

Future leaders of ESG in the business sector

# KNOWLEDGE COMPENDIUM

EU rules and regulations  
regarding ESG with comments



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# **KEY DEFINITIONS**

## **ESG**

- **Carbon Footprint**

A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced directly or indirectly by an individual, organization, event or product. The carbon footprint includes emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and other gases expressed in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

- **UN Sustainable Development Goals**

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a world recovery plan adopted by UN member countries that covers climate, environmental, social and economic issues. It assumes, among others: striving to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, preserve environmental diversity, guarantee human rights and eliminate poverty.

- **CSR (corporate social responsibility, corporate social responsibility)**

This is a concept according to which companies, when building a business strategy, take into account social interests and environmental protection and take care of relationships with various stakeholder groups, and above all, with employees. Their conduct is transparent and ethical, and contributes to the development and well-being of society as a whole.

- **CSRD (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive)**

The EU Council has finally approved the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). Companies will need to communicate how their business model impacts their sustainability, and how external sustainability factors (such as climate change or human rights) impact their operations. With this information, investors and other stakeholders will be able to make informed decisions on sustainability issues.

The new act amends the 2014 Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) and strengthens existing rules in this area, which no longer meet the requirements of the EU's transition towards a sustainable economy.

The new act introduces more detailed reporting requirements and obliges large companies to publish information on sustainability issues such as environmental rights, social rights, human rights and corporate governance factors.

The new sustainability reporting rules will apply to large utilities with more than 500 employees, all large utilities with more than 250 employees and a turnover of EUR 40 million and all companies listed on regulated markets, except micro-enterprises. These companies are also responsible for assessing information relating to their subsidiaries.





The regulations also apply to SMEs, taking into account their specificity. For a transitional period, they can benefit from a derogation: they will be exempt from the application of the directive until 2028.

As for non-European companies, they also have to submit sustainability reports as long as they generate more than EUR 150 million in net sales in the EU and have at least one subsidiary or branch here. They should report on their impact on the environmental, social policy and corporate governance issues specified in the directive.

The European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) will develop European standards, based on technical advice from several European agencies.



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- **D&I (Diversity & inclusion)**

The theory of equal opportunities, diversity and the inclusion of all employees in common activities.

- **EFRAG (European Financial Reporting Advisory Group)**

European Financial Reporting Advisory Group; an association that advises the European Commission and is responsible for developing the ESRS.

- **ESG (environmental, social responsibility , corporate governance, i.e. environment, social responsibility, corporate governance)**

This is an abbreviation of the factors based on which ratings and non-financial assessments of enterprises, countries and other organizations are created. The main goal of ESG is to provide investors with the opportunity to compare alternative investment directions on one level by analyzing these three parameters.

- **ESRS**

European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) In accordance with the assumptions of the CSRD Directive (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive) companies will be obliged

to prepare sustainable development reports to a much broader extent than is currently the case under the NFRD (Non- financial Reporting Directive). Reporting will be carried out according to specific, uniform standards - ESRS (European Sustainability Reporting Standards). In ESG reports, companies will disclose three levels of indicators: sector-agnostic, sector-specific and entity-specific.

- **GOZ**

Closed-Circuit Economy (Circular Economy) - a concept that aims to rationally use resources and reduce the negative impact of manufactured products on the environment, including: by reducing the consumption of raw materials, waste and creating a closed loop of processes in which waste is treated as raw materials in subsequent production stages.

- **Greenwashing**

Greenwashing is the false creation of a company's image, suggesting that the products they produce are ecological and safe for the environment.

- **GRI (Global Reporting Initiative)**

The Global Reporting Initiative is an international independent standards organization that helps companies, governments and



other organizations understand their impact on issues such as climate change, human rights and corruption. The GRI reporting framework is designed to help organizations (regardless of their size, area of operation or location) report their impact on the economy, environment and society.

- **Corporate governance**

It is a set of rules of conduct both for company bodies, but also for members of these companies' bodies - the supervisory board, management board and shareholders. The principles of corporate governance refer to broadly understood company management.

Socially involved marketing CRM (Cause Related Marketing)  
It is a combination of the economic goals of an enterprise with the social goals of a given project. It is a combination of business goals and activities typical of non-profit entities, i.e. solving social problems. An example may be allocating a specific part of the profit to a selected social purpose, e.g. a meal for the poor.

- **Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD)**

Human rights due diligence (HRDD) is the process of identifying, avoiding, mitigating and documenting the human rights consequences of companies' activities.

- **Net Positive**

Net positive is a situation in which we give back to the natural environment and/or society more than we take. Net positive activities aim to restore or regenerate ecological systems and slow down the decline of natural capital.

- **Net zero**

Net zero is strictly regulated by Science Based requirements Targets initiative (SBTi) and requires a minimum 90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions across the entire value chain (Scope 1, 2 and 3). The remaining 10% can be offset or captured.

- **Climate neutrality**

Climate neutrality is about reducing greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible and offsetting the remaining emissions that could not be avoided through offsetting. This can be achieved by purchasing the appropriate amount of the so-called carbon credits, but there is no standard that would determine what part of emissions may be subject to offset.





