY-CASE basis

Allocation of Income

Vote FOR approval of the allocation of income, unless:

- The dividend payout ratio has been consistently low without adequate explanation; or
- The payout is excessive given the company's financial position.

Stock (Scrip) Dividend Alternative

Vote FOR most stock (scrip) dividend proposals.

Vote AGAINST proposals that do not allow for a cash option unless management demonstrates that the cash option is harmful to shareholder value.

Amendments to Articles of Association

Vote amendments to the articles of association on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Change in Company Fiscal Term

Vote FOR resolutions to change a company's fiscal term unless a company's motivation for the change is to postpone its annual general meeting.

Lower Disclosure Threshold for Stock Ownership

Vote AGAINST resolutions to lower the stock ownership disclosure threshold below 5% unless specific reasons exist to implement a lower threshold.

Amend Quorum Requirements

Vote proposals to amend quorum requirements for shareholder meetings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Virtual Meetings

Generally vote FOR proposals allowing for the convening of hybrid* shareholder meetings if it is clear that it is not the intention to hold virtual-only AGMs. Generally vote AGAINST proposals allowing for the convening of virtual-only* shareholder meetings.

* The phrase "virtual-only shareholder meeting" refers to a meeting of shareholders that is held exclusively through the use of online technology without a corresponding in-person meeting. The term "hybrid shareholder meeting" refers to an in-person, or physical, meeting in which shareholders are permitted to participate online.

Public Benefit Corporation Proposals

Generally vote FOR management proposals and CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals related to the conversion of the company into a public benefit corporation.

Transact Other Business

Vote AGAINST other business when it appears as a voting item.

Administrative Requests

Generally vote FOR non-contentious administrative management requests.

2. Board of Directors

The board of directors should promote the interests of shareholders by acting in an oversight and/or advisory role; should consist of a majority of independent directors and / or meet local best practice expectations; and should be held accountable for actions and results related to their responsibilities.

Voting on Director Nominees in Uncontested Elections

Vote on director nominees should be determined on a CASE-BY-CASE basis taking into consideration the following:

- Adequate disclosure has not been provided in a timely manner; or
- There are clear concerns over questionable finances or restatements; or
- There have been questionable transactions or conflicts of interest; or
- There are any records of abuses against minority shareholder interests; or
- The board fails to meet minimum corporate governance standards; or
- There are reservations about:
 - Director terms
 - Bundling of proposals to elect directors
 - Board independence
 - Disclosure of named nominees
 - Combined Chairman/CEO
 - Election of former CEO as Chairman of the board
 - Overboarded directors
 - Composition of committees
 - Director independence
 - Number of directors on the board
 - Lack of diversity on the board
- Specific concerns about the individual or company, such as criminal wrongdoing or breach of fiduciary responsibilities; or
- There are other considerations which may include sanction from government or authority, violations of laws and regulations, or other issues relate to improper business practice, failure to replace management, or egregious actions related to service on other boards.

Board Composition

We generally believe diverse teams have the potential to outperform and we expect the companies that we invest in to focus on the importance of diversity. When evaluating board composition, we believe a diversity of ethnicity, gender and experience is an important consideration. We encourage companies to disclose the composition of their board in the proxy statement and may vote against members of the board without disclosure. See below how we execute our vote at companies that do not meet our diversity expectations.

Vote AGAINST members of the Nominating Committee:

- At companies that do not meet the board diversity requirements of local listing rules, corporate governance codes, national targets, or is not representative relative to the board composition of companies in their market;
- At companies in the FTSE100 if the board composition does not align with the Parker review guidelines.

Employee and /or Labor Representatives

Vote FOR employee and/or labor representatives if they sit on either the audit or compensation committee and are required by law to be on those committees.

Vote AGAINST employee and/or labor representatives if they sit on either the audit or compensation committee, if they are not required to be on those committees.

Director Independence

Classification of Directors

Executive Director

- Employee or executive of the company;
- Any director who is classified as a non-executive, but receives salary, fees, bonus, and/or other benefits that are in line with the highest-paid executives of the company.

Non-Independent Non-Executive Director (NED)

- Any director who is attested by the board to be a non-independent NED;
- Any director specifically designated as a representative of a significant shareholder of the company;
- Any director who is also an employee or executive of a significant shareholder of the company;
- Beneficial owner (direct or indirect) of at least 10% of the company's stock, either in economic terms or in voting rights (this may be aggregated if voting power is distributed among more than one member of a defined group, e.g., family members who beneficially own less than 10% individually, but collectively own more than 10%), unless market best practice dictates a lower ownership and/or disclosure threshold (and in other special market-specific circumstances);
- Government representative;
- Currently provides (or a relative provides) professional services to the company, to an affiliate of the company, or to an individual officer of the company or of one of its affiliates in excess of \$10,000 per year;
- Represents customer, supplier, creditor, banker, or other entity with which company maintains transactional/commercial relationship (unless company discloses information to apply a materiality test);
- Any director who has conflicting or cross-directorships with executive directors or the chairman of the company;
- Relative of a current employee of the company or its affiliates;
- Relative of a former executive of the company or its affiliates;
- A new appointee elected other than by a formal process through the General Meeting (such as a contractual appointment by a substantial shareholder);
- Founder/co-founder/member of founding family but not currently an employee;
- Former executive (a cooling off period may be applied);
- Years of service is generally not a determining factor unless it is recommended best practice in a market and/or in extreme circumstances, in which case it may be considered; and
- Any additional relationship or principle considered to compromise independence under local corporate governance best practice guidance.

Independent NED

- No material connection, either directly or indirectly, to the company other than a board seat.

Employee Representative

- Represents employees or employee shareholders of the company (classified as "employee representative" but considered a non-independent NED).

Director Accountability

Vote AGAINST individual directors who attend less than 75% of the board and committee meetings without a disclosed valid excuse.

Generally, vote FOR the bundled election of management nominees, unless adequate disclosures of the nominees have not been provided in a timely manner or if one or more of the nominees does not meet the expectation of our policy.

Other items considered for an AGAINST vote include specific concerns about the individual or the company, such as criminal wrongdoing or breach of fiduciary responsibilities, sanctions from government or authority, violations of

laws and regulations, the presence of inappropriate related party transactions, or other issues related to improper business practices

Vote AGAINST members of the full board or appropriate committee (or only the independent chairman or lead director as may be appropriate in situations such as where there is a classified board and members of the appropriate committee are not up for re-election or the appropriate committee is comprised of the entire board) for the below reasons. New nominees will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Extreme cases may warrant a vote against the entire board.

- Material failures of governance, stewardship, or fiduciary responsibilities at the company, including but not limited to violations of global norms principles and/or other significant global standards;
- Failure to disclose material environmental, social and governance information;
- Egregious actions related to the director(s)' service on other boards that raise substantial doubt about his or her ability to effectively oversee management and serve the best interests of shareholders at any company;
- The board failed to act on a shareholder proposal that received approval of the majority of shares cast for previous year (a management proposal with other than a FOR recommendation by management will not be considered as sufficient action taken); an adopted proposal that is substantially similar to the original shareholder proposal will be deemed sufficient; (vote against members of the committee of the board that is responsible for the issue under consideration). If we did not support the shareholder proposal, we may still vote against the committee member(s).
- The board failed to act on takeover offers where the majority of the shareholders tendered their shares;
- The company does not disclose various components of current emissions, a proxy for a company's dependency on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gasses (Scope 1, Scope 2, Scope 3 emissions), material to the company's business;
- If in an extreme situation the board lacks accountability and oversight, coupled with sustained poor performance relative to peers.

Discharge of Directors

Generally vote FOR the discharge of directors, including members of the management board and/or supervisory board, unless there is reliable information about significant and compelling controversies that the board is not fulfilling its fiduciary duties warranted by:

- A lack of oversight or actions by board members which invoke shareholder distrust related to malfeasance or poor supervision, such as operating in private or company interest rather than in shareholder interest; or
- Any legal issues (e.g., civil/criminal) aiming to hold the board responsible for breach of trust in the past or related to currently alleged actions yet to be confirmed (and not only the fiscal year in question), such as price fixing, insider trading, bribery, fraud, and other illegal actions; or
- Other egregious governance issues where shareholders may bring legal action against the company or its directors; or
- Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis where a vote against other agenda items are deemed inappropriate.

Committee Responsibilities and Expectations

Companies should establish committees to oversee areas such as audit, executive and non-executive compensation, director nominations and ESG oversight. The responsibilities of the committees should be publicly disclosed.

Audit Committee

Vote AGAINST members of the Audit Committee if:

- Non-audit-related fees are substantial, or are in excess of standard annual audit-related fees, or in excess of permitted local limits and guidelines.
- The company receives an adverse opinion on the company's financial statements from its auditor and there is not clear evidence that the situation has been remedied;
- There is excessive pledging or hedging of stock by executives;
- There is persuasive evidence that the Audit Committee entered into an inappropriate indemnification agreement with its auditor that limits the ability of the company, or its shareholders, to pursue legitimate legal recourse against the audit firm; or
- No members of the Audit Committee hold sufficient financial expertise.