- **Non-governmental organizations**

These are all entities that are not public administration units or bodies and whose activities are not aimed at making profit. They focus on pursuing a selected social interest.

- **Integrated report or integrated report**

The integrated report should be a concise statement presenting how the organization's strategy, management model, business results and future prospects, in the context of the external environment, lead to value creation in the short, medium and long term.

- **Respect Index**

It is the first index of socially responsible companies of the Warsaw Stock Exchange in Central Europe. It includes Polish and foreign companies from the WSE Main List that operate in accordance with management standards in the field of corporate and information governance and investor relations. It also takes into account ecological, social and labor aspects.

- **EU Taxonomy (Taxonomy Regulation)**

Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 establishing a framework to facilitate sustainable investment 2020/852 (the „Taxonomy

Regulation”), which entered into force on 12 July 2020 and entered into force on January 1, 2022 is a tool intended to make it easier for enterprises and investors to make investment decisions towards more sustainable economic activities. The mechanism is intended to provide uniform criteria for determining whether an economic activity is „environmentally sustainable”.

- **Upcycling**

A form of secondary processing that produces products with a higher value than those from which they were created.

- **Employee volunteering (integrated report)**

This activity mainly involves the entrepreneur undertaking and supporting charitable activities for various people, social initiatives and non-governmental organizations. It helps support the concepts of corporate social responsibility by engaging employees in charitable, socially engaged and environmentally friendly activities.

- **Social involvement**

Conscious participation of the company in social life to solve specific social problems. The company's social involvement is often expressed in charitable activities, education of children and adults, cooperation with universities and non-governmental organizations.



- **Sustainable development**

Sustainable development is intergenerational solidarity, which involves finding solutions that guarantee further growth, which allow for the active inclusion of all social groups in the development processes, while giving them the opportunity to benefit from economic growth through the implementation of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).



**KNOWLEDGE BASE**

# What does the CSRD change in the field of non-financial reporting?

**In January 2023, the CSRD directive entered into force, which changes the rules of non-financial reporting in the areas of ESG ( Environmental , Social, Governance ). The reason for the changes is, among others, the need to harmonize reporting standards and too high a level of generality, and thus difficult application of previously applicable Community regulations - the NFRD Directive. New obligations should be implemented as soon as possible to properly prepare companies for new challenges.**

Poland should fulfill its obligation to implement the CSRD Directive by July 2024. At the same time, the EU legislator introduced a three-stage impact of the new directive, according to which the obligations arising from it will cover new categories of entities in subsequent periods. First of all, the changes will affect entities that were already subject to reporting obligations in the scope defined by the NFRD directive. And so, for large public interest companies entities, (PIE) that already apply the NFRD directive and employ over 500 employees, reporting in accordance with CSRD should start in 2025 (for 2024). In turn, other large entities, i.e. enterprises that are not subject to the NFRD, but employ 250 people or boast a sufficiently high turnover or asset value, will have to implement new reporting in

2026. The most numerous in this group are listed companies from the SME sector, for which the deadline for submitting reports is set for 2027.

The Polish Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy estimates that the changes will affect over 3,000 Polish companies, but in the entire European Union it is a challenge for almost 50,000. companies. It is worth noting that previously ESG reporting obligations only applied to financial market entities. Currently, this scope is to be much wider.

It can be expected that the implementation of ESG-related reporting will be the greatest challenge for entities from the SME sector listed on the stock exchange. These are the largest number of entities, and many of them may not be prepared for such far-reaching changes and the related expenses.

## What is CSRD aiming at?

The CSRD directive stipulates that ESG reports will include information on the energy transformation, circular economy, water demand, but also a number of employee issues, including: whistleblowing , freedom of competition and anti-corruption. Preparing such a report will not be easy and will require the involvement of specialists - in large companies this will probably be a task for interdisciplinary teams of specialists.



Non-financial reports should answer a number of questions regarding, among others: the entity's business model and business strategy, sustainability goals and progress, policies and due diligence of those taking care of sustainable development or the competences of members of management, supervisory and administrative bodies in this area. Additionally, the entity must identify potential risks related to its activities and describe the actions taken to minimize their negative effects. At the same time, the correct implementation of the new obligations is important because the CSRD Directive obliges Member States to introduce sanctions for incorrect implementation of reporting obligations.

## Financial market versus ESG

Issuers of securities are in a rather special situation, as they are obliged to report ESG, not only based on the above-mentioned CSRD Directive (directly), but also the SFDR Regulation (indirectly) - obliging financial market participants and financial advisors to use a number of disclosures, which will force you to obtain this information from issuers. The SFDR Regulation imposes information obligations on these institutions regardless of the scale of their operations and the basis of operation, which will particularly affect smaller entities, including the previously mentioned Alternative Investment Companies (ASI) and Alternative Investment Company Managers (ZASI).

SFDR concerns information obligations - the so-called disclosures about financial products and services offered based on information about „other people's" activities that these products or services finance, i.e. the investment portfolio. The above means that financial institutions, in turn, need disclosures about the own activities of entities in their portfolio - in order to implement the obligations arising from SFDR at the product level and before investment - in order to include them in decision-making processes.

Although there is currently no information on penalties imposed on entities related to the financial market, including ZASI, due to failure to implement ESG obligations, it is worth taking a closer look at the internal documentation to assess its compliance with the upcoming changes (CSRD) and fill any arrears (SFDR). Especially since in the second half of last year, an amendment to the Financial Market Supervision Act came into force, under which the Polish Financial Supervision Authority was granted the power to impose severe financial sanctions for non-compliance with the provisions of the SFDR by financial market participants. Fines may be imposed both on the financial market participants themselves, e.g. ZASI - up to an amount not exceeding PLN 21,569,000 or 3% of net revenues from the sale of goods and services and financial operations, as well as on persons performing the functions of management board members of this ZASI - in the amount not exceeding PLN 3,019,660.



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# The EU will introduce a ban on greenwashing

**The EU Parliament and the Council have reached a provisional agreement on new rules banning greenwashing. The aim of the new regulations is to protect consumers from misleading practices and help them make better purchasing choices.**

## What will be banned?

- general environmental claims, e.g. „environmentally friendly”, „natural”, „biodegradable”, „climate neutral” or „organic”, without proof of the specific environmental performance of the claim;
- claims based on carbon offsetting schemes that a product has a neutral, limited or positive impact on the environment;
- sustainability labels not based on approved certification schemes or established by public authorities;
- claims regarding durability in terms of duration of use or intensity of use under normal conditions, if not proven;
- encouraging the consumer to replace consumables such as printer ink cartridges earlier than absolutely necessary;
- presenting software updates as necessary, even if they only add functionality;
- representing goods as repairable when they are not.

## New harmonized label distinguishing products covered by an extended warranty

MEPs successfully pushed for more visibility of warranty information, as many people are unaware that all goods benefit from a minimum two-year warranty in the EU. The Commission is also tasked with developing a new label for manufacturers who want to emphasize the quality of their goods by extending the warranty period free of charge.

The interim agreement must now receive final approval from both Parliament and the Council to become law. The MEPs' vote is scheduled to take place in November. Once the directive enters into force, Member States will have 24 months to incorporate the new provisions into their law.



## Responsible communication 18 goal sustainable UN development?

**Business enjoys increasing social trust, which is confirmed by research, including the latest „Edelman Trust Barometer 2023”. In 2021, business achieved the highest trust index for the first time, which it consistently maintains, surpassing governments, NGOs and the media in this respect. It is also increasingly perceived as a source of reliable, rather than false or misleading, information.**

However, as research shows, we find manipulated information in all types of traditional media (press, radio, television) as well as the Internet and social media. That is why it is so important to introduce regulations regarding responsible communication.

Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (GA), an organization in which the Polish Public Relations Association is the national representative, turned to the UN with a proposal to expand the sustainable development goals to include responsible communication that shapes ethical relations with stakeholders. The appeal was made on behalf of over 100 industry organizations from around the world, including PSPR, which gave full support to this idea during the European Global Alliance summit in Lisbon.

At the end of September, Justin Green, president of GA, officially sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, offering to start dialogue and cooperation to create a new Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) around the concept of „responsible communication”. The document was formally signed during the World Public Relations Forum 2023 in Chennai, India. For two days, over 600 delegates from all continents discussed „how the world is changing the PR profession and how the PR profession can change the world.”

Given that the first of the Global Alliance’s ethical principles is to act in the public interest, the Global Alliance considers the UN 2030 Agenda to be a beacon for public relations professionals and believes that the Sustainable Development Goals require responsible and effective communication to implement them.

Ethical communication and relations with the environment are in fact deeply intertwined with each of the 17 UN goals. Nevertheless, broad social communication, in such incredible dynamics of contemporary changes, should definitely become a separate goal. With clearly defined component goals. You can exchange for a long time. These include: the fight against disinformation, balancing marketing and strictly information communication, the safety of individuals and communities in the communication space, the rights to dialogue and obtaining reliable, credible knowledge and their enforcement, increasing



the availability of public information in selected regions of the world, and even further - consistently increasing the organization's obligations towards transparency towards its environment - because this is the direction we are heading now. I have no doubt that this is one of the great challenges of the 21st century, which is worth taking up the challenge at the level of UN priorities, argues Cyprian Maciejewski, president of the Polish Public Relations Association.

**The postulate of „responsible communication” within the UN goals includes:**

- open dialogues on global challenges such as climate change, poverty reduction and defending democracy
- recognizing dialogue as a powerful tool
- maintaining freedom of opinion and press
- ethical approach to organizational and institutional communication, based on facts
- combating fake news and propaganda
- educating individuals to use their „communication powers”, especially through social media
- public and private support for critical journalism
- supporting gender diversity and equality at a deep level
- showing empathy for people affected by hunger, poverty, limited opportunities, war, forced migration and discrimination
- using positive and inclusive language.