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on members of the Audit Committee and/or the full board if poor accounting practices, which rise to a level of serious concern are identified, such as fraud, misapplication of accounting principles and material weaknesses identified in audit-related disclosures.

Examine the severity, breadth, chronological sequence and duration, as well as the company's efforts at remediation or corrective actions, in determining whether negative vote recommendations are warranted against the members of the Audit Committee who are responsible for the poor accounting practices, or the entire board.

Remuneration Committee

See section 3 on Remuneration for reasons to vote against members of the Remuneration Committee.

Nominating/Governance Committee

Vote AGAINST members of the Nominating/Governance Committee if:

- At the previous board election, any director received more than 50% withhold/against votes of the shares cast and the company has failed to address the underlying issue(s) that caused the high withhold/against vote;
- The board does not meet our diversity expectations;
- The board amends the company's bylaws or charter without shareholder approval in a manner that materially diminishes shareholders' rights or could adversely impact shareholders

Voting on Director Nominees in Contested Elections

Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis in contested elections of directors, e.g., the election of shareholder nominees or the dismissal of incumbent directors, determining which directors are best suited to add value for shareholders.

The analysis will generally be based on, but not limited to, the following major decision factors:

- Company performance relative to its peers;
- Strategy of the incumbents versus the dissidents;
- Independence of board candidates;
- Experience and skills of board candidates;
- Governance profile of the company;
- Evidence of management entrenchment;
- Responsiveness to shareholders;
- Whether a takeover offer has been rebuffed; and
- Whether minority or majority representation is being sought.

Other Board Related Proposals (Management and Shareholder)

Vote AGAINST the introduction of classified boards and / or mandatory retirement ages for directors.

Vote AGAINST proposals to alter board structure or size in the context of a fight for control of the company or the board.

Independent Board Chair (for applicable markets)

We will generally vote AGAINST shareholder proposals requiring that the chairman's position be filled by an independent director, if the company satisfies 3 of the 4 following criteria:

- Two-thirds independent board, or majority in countries where employee representation is common practice;
- A designated, or a rotating, lead director, elected by and from the independent board members with clearly delineated and comprehensive duties;
- Fully independent key committees; and/or
- Established, publicly disclosed, governance guidelines and director biographies/profiles.

3. Remuneration

Pay Practices

Good pay practices should align management's interests with long-term shareholder value creation. Detailed disclosure of remuneration criteria is preferred; proof that companies follow the criteria should be evident and retroactive performance target changes without proper disclosure is not viewed favorably. Remuneration practices should allow a company to attract and retain proven talent. Some examples of poor pay practices include: abnormally large bonus payouts without justifiable performance linkage or proper disclosure, egregious employment contracts, excessive severance and/or change in control provisions, repricing or replacing of underwater stock options/stock appreciation rights without prior shareholder approval, and excessive perquisites. A company should also have an appropriate balance of short-term vs. long-term metrics and the metrics should be aligned with business goals and objectives.

If the company maintains problematic or poor pay practices, generally vote:

- AGAINST Management Say on Pay (MSOP) Proposals, Remuneration Reports; or
- AGAINST an equity-based incentive plan proposal if excessive non-performance-based equity awards are the major contributor to a pay-for-performance misalignment.
- If no MSOP or equity-based incentive plan proposal item is on the ballot, vote AGAINST Remuneration Committee members.

Remuneration Plans

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on management proposals for a vote on executive remuneration, considering the following factors in the context of each company's specific circumstances and the board's disclosed rationale for its practices.

Factors considered may include:

- Pay for Performance Disconnect;
 - We will consider there to be a disconnect based on a quantitative assessment of the following: CEO pay vs. TSR ("Total Shareholder Return") and peers, CEO pay as a percentage of the median peer group or CEO pay vs. shareholder return over time.
- Long-term equity-based compensation is 100% time-based;
- Board's responsiveness if company received low shareholder support in the previous year's MSOP or remuneration vote;
- Abnormally large bonus payouts without justifiable performance linkage or proper disclosure;
- Egregious employment contracts;
- Excessive perquisites or excessive severance and/or change in control provisions;

- Repricing or replacing of underwater stock options without prior shareholder approval;
- Egregious pension/SERP (supplemental executive retirement plan) payouts;
- Extraordinary relocation benefits;
- Internal pay disparity; and
- Lack of transparent disclosure of compensation philosophy and goals and targets, including details on short-term and long-term performance incentives.

Non-Executive Director Compensation

Vote FOR proposals to award cash fees to non-executive directors unless the amounts are excessive relative to other companies in the country or industry.

Vote non-executive director compensation proposals that include both cash and share-based components on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Vote proposals that bundle compensation for both non-executive and executive directors into a single resolution on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Vote AGAINST proposals to introduce retirement benefits for non-executive directors.

Director, Officer, and Auditor Indemnification and Liability Provisions

Vote proposals seeking indemnification and liability protection for directors and officers on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Vote AGAINST proposals to indemnify auditors.

Other Remuneration Related Proposals

Vote on other remuneration related proposals on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Remuneration Committee

When voting for members of the Remuneration Committee, factors considered may include:

- We voted against the company's MSOP in the previous year, the company's previous MSOP received significant opposition of votes cast and we are voting against this year's MSOP; and
- The board implements a MSOP on a less frequent basis than the frequency that received the plurality of votes cast
- Remuneration structure is widely inconsistent with local market best practices or regulations

4. Shareholder Rights and Defenses

Antitakeover Mechanisms

Generally vote AGAINST all antitakeover proposals, unless they are structured in such a way that they give shareholders the ultimate decision on any proposal or offer.

For the Netherlands, vote recommendations regarding management proposals to approve protective preference shares will be determined on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

For French companies listed on a regulated market, generally VOTE AGAINST any general authorities impacting the share capital (i.e. authorities for share repurchase plans and any general share issuances with or without preemptive rights) if they can be used for antitakeover purposes without shareholders' prior explicit approval.

5. Strategic Transactions, Capital Structures and other Business Considerations

Reorganizations/Restructurings

Vote reorganizations and restructurings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Mergers and Acquisitions

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on mergers and acquisitions taking into account the following based on publicly available information:

- Valuation;
- Market reaction;
- Strategic rationale;
- Management's track record of successful integration of historical acquisitions;
- Presence of conflicts of interest; and
- Governance profile of the combined company.

Dual Class Structures

Vote FOR resolutions that seek to maintain or convert to a one-share, one-vote capital structure.

Vote AGAINST requests for the creation or continuation of dual-class capital structures or the creation of new or additional super voting shares.

Share Issuance Requests

General Issuances:

Vote FOR issuance requests with preemptive rights to a maximum of 100% over currently issued capital or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Vote FOR issuance requests without preemptive rights to a maximum of 20% of currently issued capital or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Specific Issuances:

Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis on all requests, with or without preemptive rights.

Increases in Authorized Capital

Vote FOR non-specific proposals to increase authorized capital up to 100% over the current authorization unless the increase would leave the company with less than 30% of its new authorization outstanding, or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Vote FOR specific proposals to increase authorized capital to any amount, unless:

- The specific purpose of the increase (such as a share-based acquisition or merger) does not meet guidelines for the purpose being proposed; or
- The increase would leave the company with less than 30% of its new authorization outstanding after adjusting for all proposed issuances or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Vote AGAINST proposals to adopt unlimited capital authorizations.

Reduction of Capital

Vote FOR proposals to reduce capital for routine accounting purposes unless the terms are unfavorable to shareholders.

Vote proposals to reduce capital in connection with corporate restructuring on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Preferred Stock

Vote FOR the creation of a new class of preferred stock or for issuances of preferred stock up to 50% of issued capital unless the terms of the preferred stock would adversely affect the rights of existing shareholders.

Vote FOR the creation/issuance of convertible preferred stock as long as the maximum number of common shares that could be issued upon conversion meets guidelines on equity issuance requests.

Vote AGAINST the creation of a new class of preference shares that would carry superior voting rights to the common shares.

Vote AGAINST the creation of blank check preferred stock unless the board clearly states that the authorization will not be used to thwart a takeover bid.

Vote proposals to increase blank check preferred authorizations on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Debt Issuance Requests

Vote non-convertible debt issuance requests on a CASE-BY-CASE basis, with or without preemptive rights.

Vote FOR the creation/issuance of convertible debt instruments as long as the maximum number of common shares that could be issued upon conversion meets guidelines on equity issuance requests.

Vote FOR proposals to restructure existing debt arrangements unless the terms of the restructuring would adversely affect the rights of shareholders.

Increase in Borrowing Powers

Vote proposals to approve increases in a company's borrowing powers on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Share Repurchase Plans

We will generally recommend FOR share repurchase programs taking into account whether:

- The share repurchase program can be used as a takeover defense;
- There is clear evidence of historical abuse;
- There is no safeguard in the share repurchase program against selective buybacks;
- Pricing provisions and safeguards in the share repurchase program are deemed to be unreasonable in light of market practice.