From the UN perspective, counteracting disinformation is a particularly important communication issue. According to UNHCR, disinformation should be seen as a symptom of diseases such as systemic inequality and a crisis of trust in institutions and governments. It leads to increasing polarization of societies and threatens the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

“While misinformation is nothing new, modern digital tools and social media platforms have enabled misinformation to be intentionally spread widely before the misinformation can be challenged and removed. Organized disinformation campaigns are also used to silence human rights defenders, journalists and minority voices, putting broader human rights at risk. Violent communication activities, such as disinformation campaigns, spreading fake news or hate speech, may also effectively discourage individuals or groups from getting involved in socially important issues,” explains Kamil Wyszowski, executive director, UN Global Compact Network Poland.



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# European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS)

**On July 31, 2023, the European Commission adopted a Delegated Regulation adopting the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). This is the first set of 12 common standards, which include:**

- 2 cross-cutting standards - ESRS 1 „General requirements” and ESRS 2 „General disclosures”, and
- 10 topical standards including:
  - ◇ 5 environmental standards:

ESRS E1 „Climate”,  
ESRS E2 „Pollution”,  
ESRS E3 „Water and marine resources”,  
ESRS E4 „Biodiversity and ecosystems”,  
ESRS E5 „Resource use and circular economy”,

- ◇ 4 standards related to social issues:

ESRS S1 „Own workforce”,  
ESRS S2 „Workers in the value chain”,  
ESRS S3 „Affected communities”,  
ESRS S4 ‘Consumers and end users’,  
and

- ◇ 1 standard related to governance issues - ESRS G1 „Business conduct”.

These standards will be applied by the first group of entities (the largest public-interest entities currently reporting non-financial information) to sustainable development reporting for 2024.

Sectoral and SME standards are still under development and are expected to be ready in 2024.



# Dual materiality analysis in European Reporting Standards (ESRS)

**2024 will be an important period for the first group of companies subject to the obligation to report on sustainable development issues. Reports for this period will have to fit into the framework outlined in the CSRD directive and the accompanying European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). A novelty, and at the same time the basic framework for the analysis of a rich set of sustainable development indicators presented in the ESRS standards, is double materiality, covering the need to analyze both the company's impact on people and the impact of social and ecological trends on its financial condition.**

The group of entities that will be covered by regulations related to the European Green Deal in the coming years will significantly increase compared to the currently applicable NFRD directive. ESRS standards cover a wide range of issues related to the environmental, social and managerial aspects of enterprise functioning. They will significantly influence the shape of the EU market through growing expectations regarding ESG issues towards trading partners in supply chains.

ESRS indicators are intended to harmonize standards for reporting non-financial issues within the European Union. They were created in cooperation with, among others, with the International Sustainable Development Standards Board, responsible for creating international disclosure standards in the field of sustainable development. The unification of the standard is intended to make it easier to meet new regulatory requirements by enterprises that previously decided to use voluntary reporting frameworks, such as GRI standards or TCFD recommendations - says Iwona Galbierz- Sztrauch , Partner, Leader of Advisory Services for the Financial Sector, ESG Leader at KPMG in Poland.

## The ESRS standards introduce dual materiality analysis

The basic framework for analyzing the rich set of sustainability indicators presented in the ESRS standards is double materiality. materiality), including the need to analyze both the company's impact on people and the impact of social and ecological trends on its financial condition. Such an analysis is intended to help select indicators that have a key impact on the functioning of the company, enabling it to communicate transparently with stakeholders and providing a basis for creating well-thought-out strategies for changes in the business model.





Companies will be obliged to report on issues related to management structure, strategy, management of ESG risks and opportunities, as well as environmental, social and management indicators selected in the dual materiality analysis.

### **Who will be covered by the ESRS requirements?**

public interest companies will be obliged to publish their reports for 2024 entities , PIE) employing over 500 people - including those covered so far by reporting obligations based on the NFRD directive. In the following years, the pool of entities covered by the regulation will expand to include all large enterprises employing more than 250 people, which will be obliged to report for 2025 , and then to include listed small and medium-sized enterprises, which will only be subject to the obligation in reports for 2026.

*From the one published in June this year. by KPMG in Poland report entitled The „Climate and Environmental Benchmark” shows that meeting the requirements set out in European sustainable development reporting standards may be a challenge even for the largest Polish enterprises. We took a closer look at a set of what we consider to be the most important environmental indicators among the ESRSs, taking into account climate, raw material and biodiversity issues. The average score of the 100 largest*

*Polish companies is 5.2 out of 10 possible points. The implementation of new regulatory requirements for many companies will mean the need to accelerate activities in the field of data collection, dialogue with stakeholders and the formulation of holistic strategies for sustainable development of the company, enabling the creation of business models resistant to the challenges of the future - says Justyna Wysocka-Golec, Director in the Climate Change Team , Energy and Decarbonization in the Business Consulting Department at KPMG in Poland.*

*The use of ESRS indicators will not only help meet regulatory requirements, but will also help build credibility in a dynamically changing market. Changes in the way a company is run, resulting from a reliable analysis of collected data, may make it easier to obtain financing or insurance, says Przemysław Eyep , Associate Partner in the Business/ESG Consulting Department at KPMG in Poland.*



## ESRS – struktura standardów



# **CASE STUDY**

## Bank Ochrony Środowiska (BOŚ Bank) - ESG report

**Bank Ochrony Środowiska published their ESG report for 2021. It presents the impact of BOŚ on the environment - in particular in the field of environmental protection, social responsibility, and corporate governance. It also presents the bank's activities around sustainable development, which goes beyond the information and data presented as part of traditional financial reporting.**

The year 2021 was a breakthrough year for BOŚ. During this time, the bank developed an ESG strategy closely related to the bank's business strategy for 2021-2023. Their ESG Strategy sets out the main directions of activities for sustainable development and contains a wide catalogue of activities, to which measurable goals have been assigned - including, among others, the goal of striving for climate neutrality.

In addition, in 2021, the bank strongly focused on: the development of green financial products and increasing their importance in business activities; improving the professional competences of employees; and was involved in social initiatives, including education in the field of sustainable development.

Obtaining an ESG rating by Bank Ochrony Środowiska was an important element of the implementation of the strategy. In December 2021, the Sustainalytics agency awarded BOŚ an overall ESG Risk rating of 19.9, which means low exposure to the risk of a significant negative impact of ESG factors („Low Risk”). The result of the ESG assessment placed BOŚ in the group of 18% of the best-rated banks and in the top 23% of nearly 15,000 companies worldwide surveyed by this agency, as of December 2021.

- The recently published ESG report for 2021 shows how dynamically Bank Ochrony Środowiska is changing and how much we have been able to do in the area of sustainable development in just one year. I am proud of the entire Bank's team, as it is our joint success. It is even more significant if we consider the uncertainty and volatility of market conditions surrounding us, related to, among others, with the COVID-19 pandemic. The report also shows that BOŚ successfully combines the implementation of business goals with environmental and social goals. We continue our efforts to further change our bank and support our partners even more intensively on their way to the green transformation - said Wojciech Hann, President of the Management Board of BOŚ SA.



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## Supporting the green transformation of the bank's customers

In 2021, BOŚ concluded 2,622 pro-ecological transactions in the total amount of PLN 1.67 billion (+24% y/y). The bank's customers completed over 2.6 thousand eco-investments with a total estimated value of PLN 2.86 billion (+291% y/y). The projects implemented last year contributed to the production of over 62,700 MWh/year of energy from renewable energy sources (RES) (+10% y/y), reduction of consumption and reduction of heat losses by 58,300 GJ/year (+374% y/y), reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 183,100 tonnes/year (+165% y/y), and reduction of dust emissions by 35.2 tonnes/year (+27% y/y).

The development of a specialised offer of financial products is reflected in the growing share of green assets in the bank's loan portfolio. At the end of 2021, it amounted to nearly 37%, and the goal is to increase it to 50% by 2023.

## Reducing the impact on the natural environment

Every year, the bank calculates and objectively verifies the results of own operational activities. It takes steps to limit the organisation's negative impact on the natural environment. As a result, in 2021 the bank reduced its own emissions measured in CO<sub>2</sub>eq by

approximately 60% compared to 2020 (calculated according to the market-based method). Emissions could have been reduced thanks to the reduction of electricity and heat consumption of the buildings used by the bank, and the implementation of a remote work system.

At the same time, the bank is involved in initiatives that protect the natural environment. Last year, BOŚ became a member of the United Nations Global Compact and joined the Climate Positive programme. The bank also joined the Science Based Targets initiative, which is an international partnership between the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the World Resources Institute (WRI), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which aims to promote activities aimed at climate protection, including the reduction of their carbon footprint.

The full ESG Report of Bank Ochrony Środowiska is available at: <https://www.bosbank.pl/ESG/esg/strategia-i-raport-esg>





## ESG report from Santander Bank Poland - with an analysis of climate risks and opportunities for the first time.

**The ESG 2021 report published by Santander Bank Poland is the ninth edition of the document that presents the organisation's impact on governance, social and environmental areas. This year's novelty is the climate report, developed according to the TCFD criteria, as an integral element of the environmental aspect. The analysis of climate risks and opportunities contained in it is another step in the bank's conscious preparations for the challenges of the near future.**

Climate change has consequences both for the planet and the environment, and for the economy and the financial system. The key challenge for the coming years will be the implementation of the European Green Deal. Achieving climate neutrality in Europe by 2050 requires the development of new products and increased customer education.

Banks can significantly contribute to the implementation of these changes. However, this requires conscious management which must cover a completely new area, in particular climate risks. Santander Bank Poland treats this issue with great attention, which is why the TCFD Report is an extensive part of the disclosure. It presents, for example, the distribution of climate responsibility

between the bank's corporate structure, the assumptions of the climate change strategy, as well as an analysis of the risks and opportunities associated with these changes.

- A very important goal for us is to minimise the impact of climate change. Comprehensive analysis of both opportunities and risks, in the TCFD model and in different scenarios and time perspectives, enables us to better understand the impact of climate change on our operations and the activities of our clients. Thanks to it, we can adapt the way of managing climate risks to current policies and legal regulations and take effective actions – emphasises Michał Gajewski, President of the Management Board of Santander Bank Poland.