Reissuance of Repurchased Shares

Vote FOR requests to reissue any repurchased shares unless there is clear evidence of abuse of this authority in the past.

Capitalization of Reserves for Bonus Issues/Increase in Par Value

Vote FOR requests to capitalize reserves for bonus issues of shares or to increase par value.

Reorganizations/Restructurings

Vote reorganizations and restructurings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Reincorporation Proposals

Vote reincorporation proposals on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Related-Party Transactions

Vote related-party transactions on a CASE-BY-CASE basis, considering factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- The parties on either side of the transaction;
- The nature of the asset to be transferred/service to be provided;
- The pricing of the transaction (and any associated professional valuation);
- The views of independent directors (where provided);
- The views of an independent financial adviser (where appointed);
- Whether any entities party to the transaction (including advisers) is conflicted; and
- The stated rationale for the transaction, including discussions of timing

6. Environmental and Social Issues

Overall Approach

Proposals considered under this category could include, among others, requests that a company:

- Publish a report or additional information related to the company's business and impact on stakeholders;
- Disclose policies related to specific business practices and/or services;
- Conduct third party audits, reports or studies related to the company's business practices, services and/or impact on stakeholders

When evaluating environmental and social shareholder proposals, the following factors are generally considered:

- Whether the subject of the proposal is considered to be material to the company's business;
- The company's current level of publicly available disclosure, including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- The proponent of the proposal;
- If the company has implemented or formally committed to the implementation of a reporting program based on the International Sustainability Standards Board's Sustainability Accounting Standards, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board's (SASB) standards, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure's (TCFD) recommendations, or a similar standard;
- Whether adoption of the proposal is likely to enhance or protect shareholder value;
- Whether the information requested concerns business issues that relate to a meaningful percentage of the company's business;
- The degree to which the company's stated position on the issues raised in the proposal could affect its reputation or sales, or leave it vulnerable to a boycott or selective purchasing;
- Whether the company has already responded in some appropriate manner to the request embodied in the proposal;
- What other companies in the relevant industry have done in response to the issue addressed in the proposal;

- Whether the proposal itself is well framed and the cost of preparing the report and/or the implementation is reasonable ;
- Whether the subject of the proposal is best left to the discretion of the board;
- Whether the proposal is legally binding for the board;
- Whether the company has material fines or violations in the area and if so, if appropriate actions have already been taken to remedy going forward;
- Whether providing this information would reveal proprietary or confidential information that would place the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Environmental Issues

Climate Transition Plans

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on management proposed climate transition plans. When evaluating management proposed plans, the following factors are generally considered:

- If the company has detailed disclosure of the governance, strategy, risk mitigation efforts, and metrics and targets based on the TCFD’s recommendations, or a similar standard;
- If the company has detailed disclosure of their current emissions data based on the SASB materiality framework; and
- If the company has detailed disclosure in line with Paris Agreement goals.

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting climate transition plans. When evaluating these shareholder proposals, the following factors are generally considered:

- The company’s current level of publicly available disclosure including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- If the proposal asks for detailed disclosure according to the TCFD’s recommendations;
- If the proposal asks for detailed disclosure of the company’s current emissions data based on the SASB materiality framework;
- If the proposal asks for long-term targets, as well as short and medium term milestones;
- If the proposal asks for targets to be aligned to a globally accepted framework, such as Paris Aligned or Net Zero;
- If the proposal asks for targets to be approved by the Science Based Target Initiative (“SBTi”);
- If the proposal seeks to add reasonable transparency and is not onerous or overly prescriptive; and
- Whether the proposal is binding or non-binding.

Environmental Sustainability Reporting

Generally vote FOR shareholders proposals requesting the company to report on its policies, initiatives and oversight mechanisms related to environmental sustainability, including the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. The following factors will be considered:

- The company’s current level of publicly available disclosure including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- If the company has implemented or formally committed to the implementation of a reporting program based on the International Sustainability Standards Board’s Sustainability Accounting Standards, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board’s (SASB) standards, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure’s (TCFD) recommendations, or a similar standard;
- If the company’s current level of disclosure is comparable to that of its industry peers; and
- If there are significant controversies, fines, penalties, or litigation associated with the company’s environmental performance.

Other Environmental Proposals

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on the following shareholder proposals if relevant to the company:

- Seeking information on the financial, physical, or regulatory risks a company faces related to climate change on its operations and investment, or on how the company identifies, measures and manages such risks;
- Calling for the reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions;
- Seeking reports on responses to regulatory and public pressures surrounding climate change, and for disclosure of research that aided in setting company policies around climate change;
- Requesting an action plan including science based targets and a commitment to net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier;
- Requesting a report/disclosure of goals on GHG emissions from company operations and/or products;
- Requesting a company report on its energy efficiency policies; and
- Requesting reports on the feasibility of developing renewable energy resources.

Social Issues

Board and Workforce Demographics

A company should have a clear diversity policy. Generally vote FOR proposals seeking to amend a company's diversity policy to additionally prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Generally vote FOR proposals requesting reports on a company's efforts to diversify the board, unless:

- The gender and racial minority representation of the company's board meets our board composition expectations; and
- The board already reports on its nominating procedures and gender and racial minority initiatives on the board.

Gender Pay Gap

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on proposals requesting reports on a company's pay data by gender, or a report on a company's policies and goals to reduce any gender pay gap, taking into account:

- The company's current policies and disclosure related to both its diversity and inclusion policies and practices and its compensation philosophy and fair and equitable compensation practices;
- Whether the company has been the subject of recent controversy, litigation or regulatory actions related to gender pay gap issues; and
- Whether the company's reporting regarding gender pay gap policies or initiatives is lagging its peers.

Labor, Human and Animal Rights Standards

Generally vote FOR proposals requesting a report on company or company supplier labor, human, and/or animal rights standards and policies, or on the impact of its operations on society, unless such information is already publicly disclosed considering:

- The degree to which existing relevant policies and practices are disclosed;
- Whether or not existing relevant policies are consistent with internationally recognized standards;
- Whether company facilities and those of its suppliers are monitored and how;
- Company participation in fair labor organizations or other internationally recognized human rights initiatives;
- Scope and nature of business conducted in markets known to have higher risk of workplace labor/human rights abuse;
- Recent, significant company controversies, fines, or litigation regarding human rights at the company or its suppliers;
- The scope of the request; and
- Deviation from industry sector peer company standards and practices.

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting reports on the actions taken by a company to prevent sexual and other forms of harassment or on the risks posed by the company's failure to take such actions, taking into account the company's existing policies and disclosures of policies.

Political Contributions and Trade Association Spending/Lobbying Expenditures and Initiatives

We generally believe that it is the role of boards and management to determine the appropriate level of disclosure of all types of corporate political activity. When evaluating these proposals, we consider the prescriptive nature of the proposal and the overall benefit to shareholders along with a company's current disclosure of policies, practices and oversight.

Generally vote AGAINST proposals asking the company to affirm political nonpartisanship in the workplace so long as:

- There are no recent, significant controversies, fines or litigation regarding the company's political contributions or trade association spending; and

Generally vote AGAINST proposals requesting increased disclosure of a company's policies with respect to political contributions, lobbying and trade association spending as long as:

- There is no significant potential threat or actual harm to shareholders' interests;
- There are no recent significant controversies or litigation related to the company's political contributions or governmental affairs; and
- There is publicly available information to assess the company's oversight related to such expenditures of corporate assets.

We generally will vote AGAINST proposals asking for detailed disclosure of political contributions or trade association or lobbying expenditures.

We generally will vote AGAINST proposals barring the company from making political contributions. Businesses are affected by legislation at the federal, state, and local level and barring political contributions can put the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Region: Asia Pacific (APAC) Proxy Items

The following section is a broad summary of the Guidelines, which form the basis of the Policy with respect to APAC public equity investments of operating and/or holding companies. Applying these guidelines is subject to certain regional and country-specific exceptions and modifications and is not inclusive of all considerations in each market. For Japan-specific policies, see the Japan Proxy Items section.

1. Business Items

Financial Results/Director and Auditor Reports

Vote FOR approval of financial statements and director and auditor reports, unless:

- There are serious concerns about the accounts presented, audit procedures used or audit opinion rendered; or
- The company is not responsive to shareholder questions about specific items that should be publicly disclosed.

Appointment of Auditors and Auditor Fees

Vote FOR the re-election of auditors and proposals authorizing the board to fix auditor fees unless:

- There are serious concerns about the accounts presented, audit procedures used or audit opinion rendered;
- There is reason to believe that the auditor has rendered an opinion that is neither accurate nor indicative of the company's financial position;
- Name of the proposed auditor has not been published;
- The auditors are being changed without explanation;
- Non-audit-related fees are substantial, or are in excess of standard annual audit-related fees, or in excess of permitted local limits and guidelines; or
- The appointment of external auditors if they have previously served the company in an executive capacity or can otherwise be considered affiliated with the company.