The TCFD report contains a detailed analysis of climate risks and opportunities in two scenarios - the first assumes the implementation of the Paris Agreement and an increase in temperatures not exceeding 2°C, the second assumes their increase by 4°C. The analysis considered two basic types of risk: physical and transformational, broken down into 19 sectors in the bank's portfolio, and then into three perspectives: short- (2025), medium- (2030) and long- (2050) term.

Climate opportunities were analysed in a similar way. Such a comprehensive approach makes it possible to understand how different the impact of climate change can be on the activities of the bank and its clients.



## Santander reporting according to international standards

For nine years, Santander Bank Poland has been comprehensively summarising its operations in the context of ESG indicators, i.e., Environmental, Social and Governance. This is achieved by an annual report prepared for clients, investors and other stakeholders, in accordance with the guidelines of the GRI Foundation 2021 (Global Reporting Initiative) and based on a dialogue with stakeholders. Due to the growing importance of climate issues, the latest edition includes a climate analysis according to the recommendations of the TCFD (Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures).

Transparent information on ESG indicators is crucial for the credibility of institutions, including banks, not only from the perspective of investors but also the European Union and other regulatory bodies. Based on this type of data, ratings are given, and non-financial assessments of enterprises (as well as other organisations and entire countries) are carried out.

The Annual Non-Financial Report of Santander Bank Poland, in addition to the GRI guidelines, also considers the UNEP FI - Principles for Responsible Banking; the recommendations of the European Commission on non-financial information on the climate impact and ESG Reporting Guidelines for companies listed on the Warszawa Stock Exchange. The publication also refers to the glo-

bal UN Sustainable Development Goals. The report, including the Climate Supplement (TCFD), has been reviewed by an independent auditor.

The report and ESG websites are published in two language versions - Polish and English, also available on a mobile device. In addition, it has been adapted to the needs of the blind and visually impaired, complies with the international standard on accessibility for people with individual needs (WCAG 2.1 at AA level), and is certified by the Visible.org Foundation. There are also pdf files available for download on the website, with the report being available in both languages of Polish and English.

The full ESG Report is available at:

<https://esg.santander.pl/2021/>



## **„We are Green” - Green Holding has published their first ESG report for 2021**

**From 2024, in accordance with the EU CSRD directive, all the largest companies will be required to report their activities in the field of sustainable development. Green Holding, one of the leaders in the production of fresh green vegetables in Poland, has already published its first ESG report this year - in response to the recently implemented „We are Green” strategy. The Capital Group, consisting of five companies, clearly defined its goals until 2025 and 2030. They plan, amongst other things, to use 20% of green energy from their own sources in the production processes, as well as to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 30%.**

Green Holding has been consistently implementing a responsible business model for years. According to the guidelines of the European Commission, the largest companies will be required to report non-financial information from 2024, but Green Holding is doing it now. The report not only summarises their annual activity, but also presents the strategy and specific goals until 2025 and 2030.

- The family DNA of the company has provided the solid foundations on which our business is now built. Being aware of the

impact of our business on the environment, society, and economy, we have implemented the ESG strategy, which sets the directions for our activities in four main areas: caring for the planet, products, partnerships, and people. We want to show how important ESG issues are to us, which is why this year - although it is not obligatory - we are sharing the ESG report for 2021. We have set specific goals for 2025 and 2030, which relate to the ESG area. By fulfilling them, we want to make a real contribution to changing the world for the better - explains Przemysław Januszko, Chief Operating Officer and member of the management board of Green Holding.

### **What does „We are Green” mean?**

In their ESG report for 2021, Green Holding presents, amongst other things, the results achieved in all five companies belonging to the Capital Group as part of the sustainable development strategy „We are Green”. The report analyses actions taken within four strategic areas included in the strategy: „We care about the planet”, „We care about the product”, „We care about partnership” and „We care about people”.

In taking care of the planet, Green Holding applies sustainable agriculture solutions, such as reducing the use of mineral fertilisers. It also consciously uses natural resources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30%, and reducing electricity consumption by 10%, with as much as 20% of it coming from its own



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renewable sources. In this area, the group also plans to reduce the use of water in production processes and irrigation of crops by 5%. Fuel consumption in agricultural vehicles and plastic packaging will also be reduced.

In taking care of the product, Green Holding will extend the shelf life of products by 10% by 2030. Product management is not only about ensuring the highest standards, but also preventing food waste. In 2021 alone, the Group donated a total of 90 tons of products to food banks and, in line with the adopted strategy, plans to continue these activities.

As part of the „We take care of partnership” pillar, the group implements activities that build an ethical culture of the organisation and the entire supply chain. Therefore by 2025, it will train 100% of its employees in ethics, and will implement an even more detailed assessment of suppliers and require them to comply with the ‘Supplier Code of Conduct of Green Holding’.

The „We care about people” pillar is, in turn, a response to the needs and expectations of employees and consumers. Green Holding supports professional development, ensures the highest safety standards, and educates how to change eating habits. By 2025, an employee satisfaction survey will be conducted in all companies. Charitable activities will also be continued, such as support for Noble Box, or activities within the Ronald McDonald Foundation.

The first report of ESG Green Holding is a compendium of knowledge about the activities and goals of the group, but also an inspiration for companies that have yet to create their first report. The entire report can be read at: [www.greenholding.pl](http://www.greenholding.pl)



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## DANONE - reduction of methane emissions by 30% by 2030

**The DANONE group of companies, as the first company in the food sector, announced a global commitment to reduce methane emissions. It is part of the goals contained in the document „The Way of Positive Impact” - a new sustainable development strategy.**

It states that over the next seven years, the company intends to reduce methane emissions from the process of obtaining fresh milk by 30%, compared to the level from 2000. The new DANONE strategy, in addition to ambitious climate goals, includes commitments to develop regenerative farming practices, protect water resources, ensure circular packaging, and reduction of food waste.

Climate issues have been high on DANONE's agenda for years, but now they are becoming part of the organisation's strategic goals. In the context of Earth Day celebrated on April 22, the idea of which is to build public awareness of environmental protection and take specific actions in this regard, the new goals set out in the „Way of Positive Influence” gain particular importance.

Although electricity in all seven DANONE plants is already obtained from renewable sources, the company has just set itself even more ambitious goals for 2030. DANONE has announced

decarbonisation targets that have been scientifically verified and validated by the international Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). The climate goals set by the company are in line with the provisions of the Paris Agreement, which assumes limiting global warming to 1.5°C compared to the pre-industrial era.

- We raise the bar of the goals we set for ourselves. The actions already implemented, but also the commitments that we have just announced, are our real contribution to the fight against climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The health of people and the balance of the planet constitute a common ecosystem in which one element cannot function without the other. Each of us has only one healthy body, we live on one planet, therefore, we see having a positive impact on these two areas as a strategic role of the DANONE group of companies. This approach is reflected in the 'One Planet. One Healthy body.' vision, which we consistently implement - says Paweł Piątek, General Director of the DANONE group in Poland.

### Pioneering Promise

Why is methane emission reduction so important? For the first 20 years after reaching the atmosphere, methane as a greenhouse gas has more than 80 times more heating power than carbon dioxide. According to the IPCC, reducing methane emissions will have immediate climate benefits. DANONE is the first food producer in the world to announce such a com-





mitment. The declaration includes the reduction of methane emissions resulting from the acquisition of fresh milk, which is an ingredient of dairy products offered by DANONE.

- Reducing methane emissions is an integral part of our holistic approach to food production in the most sustainable way, which includes all stages of the value chain. We care about the quality of food and the balance of the planet before the plants that feed the cows, whose milk becomes an ingredient of DANONE dairy products, grow. Understanding that the impact of our suppliers is part of our impact, we continue to support our partner dairy farms in adopting regenerative farming practices that benefit both farms and the planet. Together with farms and substantive partners, we will also develop innovative solutions, while constantly caring for animal welfare - explains Marek Sumiła, Managing Director of Danone and 'Żywiec Zdrój' company.

## Regenerative model

Initiatives that will contribute to the announced reduction of methane emissions are already underway, an example of which is the introduction of regenerative farming practices. Already, more than half of the milk that goes to DANONE products manufactured in Poland comes from farms where such practices are present. To develop this direction, DANONE conducts a special audit at its suppliers, which is a real help for farms in

identifying the degree of implementation of regenerative practices. By the end of 2023, such an audit will cover 100% of dairy farms cooperating with the company.

Another measure is an educational program addressed to farmers. DANONE will also carry out pilot projects - e.g., solutions related to soil improvement will be introduced in five farms, which is a real step on the way to climate neutrality of these farms. The company also joined the project „Dairy industry in the era of climate change”, coordinated by the Association of Polish Milk Processors. The project focuses on the needs of transforming the dairy sector towards solutions of the future.

## Towards a closed loop

DANONE joined the Polish Plastics Pact, introducing solutions aimed at changing the current model of using plastics on the Polish packaging market towards a circular economy. At the same time, the company periodically introduces changes in packaging solutions and undertakes cooperation with other market participants for a more effective packaging collection and recycling system.

DANONE has implemented the principles of eco-design, which means that each new packaging is created with the thought of increasing the possibility of its future recycling. Constantly minimising the impact of packaging on the environment also in-



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cludes: reducing its weight (thus reducing the consumption of materials), optimising the filling of transport spaces, or the use of recycled materials.

The company also undertakes pioneering initiatives, as exemplified by the commitment announced five years ago at the UN climate summit COP 24 in Katowice. Żywiec Zdrój, which is part of the DANONE group of companies, stated that in 2020 it would collect as much plastic as it introduced to the market in the same period. The promise was kept in 2020, as well as in 2021, and 2022. Żywiec Zdrój has been striving for years to introduce a deposit system for beverage packaging in Poland, striving to recirculate the packaging, becoming a valuable raw material that can gain a second life.

## Counteracting food waste

DANONE counteracts greenhouse gas emissions also through consistent fight against food waste. Solutions in this area were introduced at all stages of product development. The team of one of the largest European cheese and yoghurt factories DANONE, located in the Silesian Bieruń, has implemented hundreds of technological processes and operational improvements to minimise the amount of residue from the production process, as well as food leftovers that the factory is unable to use again - in line with the idea of a closed circular economy loop.