Appointment of Internal Statutory Auditors

Vote FOR the appointment or re-election of statutory auditors, unless:

- There are serious concerns about the statutory reports presented or the audit procedures used;
- Questions exist concerning any of the statutory auditors being appointed; or
- The auditors have previously served the company in an executive capacity or can otherwise be considered affiliated with the company.

Reincorporation Proposals

Vote reincorporation proposals on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Allocation of Income

Vote FOR approval of the allocation of income, unless:

- The dividend payout ratio has been consistently low without adequate explanation; or
- The payout is excessive given the company's financial position.

Stock (Scrip) Dividend Alternative

Vote FOR most stock (scrip) dividend proposals.

Vote AGAINST proposals that do not allow for a cash option unless management demonstrates that the cash option is harmful to shareholder value.

Amendments to Articles of Association

Vote amendments to the articles of association on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Change in Company Fiscal Term

Vote FOR resolutions to change a company's fiscal term unless a company's motivation for the change is to postpone its annual general meeting.

Lower Disclosure Threshold for Stock Ownership

Vote AGAINST resolutions to lower the stock ownership disclosure threshold below 5% unless specific reasons exist to implement a lower threshold.

Amend Quorum Requirements

Vote proposals to amend quorum requirements for shareholder meetings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Virtual Meetings

Generally vote FOR proposals allowing for the convening of hybrid* shareholder meetings if it is clear that it is not the intention to hold virtual-only AGMs. Generally vote AGAINST proposals allowing for the convening of virtual-only* shareholder meetings.

* The phrase "virtual-only shareholder meeting" refers to a meeting of shareholders that is held exclusively through the use of online technology without a corresponding in-person meeting. The term "hybrid shareholder meeting" refers to an in-person, or physical, meeting in which shareholders are permitted to participate online.

Transact Other Business

Vote AGAINST other business when it appears as a voting item.

Administrative Requests

Generally vote FOR non-contentious administrative management requests.

2. Board of Directors

The board of directors should promote the interests of shareholders by acting in an oversight and/or advisory role; should consist of a majority of independent directors and / or meet local best practice expectations; and should be held accountable for actions and results related to their responsibilities.

Voting on Director Nominees in Uncontested Elections

Vote on director nominees should be determined on a CASE-BY-CASE basis taking into consideration the following:

- Adequate disclosure has not been provided in a timely manner; or

- There are clear concerns over questionable finances or restatements; or
- There have been questionable transactions or conflicts of interest; or
- There are any records of abuses against minority shareholder interests; or
- The board fails to meet minimum corporate governance standards; or
- There are reservations about:
 - Director terms
 - Bundling of proposals to elect directors
 - Board independence
 - Disclosure of named nominees
 - Combined Chairman/CEO
 - Election of former CEO as Chairman of the board
 - Overboarded directors
 - Composition of committees
 - Director independence
 - Number of directors on the board
 - Lack of gender diversity on the board
- Specific concerns about the individual or company, such as criminal wrongdoing or breach of fiduciary responsibilities; or
- There are other considerations which may include sanction from government or authority, violations of laws and regulations, or other issues relate to improper business practice, failure to replace management, or egregious actions related to service on other boards.

Board Composition

We generally believe diverse teams have the potential to outperform and we expect the companies that we invest in to focus on the importance of diversity. When evaluating board composition, we believe a diversity of ethnicity, gender and experience is an important consideration. We encourage companies to disclose the composition of their board in the proxy statement and may vote against members of the board without disclosure. See below how we execute our vote at companies that do not meet our diversity expectations.

Vote AGAINST members of the Nominating Committee:

- At companies that do not meet the board diversity requirements of local listing rules, corporate governance codes, national targets, or is not representative relative to the board composition of companies in their market;

Employee and /or Labor Representatives

Vote FOR employee and/or labor representatives if they sit on either the audit or compensation committee and are required by law to be on those committees.

Vote AGAINST employee and/or labor representatives if they sit on either the audit or compensation committee, if they are not required to be on those committees.

Director Independence

Classification of Directors

Executive Director

- Employee or executive of the company;
- Any director who is classified as a non-executive, but receives salary, fees, bonus, and/or other benefits that are in line with the highest-paid executives of the company.

Non-Independent Non-Executive Director (NED)

- Any director who is attested by the board to be a non-independent NED;
- Any director specifically designated as a representative of a significant shareholder of the company;
- Any director who is also an employee or executive of a significant shareholder of the company;
- Beneficial owner (direct or indirect) of at least 10% of the company's stock, either in economic terms or in voting rights (this may be aggregated if voting power is distributed among more than one member of a defined group, e.g., family members who beneficially own less than 10% individually, but collectively own more than 10%), unless market best practice dictates a lower ownership and/or disclosure threshold (and in other special market-specific circumstances);
- Government representative;
- Currently provides (or a relative provides) professional services to the company, to an affiliate of the company, or to an individual officer of the company or of one of its affiliates in excess of \$10,000 per year;
- Represents customer, supplier, creditor, banker, or other entity with which company maintains transactional/commercial relationship (unless company discloses information to apply a materiality test);
- Any director who has conflicting or cross-directorships with executive directors or the chairman of the company;
- Relative of a current employee of the company or its affiliates;
- Relative of a former executive of the company or its affiliates;
- A new appointee elected other than by a formal process through the General Meeting (such as a contractual appointment by a substantial shareholder);
- Founder/co-founder/member of founding family but not currently an employee;
- Former executive (a cooling off period may be applied);
- Years of service is generally not a determining factor unless it is recommended best practice in a market and/or in extreme circumstances, in which case it may be considered; and
- Any additional relationship or principle considered to compromise independence under local corporate governance best practice guidance.

Independent NED

- No material connection, either directly or indirectly, to the company other than a board seat.

Employee Representative

- Represents employees or employee shareholders of the company (classified as "employee representative" but considered a non-independent NED).

Director Accountability

Vote AGAINST individual directors who attend less than 75% of the board and committee meetings without a disclosed valid excuse.

Generally, vote FOR the bundled election of management nominees, unless adequate disclosures of the nominees have not been provided in a timely manner or if one or more of the nominees does not meet the expectation of our policy.

Other items considered for an AGAINST vote include specific concerns about the individual or the company, such as criminal wrongdoing or breach of fiduciary responsibilities, sanctions from government or authority, violations of laws and regulations, the presence of inappropriate related party transactions, or other issues related to improper business practices

Vote AGAINST members of the full board or appropriate committee (or only the independent chairman or lead director as may be appropriate in situations such as where there is a classified board and members of the appropriate

committee are not up for re-election or the appropriate committee is comprised of the entire board) for the below reasons. New nominees will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Extreme cases may warrant a vote against the entire board.

- Material failures of governance, stewardship, or fiduciary responsibilities at the company, including but not limited to violations of global norms principles and/or other significant global standards;
- Failure to disclose material environmental, social and governance information;
- Egregious actions related to the director(s)' service on other boards that raise substantial doubt about his or her ability to effectively oversee management and serve the best interests of shareholders at any company;
- The board failed to act on a shareholder proposal that received approval of the majority of shares cast the previous year (a management proposal with other than a FOR recommendation by management will not be considered as sufficient action taken); an adopted proposal that is substantially similar to the original shareholder proposal will be deemed sufficient; (vote against members of the committee of the board that is responsible for the issue under consideration). If we did not support the shareholder proposal, we may still vote against the committee member(s).
- The board failed to act on takeover offers where the majority of the shareholders tendered their shares;
- The company does not disclose various components of current emissions, a proxy for a company's dependency on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gasses (Scope 1, Scope 2, Scope 3 emissions), material to the company's business;
- If in an extreme situation the board lacks accountability and oversight, coupled with sustained poor performance relative to peers.

Discharge of Directors

Generally vote FOR the discharge of directors, including members of the management board and/or supervisory board, unless there is reliable information about significant and compelling controversies that the board is not fulfilling its fiduciary duties warranted by:

- A lack of oversight or actions by board members which invoke shareholder distrust related to malfeasance or poor supervision, such as operating in private or company interest rather than in shareholder interest; or
- Any legal issues (e.g., civil/criminal) aiming to hold the board responsible for breach of trust in the past or related to currently alleged actions yet to be confirmed (and not only the fiscal year in question), such as price fixing, insider trading, bribery, fraud, and other illegal actions; or
- Other egregious governance issues where shareholders may bring legal action against the company or its directors; or
- Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis where a vote against other agenda items are deemed inappropriate.

Committee Responsibilities and Expectations

Companies should establish committees to oversee areas such as audit, executive and non-executive compensation, director nominations and ESG oversight. The responsibilities of the committees should be publicly disclosed.

Audit Committee

Vote AGAINST members of the Audit Committee if:

- Non-audit-related fees are substantial, or are in excess of standard annual audit-related fees, or in excess of permitted local limits and guidelines.

- The company receives an adverse opinion on the company’s financial statements from its auditor and there is not clear evidence that the situation has been remedied;
- There is excessive pledging or hedging of stock by executives;
- There is persuasive evidence that the Audit Committee entered into an inappropriate indemnification agreement with its auditor that limits the ability of the company, or its shareholders, to pursue legitimate legal recourse against the audit firm; or
- No members of the Audit Committee hold sufficient financial expertise.

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on members of the Audit Committee and/or the full board if poor accounting practices, which rise to a level of serious concern are identified, such as fraud, misapplication of accounting principles and material weaknesses identified in audit-related disclosures.

Examine the severity, breadth, chronological sequence and duration, as well as the company’s efforts at remediation or corrective actions, in determining whether negative vote recommendations are warranted against the members of the Audit Committee who are responsible for the poor accounting practices, or the entire board.

At companies incorporated in India, vote AGAINST Audit Committee members who are classified as promoters or beneficial owners in the company.

Remuneration Committee

See section 3 on Remuneration for reasons to vote against members of the Remuneration Committee.

Nominating/Governance Committee

Vote AGAINST members of the Nominating/Governance Committee if:

- At the previous board election, any director received more than 50% withhold/against votes of the shares cast and the company has failed to address the underlying issue(s) that caused the high withhold/against vote;
- The board does not meet our diversity expectations;
- The board amends the company’s bylaws or charter without shareholder approval in a manner that materially diminishes shareholders’ rights or could adversely impact shareholders

Voting on Director Nominees in Contested Elections

Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis in contested elections of directors, e.g., the election of shareholder nominees or the dismissal of incumbent directors, determining which directors are best suited to add value for shareholders.

The analysis will generally be based on, but not limited to, the following major decision factors:

- Company performance relative to its peers;
- Strategy of the incumbents versus the dissidents;
- Independence of board candidates;
- Experience and skills of board candidates;
- Governance profile of the company;
- Evidence of management entrenchment;
- Responsiveness to shareholders;
- Whether a takeover offer has been rebuffed; and
- Whether minority or majority representation is being sought.

Other Board Related Proposals (Management and Shareholder)

Vote AGAINST the introduction of classified boards and mandatory retirement ages for directors.

Vote AGAINST proposals to alter board structure or size in the context of a fight for control of the company or the board.

Independent Board Chair (for applicable markets)

We will generally vote AGAINST shareholder proposals requiring that the chairman's position be filled by an independent director, if the company satisfies 3 of the 4 following criteria:

- Two-thirds independent board, or majority in countries where employee representation is common practice;
- A designated, or a rotating, lead director, elected by and from the independent board members with clearly delineated and comprehensive duties;
- Fully independent key committees; and/or
- Established, publicly disclosed, governance guidelines and director biographies/profiles.

3. Remuneration

Pay Practices

Good pay practices should align management's interests with long-term shareholder value creation. Detailed disclosure of remuneration criteria is preferred; proof that companies follow the criteria should be evident and retroactive performance target changes without proper disclosure is not viewed favorably. Remuneration practices should allow a company to attract and retain proven talent. Some examples of poor pay practices include: abnormally large bonus payouts without justifiable performance linkage or proper disclosure, egregious employment contracts, excessive severance and/or change in control provisions, repricing or replacing of underwater stock options/stock appreciation rights without prior shareholder approval, and excessive perquisites. A company should also have an appropriate balance of short-term vs. long-term metrics and the metrics should be aligned with business goals and objectives.

If the company maintains problematic or poor pay practices, generally vote:

- AGAINST Management Say on Pay (MSOP) Proposals, Remuneration Reports; or
- AGAINST an equity-based incentive plan proposal if excessive non-performance-based equity awards are the major contributor to a pay-for-performance misalignment.
- If no MSOP or equity-based incentive plan proposal item is on the ballot, vote AGAINST from Remuneration Committee members.

Remuneration Plans

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on management proposals for a vote on executive remuneration, considering the following factors in the context of each company's specific circumstances and the board's disclosed rationale for its practices.

Factors considered may include:

- Pay for Performance Disconnect;
 - We will consider there to be a disconnect based on a quantitative assessment of the following: CEO pay vs. TSR ("Total Shareholder Return") and peers, CEO pay as a percentage of the median peer group or CEO pay vs. shareholder return over time.
- Long-term equity-based compensation is 100% time-based;
- Board's responsiveness if company received low shareholder support in the previous year's MSOP or remuneration vote;
- Abnormally large bonus payouts without justifiable performance linkage or proper disclosure;
- Egregious employment contracts;
- Excessive perquisites or excessive severance and/or change in control provisions;
- Repricing or replacing of underwater stock options without prior shareholder approval;
- Egregious pension/SERP (supplemental executive retirement plan) payouts;

- Extraordinary relocation benefits;
- Internal pay disparity; and
- Lack of transparent disclosure of compensation philosophy and goals and targets, including details on short-term and long-term performance incentives.

Non-Executive Director Compensation

Vote FOR proposals to award cash fees to non-executive directors unless the amounts are excessive relative to other companies in the country or industry.

Vote non-executive director compensation proposals that include both cash and share-based components on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Vote proposals that bundle compensation for both non-executive and executive directors into a single resolution on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Vote AGAINST proposals to introduce retirement benefits for non-executive directors.

Director, Officer, and Auditor Indemnification and Liability Provisions

Vote proposals seeking indemnification and liability protection for directors and officers on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Vote AGAINST proposals to indemnify auditors.

Other Remuneration Related Proposals

Vote on other remuneration related proposals on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Remuneration Committee

When voting for members of the Remuneration Committee, factors considered may include:

- We voted against the company's MSOP in the previous year, the company's previous MSOP received significant opposition of votes cast and we are voting against this year's MSOP; and
- The board implements a MSOP on a less frequent basis than the frequency that received the plurality of votes cast
- Remuneration structure is widely inconsistent with local market best practices or regulations

4. Shareholder Rights and Defenses

Antitakeover Mechanisms

Generally vote AGAINST all antitakeover proposals, unless they are structured in such a way that they give shareholders the ultimate decision on any proposal or offer.

5. Strategic Transactions, Capital Structures and other Business Considerations

Reorganizations/Restructurings

Vote reorganizations and restructurings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Mergers and Acquisitions

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on mergers and acquisitions taking into account the following based on publicly available information:

- Valuation;
- Market reaction;
- Strategic rationale;
- Management's track record of successful integration of historical acquisitions;
- Presence of conflicts of interest; and
- Governance profile of the combined company.

Dual Class Structures

Vote FOR resolutions that seek to maintain or convert to a one-share, one-vote capital structure.

Vote AGAINST requests for the creation or continuation of dual-class capital structures or the creation of new or additional super voting shares.

Share Issuance Requests

General Issuances:

Vote FOR issuance requests with preemptive rights to a maximum of 100% over currently issued capital or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Vote FOR issuance requests without preemptive rights to a maximum of 20% of currently issued capital or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law. At companies in India, vote FOR issuance requests without preemptive rights to a maximum of 25% of currently issued capital.

Specific Issuances:

Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis on all requests, with or without preemptive rights.

Increases in Authorized Capital

Vote FOR non-specific proposals to increase authorized capital up to 100% over the current authorization unless the increase would leave the company with less than 30% of its new authorization outstanding, or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law.

Vote FOR specific proposals to increase authorized capital to any amount, unless:

- The specific purpose of the increase (such as a share-based acquisition or merger) does not meet guidelines for the purpose being proposed; or
- The increase would leave the company with less than 30% of its new authorization outstanding after adjusting for all proposed issuances, or any stricter limit set in local best practice recommendations or law

Vote AGAINST proposals to adopt unlimited capital authorizations.

Reduction of Capital

Vote FOR proposals to reduce capital for routine accounting purposes unless the terms are unfavorable to shareholders.

Vote proposals to reduce capital in connection with corporate restructuring on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Preferred Stock

Vote FOR the creation of a new class of preferred stock or for issuances of preferred stock up to 50% of issued capital unless the terms of the preferred stock would adversely affect the rights of existing shareholders.

Vote FOR the creation/issuance of convertible preferred stock as long as the maximum number of common shares that could be issued upon conversion meets guidelines on equity issuance requests.

Vote AGAINST the creation of a new class of preference shares that would carry superior voting rights to the common shares.

Vote AGAINST the creation of blank check preferred stock unless the board clearly states that the authorization will not be used to thwart a takeover bid.

Vote proposals to increase blank check preferred authorizations on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Debt Issuance Requests

Vote non-convertible debt issuance requests on a CASE-BY-CASE basis, with or without preemptive rights.

Vote FOR the creation/issuance of convertible debt instruments as long as the maximum number of common shares that could be issued upon conversion meets guidelines on equity issuance requests.

Vote FOR proposals to restructure existing debt arrangements unless the terms of the restructuring would adversely affect the rights of shareholders.

Increase in Borrowing Powers

Vote proposals to approve increases in a company's borrowing powers on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Share Repurchase Plans

We will generally recommend FOR share repurchase programs taking into account whether:

- The share repurchase program can be used as a takeover defense;
- There is clear evidence of historical abuse;
- There is no safeguard in the share repurchase program against selective buybacks;
- Pricing provisions and safeguards in the share repurchase program are deemed to be unreasonable in light of market practice.

Reissuance of Repurchased Shares

Vote FOR requests to reissue any repurchased shares unless there is clear evidence of abuse of this authority in the past.

Capitalization of Reserves for Bonus Issues/Increase in Par Value

Vote FOR requests to capitalize reserves for bonus issues of shares or to increase par value.

Reorganizations/Restructurings

Vote reorganizations and restructurings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Reincorporation Proposals

Vote reincorporation proposals on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Related-Party Transactions

Vote related-party transactions on a CASE-BY-CASE basis, considering factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- The parties on either side of the transaction;
- The nature of the asset to be transferred/service to be provided;
- The pricing of the transaction (and any associated professional valuation);
- The views of independent directors (where provided);
- The views of an independent financial adviser (where appointed);
- Whether any entities party to the transaction (including advisers) is conflicted; and The stated rationale for the transaction, including discussions of timing

6. Environmental and Social Issues

Overall Approach

Proposals considered under this category could include, among others, requests that a company:

- Publish a report or additional information related to the company's business and impact on stakeholders;
- Disclose policies related to specific business practices and/or services;
- Conduct third party audits, reports or studies related to the company's business practices, services and/or impact on stakeholders

When evaluating environmental and social shareholder proposals, the following factors are generally considered:

- Whether the subject of the proposal is considered to be material to the company's business;
- The company's current level of publicly available disclosure, including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- The proponent of the proposal;
- If the company has implemented or formally committed to the implementation of a reporting program based on the International Sustainability Standards Board's Sustainability Accounting Standards, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board's (SASB) standards, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure's (TCFD) recommendations, or a similar standard;
- Whether adoption of the proposal is likely to enhance or protect shareholder value;
- Whether the information requested concerns business issues that relate to a meaningful percentage of the company's business;
- The degree to which the company's stated position on the issues raised in the proposal could affect its reputation or sales, or leave it vulnerable to a boycott or selective purchasing;
- Whether the company has already responded in some appropriate manner to the request embodied in the proposal;
- What other companies in the relevant industry have done in response to the issue addressed in the proposal;
- Whether the proposal itself is well framed and the cost of preparing the report and/or the implementation is reasonable;
- Whether the subject of the proposal is best left to the discretion of the board;
- Whether the proposal is legally binding for the board;
- Whether the company has material fines or violations in the area and if so, if appropriate actions have already been taken to remedy going forward;
- Whether providing this information would reveal proprietary or confidential information that would place the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Environmental Issues

Climate Transition Plans

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on management proposed climate transition plans. When evaluating management proposed plans, the following factors are generally considered:

- If the company has detailed disclosure of the governance, strategy, risk mitigation efforts, and metrics and targets based on the TCFD’s recommendations, or a similar standard;
- If the company has detailed disclosure of their current emissions data based on the SASB materiality framework; and
- If the company has detailed disclosure in line with Paris Agreement goals.

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting climate transition plans. When evaluating these shareholder proposals, the following factors are generally considered:

- The company’s current level of publicly available disclosure including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- If the proposal asks for detailed disclosure according to the TCFD’s recommendations;
- If the proposal asks for detailed disclosure of the company’s current emissions data based on the SASB materiality framework;
- If the proposal asks for long-term targets, as well as short and medium term milestones;
- If the proposal asks for targets to be aligned to a globally accepted framework, such as Paris Aligned or Net Zero;
- If the proposal asks for targets to be approved by the Science Based Target Initiative (“SBTi”);
- If the proposal seeks to add reasonable transparency and is not onerous or overly prescriptive; and
- Whether the proposal is binding or non-binding.

Environmental Sustainability Reporting

Generally vote FOR shareholders proposals requesting the company to report on its policies, initiatives and oversight mechanisms related to environmental sustainability, including the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. The following factors will be considered:

- The company’s current level of publicly available disclosure including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- If the company has implemented or formally committed to the implementation of a reporting program based on the International Sustainability Standards Board’s Sustainability Accounting Standards, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board’s (SASB) standards, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure’s (TCFD) recommendations, or a similar standard;
- If the company’s current level of disclosure is comparable to that of its industry peers; and
- If there are significant controversies, fines, penalties, or litigation associated with the company’s environmental performance.

Other Environmental Proposals

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on the following shareholder proposals if relevant to the company:

- Seeking information on the financial, physical, or regulatory risks a company faces related to climate change on its operations and investment, or on how the company identifies, measures and manages such risks;
- Calling for the reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions;
- Seeking reports on responses to regulatory and public pressures surrounding climate change, and for disclosure of research that aided in setting company policies around climate change;
- Requesting an action plan including science based targets and a commitment to net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier;
- Requesting a report/disclosure of goals on GHG emissions from company operations and/or products;
- Requesting a company report on its energy efficiency policies; and
- Requesting reports on the feasibility of developing renewable energy resources.

Social Issues

Board and Workforce Demographics

A company should have a clear diversity policy. Generally vote FOR proposals seeking to amend a company's diversity policy to additionally prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Generally vote FOR proposals requesting reports on a company's efforts to diversify the board, unless:

- The gender and racial minority representation of the company's board does not meet our board composition expectations; and
- The board already reports on its nominating procedures and gender and racial minority initiatives on the board.

Labor, Human and Animal Rights Standards

Generally vote FOR proposals requesting a report on company or company supplier labor, human, and/or animal rights standards and policies, or on the impact of its operations on society, unless such information is already publicly disclosed considering:

- The degree to which existing relevant policies and practices are disclosed;
- Whether or not existing relevant policies are consistent with internationally recognized standards;
- Whether company facilities and those of its suppliers are monitored and how;
- Company participation in fair labor organizations or other internationally recognized human rights initiatives;
- Scope and nature of business conducted in markets known to have higher risk of workplace labor/human rights abuse;
- Recent, significant company controversies, fines, or litigation regarding human rights at the company or its suppliers;
- The scope of the request; and
- Deviation from industry sector peer company standards and practices.

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting reports on the actions taken by a company to prevent sexual and other forms of harassment or on the risks posed by the company's failure to take such actions, taking into account the company's existing policies and disclosures of policies.

Political Contributions and Trade Association Spending/Lobbying Expenditures and Initiatives

We generally believe that it is the role of boards and management to determine the appropriate level of disclosure of all types of corporate political activity. When evaluating these proposals, we consider the prescriptive nature of the proposal and the overall benefit to shareholders along with a company's current disclosure of policies, practices and oversight.

Generally vote AGAINST proposals asking the company to affirm political nonpartisanship in the workplace so long as:

- There are no recent, significant controversies, fines or litigation regarding the company's political contributions or trade association spending; and

Generally vote AGAINST proposals requesting increased disclosure of a company's policies with respect to political contributions, lobbying and trade association spending as long as:

- There is no significant potential threat or actual harm to shareholders' interests;

- There are no recent significant controversies or litigation related to the company's political contributions or governmental affairs; and
- There is publicly available information to assess the company's oversight related to such expenditures of corporate assets.

We generally will vote AGAINST proposals asking for detailed disclosure of political contributions or trade association or lobbying expenditures.

We generally will vote AGAINST proposals barring the company from making political contributions. Businesses are affected by legislation at the federal, state, and local level and barring political contributions can put the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Region: Japan Proxy Items

The following section is a broad summary of the Guidelines, which form the basis of the Policy with respect to Japanese public equity investments of operating and/or holding companies. Applying these guidelines is not inclusive of all considerations in the Japanese market.

1. Operational Items

Financial Results/Director and Auditor Reports

Vote FOR approval of financial statements and director and auditor reports, unless:

- There are concerns about the accounts presented or audit procedures used; or
- The company is not responsive to shareholder questions about specific items that should be publicly disclosed.

Appointment of Auditors and Auditor Fees

Vote FOR the re-election of auditors and proposals authorizing the board to fix auditor fees, unless:

- There are serious concerns about the accounts presented, audit procedures used or audit opinion rendered;
- There is reason to believe that the auditor has rendered an opinion that is neither accurate nor indicative of the company's financial position;
- Name of the proposed auditor has not been published;
- The auditors are being changed without explanation;
- Non-audit-related fees are substantial or are in excess of standard annual audit-related fees; or
- The appointment of external auditors if they have previously served the company in an executive capacity or can otherwise be considered affiliated with the company.

Reincorporation Proposals

Vote reincorporation proposals on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Allocation of Income

Vote FOR approval of the allocation of income, unless:

- The dividend payout ratio has been consistently low without adequate explanation; or
- The payout is excessive given the company's financial position;

Amendments to Articles of Association

Vote amendments to the articles of association on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Change in Company Fiscal Term

Vote FOR resolutions to change a company's fiscal term unless a company's motivation for the change is to postpone its annual general meeting.

Amend Quorum Requirements

Vote proposals to amend quorum requirements for shareholder meetings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Virtual Meetings

Generally vote AGAINST proposals allowing for the convening of virtual-only* shareholder meetings.

* The phrase “virtual-only shareholder meeting” refers to a meeting of shareholders that is held exclusively through the use of online technology without a corresponding in-person meeting. The term “hybrid shareholder meeting” refers to an in-person, or physical, meeting in which shareholders are permitted to participate online.

2. Board of Directors and Statutory Auditors

The board of directors should promote the interests of shareholders by acting in an oversight and/or advisory role; should have independent oversight of management; and should be held accountable for actions and results related to their responsibilities.

Voting on Director Nominees in Uncontested Elections

Vote on director nominees should be determined on a CASE-BY-CASE basis taking into consideration the following:

- The company’s committee structure: statutory auditor board structure, U.S.-type three committee structure, or audit committee structure; or
- Adequate disclosure has not been provided in a timely manner; or
- There are clear concerns over questionable finances or restatements; or
- There have been questionable transactions or conflicts of interest; or
- There are any records of abuses against minority shareholder interests; or
- The board fails to meet minimum corporate governance standards; or
- There are reservations about:
 - Director terms
 - Bundling of proposals to elect directors
 - Board independence
 - Disclosure of named nominees
 - Combined Chairman/CEO
 - Election of former CEO as Chairman of the board
 - Overboarded directors
 - Composition of committees
 - Director independence
 - Number of directors on the board
 - Lack of gender diversity on the board
- Specific concerns about the individual or company, such as criminal wrongdoing or breach of fiduciary responsibilities; or
- There are other considerations which may include sanctions from government or authority, violations of laws and regulations, or other issues related to improper business practice, failure to replace management, or egregious actions related to service on other boards.

Vote AGAINST top executives when the company has an excessive amount of strategic shareholdings.

Vote AGAINST top executives when the company has posted average return on equity (ROE) of less than five percent over the last five fiscal years.

Vote AGAINST top executives when the company does not disclose various components of current emissions, a proxy for a company’s dependency on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gasses (such as Scope 1, Scope 2, Scope 3 emissions), material to the company’s business. For companies with 3-committee structure boards, vote AGAINST the Audit Committee Chair.

Board Composition

We generally believe diverse teams have the potential to outperform and we expect the companies that we invest in to focus on the importance of diversity. When evaluating board composition, we believe a diversity of ethnicity,

gender and experience is an important consideration. We encourage companies to disclose the composition of their board in the proxy statement and may vote against members of the board without disclosure. See below how we execute our vote at companies that do not meet our diversity expectations.

Vote AGAINST members of the Nominating Committee if the board is not representative relative to the board composition of companies in their market. For Japanese boards with statutory auditors or audit committee structure, vote AGAINST top executives.

Director Independence

Classification of Directors

Inside Director

- Employee or executive of the company;
- Any director who is not classified as an outside director of the company.

Non-Independent Non-Executive Director (affiliated outsider)

- Any director specifically designated as a representative of a significant shareholder of the company;
- Any director who is/was also an employee or executive of a significant shareholder of the company;
- Beneficial owner (direct or indirect) of at least 10% of the company's stock, or one of the top 10 shareholders, either in economic terms or in voting rights (this may be aggregated if voting power is distributed among more than one member of a defined group, e.g., family members who beneficially own less than 10% individually, but collectively own more than 10%)
- Individuals who are employees or were previously employed at main lenders/banks of the company;
- Relative of a current employee of the company or its affiliates;
- Any director who works or has worked at a company whose shares are held by the company in question as strategic shareholdings (i.e. "cross-shareholdings")
- Any director who has served at a company as an outside director for 12 years or more;
- Any additional relationship or principle considered to compromise independence under local corporate governance best practice guidance.

Independent Non-Executive Directors (independent outsider)

- No material connection, either directly or indirectly, to the company other than a board seat.

At companies adopting a board with a statutory auditor committee structure or an audit committee structure, vote AGAINST top executives when the board consists of fewer than two independent outside directors or less than 1/3 of the board consists of independent outside directors. Additionally, if the company is a member of the TOPIX 100 index, vote AGAINST top executives when less than 1/2 of the board consists of outside directors.

At companies adopting an audit committee structure, vote AGAINST affiliated outside directors who are audit committee members.

At companies adopting a U.S.-type three committee structure, vote AGAINST members of the Nominating Committee when less than a majority of the board consists of independent outside directors.

At controlled companies adopting board with a statutory auditor structure or an audit committee structure, vote AGAINST top executives if the board does not consist of majority independent outside directors.

Director Accountability

Vote AGAINST individual outside directors who attend less than 75% of the board and/or committee meetings without a disclosed valid excuse.

Other items considered for an AGAINST vote include specific concerns about the individual or the company, such as criminal wrongdoing or breach of fiduciary responsibilities, sanctions from government or authority, violations of laws and regulations, the presence of inappropriate related party transactions, or other issues related to improper business practices

Vote AGAINST members of the full board or appropriate committee (or only the independent chairman or lead director as may be appropriate in situations such as where there is a classified board and members of the appropriate committee are not up for re-election or the appropriate committee is comprised of the entire board) for the below reasons. New nominees will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Extreme cases may warrant a vote against the entire board.

- Material failures of governance, stewardship, or fiduciary responsibilities at the company, including but not limited to violations of global norms principles and/or other significant global standards;
- Failure to disclose material environmental, social and governance information;
- Egregious actions related to the director(s)' service on other boards that raise substantial doubt about his or her ability to effectively oversee management and serve the best interests of shareholders at any company;
- The board adopts or renews a poison pill without shareholder approval, does not commit to putting it to shareholder vote within 12 months of adoption (or in the case of a newly public company, does not commit to put the pill to a shareholder vote within 12 months following the IPO), or reneges on a commitment to put the pill to a vote, and has not yet received a withhold/against recommendation for this issue;
- The board failed to act on takeover offers where the majority of the shareholders tendered their shares;
- If in an extreme situation the board lacks accountability and oversight, coupled with sustained poor performance relative to peers.

Voting on Director Nominees in Contested Elections

Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis in contested elections of directors, e.g., the election of shareholder nominees or the dismissal of incumbent directors, determining which directors are best suited to add value for shareholders.

The analysis will generally be based on, but not limited to, the following major decision factors:

- Company performance relative to its peers;
- Strategy of the incumbents versus the dissidents;
- Independence of board candidates;
- Experience and skills of board candidates;
- Governance profile of the company;
- Evidence of management entrenchment;
- Responsiveness to shareholders;
- Whether a takeover offer has been rebuffed;
- Whether minority or majority representation is being sought.

Other Board Related Proposals (Management and Shareholder)

Vote AGAINST the introduction of classified boards and mandatory retirement ages for directors.

Vote AGAINST proposals to alter board structure or size in the context of a fight for control of the company or the board.

Independent Board Chair

We will generally vote AGAINST shareholder proposals requiring that the chairman’s position be filled by an independent director, if the company satisfies 3 of the 4 following criteria:

- Two-thirds independent board;
- A designated, or a rotating, lead director, elected by and from the independent board members with clearly delineated and comprehensive duties;
- Fully independent key committees; and/or
- Established, publicly disclosed, governance guidelines and director biographies/profiles.

Statutory Auditor Elections

Statutory Auditor Independence

Vote AGAINST affiliated outside statutory auditors.

For definition of affiliated outsiders, see “Classification of Directors”

Statutory Auditor Appointment

Vote FOR management nominees taking into consideration the following:

- Adequate disclosure has not been provided in a timely manner; or
- There are clear concerns over questionable finances or restatements; or
- There have been questionable transactions or conflicts of interest; or
- There are any records of abuses against minority shareholder interests; or
- The board fails to meet minimum corporate governance standards; or
- Specific concerns about the individual or company, such as criminal wrongdoing or breach of fiduciary responsibilities; or
- Outside statutory auditor’s attendance at less than 75% of the board and statutory auditor meetings without a disclosed valid excuse; or
- Unless there are other considerations which may include sanctions from government or authority, violations of laws and regulations, or other issues related to improper business practice, failure to replace management, or egregious actions related to service on other boards.

3. Compensation

Director Compensation

Vote FOR proposals to award cash fees to non-executive directors unless the amounts are excessive relative to other companies in the country or industry.

Vote non-executive director compensation proposals that include both cash and share-based components on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Vote proposals that bundle compensation for both non-executive and executive directors into a single resolution on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Vote AGAINST proposals to introduce retirement bonuses for outside directors and/or outside statutory auditors, unless the amounts are disclosed and are not excessive relative to other companies in the country or industry.

Compensation Plans

Vote compensation plans on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Director, Officer, and Auditor Indemnification and Liability Provisions

Vote proposals seeking indemnification and liability protection for directors and statutory auditors on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Vote AGAINST proposals to indemnify auditors.

4. Shareholder Rights and Defenses

Antitakeover Mechanisms

Generally vote AGAINST all antitakeover proposals, unless certain conditions are met to ensure the proposal is intended to enhance shareholder value, including consideration of the company's governance structure, the anti-takeover defense duration, the trigger mechanism and governance, and the intended purpose of the antitakeover defense.

5. Strategic Transactions and Capital Structures

Reorganizations/Restructurings

Vote reorganizations and restructurings on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Mergers and Acquisitions

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on mergers and acquisitions taking into account the following based on publicly available information:

- Valuation;
- Market reaction;
- Strategic rationale;
- Management's track record of successful integration of historical acquisitions;
- Presence of conflicts of interest; and
- Governance profile of the combined company.

Dual Class Structures

Vote FOR resolutions that seek to maintain or convert to a one-share, one-vote capital structure.

Vote AGAINST requests for the creation or continuation of dual-class capital structures or the creation of new or additional super voting shares.

Share Issuance Requests

General Issuances:

Vote FOR issuance requests with preemptive rights to a maximum of 100% over currently issued capital.

Vote FOR issuance requests without preemptive rights to a maximum of 20% of currently issued capital.

Specific Issuances:

Vote on a CASE-BY-CASE basis on all requests, with or without preemptive rights.

Increases in Authorized Capital

Vote FOR non-specific proposals to increase authorized capital up to 100% over the current authorization unless the increase would leave the company with less than 30% of its new authorization outstanding.

Vote FOR specific proposals to increase authorized capital to any amount, unless:

- The specific purpose of the increase (such as a share-based acquisition or merger) does not meet guidelines for the purpose being proposed.

Vote AGAINST proposals to adopt unlimited capital authorizations.

Reduction of Capital

Vote FOR proposals to reduce capital for routine accounting purposes unless the terms are unfavorable to shareholders.

Vote proposals to reduce capital in connection with corporate restructuring on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Preferred Stock

Vote FOR the creation of a new class of preferred stock or for issuances of preferred stock up to 50% of issued capital unless the terms of the preferred stock would adversely affect the rights of existing shareholders.

Vote FOR the creation/issuance of convertible preferred stock as long as the maximum number of common shares that could be issued upon conversion meets guidelines on equity issuance requests.

Vote AGAINST the creation of a new class of preference shares that would carry superior voting rights to the common shares.

Vote AGAINST the creation of blank check preferred stock unless the board clearly states that the authorization will not be used to thwart a takeover bid.

Vote proposals to increase blank check preferred authorizations on a CASE-BY-CASE basis.

Share Repurchase Plans

We will generally recommend FOR share repurchase programs taking into account whether:

- The share repurchase program can be used as a takeover defense;
- There is clear evidence of historical abuse;
- There is no safeguard in the share repurchase program against selective buybacks;
- Pricing provisions and safeguards in the share repurchase program are deemed to be unreasonable in light of market practice.

Related-Party Transactions

Vote related-party transactions on a CASE-BY-CASE basis, considering factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- The parties on either side of the transaction;
- The nature of the asset to be transferred/service to be provided;
- The pricing of the transaction (and any associated professional valuation);
- The views of independent directors (where provided);
- The views of an independent financial adviser (where appointed);
- Whether any entities party to the transaction (including advisers) is conflicted; and
- The stated rationale for the transaction, including discussions of timing.

6. Environmental and Social Issues

Overall Approach

Proposals considered under this category could include, among others, requests that a company:

- Publish a report or additional information related to the company's business and impact on stakeholders;
- Disclose policies related to specific business practices and/or services;
- Conduct third party audits, reports or studies related to the company's business practices, services and/or impact on stakeholders

When evaluating environmental and social shareholder proposals, the following factors are generally considered:

- Whether the subject of the proposal is considered to be material to the company's business;
- The company's current level of publicly available disclosure, including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- The proponent of the proposal;
- If the company has implemented or formally committed to the implementation of a reporting program based on the International Sustainability Standards Board's Sustainability Accounting Standards, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board's (SASB) standards, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure's (TCFD) recommendations, or a similar standard;
- Whether adoption of the proposal is likely to enhance or protect shareholder value;
- Whether the information requested concerns business issues that relate to a meaningful percentage of the company's business;
- The degree to which the company's stated position on the issues raised in the proposal could affect its reputation or sales, or leave it vulnerable to a boycott or selective purchasing;
- Whether the company has already responded in some appropriate manner to the request embodied in the proposal;
- What other companies in the relevant industry have done in response to the issue addressed in the proposal;
- Whether the proposal itself is well framed and the cost of preparing the report and/or the implementation is reasonable;
- Whether the subject of the proposal is best left to the discretion of the board;
- Whether the proposal is legally binding for the board;
- Whether the company has material fines or violations in the area and if so, if appropriate actions have already been taken to remedy going forward;
- Whether providing this information would reveal proprietary or confidential information that would place the company at a competitive disadvantage.

Environmental Issues

Climate Transition Plans

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on management proposed climate transition plans. When evaluating management proposed plans, the following factors are generally considered:

- If the company has detailed disclosure of the governance, strategy, risk mitigation efforts, and metrics and targets based on the TCFD's recommendations, or a similar standard;
- If the company has detailed disclosure of their current emissions data based on the SASB materiality framework; and

- If the company has detailed disclosure in line with Paris Agreement goals.

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting climate transition plans. When evaluating these shareholder proposals, the following factors are generally considered:

- The company’s current level of publicly available disclosure including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- If the proposal asks for detailed disclosure according to the TCFD’s recommendations;
- If the proposal asks for detailed disclosure of the company’s current emissions data based on the SASB materiality framework;
- If the proposal asks for long-term targets, as well as short and medium term milestones;
- If the proposal asks for targets to be aligned to a globally accepted framework, such as Paris Aligned or Net Zero;
- If the proposal asks for targets to be approved by the Science Based Target Initiative (“SBTi”);
- If the proposal seeks to add reasonable transparency and is not onerous or overly prescriptive; and
- Whether the proposal is binding or non-binding.

Environmental Sustainability Reporting

Generally vote FOR shareholders proposals requesting the company to report on its policies, initiatives and oversight mechanisms related to environmental sustainability, including the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. The following factors will be considered:

- The company’s current level of publicly available disclosure including if the company already discloses similar information through existing reports or policies;
- If the company has implemented or formally committed to the implementation of a reporting program based on the International Sustainability Standards Board’s Sustainability Accounting Standards, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board’s (SASB) standards, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure’s (TCFD) recommendations, or a similar standard;
- If the company’s current level of disclosure is comparable to that of its industry peers; and
- If there are significant controversies, fines, penalties, or litigation associated with the company’s environmental performance.

Other Environmental Proposals

Vote CASE-BY-CASE on the following shareholder proposals if relevant to the company:

- Seeking information on the financial, physical, or regulatory risks a company faces related to climate change on its operations and investment, or on how the company identifies, measures and manages such risks;
- Calling for the reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions;
- Seeking reports on responses to regulatory and public pressures surrounding climate change, and for disclosure of research that aided in setting company policies around climate change;
- Requesting an action plan including science based targets and a commitment to net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier;
- Requesting a report/disclosure of goals on GHG emissions from company operations and/or products;
- Requesting a company report on its energy efficiency policies; and
- Requesting reports on the feasibility of developing renewable energy resources.

Social Issues

Board and Workforce Demographics

A company should have a clear diversity policy. Generally vote FOR proposals seeking to amend a company’s diversity policy to additionally prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Generally vote FOR proposals requesting reports on a company's efforts to diversify the board, unless:

- The gender and racial minority representation of the company's board meets our board composition expectations; and
- The board already reports on its nominating procedures and gender and racial minority initiatives on the board.

Labor, Human and Animal Rights Standards

Generally vote FOR proposals requesting a report on company or company supplier labor, human, and/or animal rights standards and policies, or on the impact of its operations on society, unless such information is already publicly disclosed considering:

- The degree to which existing relevant policies and practices are disclosed;
- Whether or not existing relevant policies are consistent with internationally recognized standards;
- Whether company facilities and those of its suppliers are monitored and how;
- Company participation in fair labor organizations or other internationally recognized human rights initiatives;
- Scope and nature of business conducted in markets known to have higher risk of workplace labor/human rights abuse;
- Recent, significant company controversies, fines, or litigation regarding human rights at the company or its suppliers;
- The scope of the request; and
- Deviation from industry sector peer company standards and practices.

Generally vote CASE-BY-CASE on shareholder proposals requesting reports on the actions taken by a company to prevent sexual and other forms of harassment or on the risks posed by the company's failure to take such actions, taking into account the company's existing policies and disclosures of policies.