Nearly 60% of raw materials and semi-finished products that cannot be used in production processes are processed into animal feed. Other food leftovers are 100% recycled or recovered. Thanks to the introduced improvements, no food from the factory ends up in a landfill.

Date labeling on many products has been changed from „use by” to „best before” and added „often good for longer”. This is to encourage consumers to use their senses to evaluate a product before they decide to throw it away, thereby reducing household food waste. The company also cooperates with Too Good To Go. Through the application, you can buy full-fledged products with a short best before date at a reduced price. DANONE is also involved in supporting food banks: in 2022, products with a total value of approximately PLN 4 million were donated.

Activities undertaken by the DANONE group for the benefit of the environment, local communities or spreading knowledge about healthy eating habits have for years contributed to the improvement of the health condition of millions of people living in Poland and have had a positive impact on the condition of the environment. The new strategy “DANONE Positive Impact Way” is proof that the protection of the planet’s resources is of fundamental importance to the company.



## About the DANONE group of companies:

DANONE is a world leader in the food market, which is guided by health care in all its activities. In Poland, DANONE operates in three areas important for proper nutrition: dairy products and plant-derived products (Danone), water and beverages (Żywiec Zdrój), specialised nutrition, including food for infants and young children, and food for special medical purposes (Nutricia). All DANONE companies share a doubled commitment to sustainable economic and social development and the mission of bringing health through food to as many people as possible. Through the offered products and implemented projects and programs, in accordance with the common vision of 'One Planet. One Healthy body.', DANONE companies encourage making the right food choices every day and contribute to the health of the next generations and a better state of our planet. In ten locations in the country, over 3,000 people are employed, developing professionally in a safe and friendly work environment.



# Kingspan Group

**The Kingspan Group is an Irish building materials company. Their mission is “to accelerate a net-zero carbon future-built environment with the wellbeing of people and planet at its heart”, overall being dedicated to addressing sustainability challenges.**

The setting of ambitious targets to reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption is one of the key ways they aim to do this, such as committing to using renewable energy sources for their operations. The company wide ESG strategy focuses on sustainable manufacturing, resource efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation. Kingspan actively oversees its governance practices through engaging with stakeholders to address social concerns which include gender equality, fair labour practices, as well as providing a safe working environment through implementing programmes and initiatives for the good of local communities and employee development and well-being. Kingspan does not focus only on their own organisation and internal efforts: they engage with suppliers to implement absolute carbon reductions across its value chain. To reduce carbon intensity of its key products and services, Kingspan has set a target of a 50% reduction in product CO<sub>2</sub>e intensity from its primary supply partners by 2030. The Kingspan Group has outlined four strategic pillars as part of their ESG efforts:

- 1. Planet Passionate:** To significantly reduce carbon in the business whilst driving circularity and water conservation over the next 10 years.
- 2. Innovation:** A programme of innovation and digitalisation led by their own global innovation centre IKON.
- 3. Completing the Envelope:** The idea that buildings must transform to meet future needs and the urgency of introducing a range of solutions to market.
- 4. Globalisation:** Investments and acquisitions are key to bring advanced construction products to markets worldwide.

The organisation released their third annual report this year outlining progress on their 10-year sustainability programme named ‘Planet Passionate’, completing over 100 projects as part of it. Compared to 2020, the Group made a 42% reduction in waste sent to landfill and a 26% increase in rainwater harvesting capacity. An increase in the direct use of renewable energy from 19.5% to 33.4% relative to the 2020 base year as the Group aims to meet its target of 60% direct renewable energy by 2030. Furthermore, some other key environmental statistics include:

- 173m Tonnes Carbon Saved:** The insulation system products and services which were sold by the Group in 2022 will deliver an estimated carbon saving of 173m tonnes over their lifetime.





- **9bn Lumens of Natural Light Created:** The Daylighting systems which were sold by the Group sold in 2022 have the capacity to create 9 billion lumens of natural light annually.
- **45bn Litres of Rainwater Harvested:** Over 45 billion litres of rainwater will be filled by tanks sold by the Group in 2022 over their 20-year product life.
- **803m PET Bottles Recycled:** 803 million waste plastic bottles into raw materials for our products were recycled by the Group in 2022.

Overall, Kingspan Group's dedication to ESG principles and their continuous efforts to improve their environmental, social, and governance practices make them a leading company in Ireland's business sector.



# CRH

**CRH is one of the largest building materials companies globally and is committed to sustainable development. They prioritise environmental stewardship, safety, and social responsibility in their operations.**

CRH states that the “Values unite us in the way we work, every day, all over the world”, showcasing their organisational commitment to ESG and sustainable development. The four organisational values are:

- 1. People are our Priority:** Building enduring and long-term relationships and encouraging the care for safety and well-being.
- 2. Character is our Strength:** Being transparent by doing what they say, living by their word to deliver promises as one team.
- 3. Performance is our Commitment:** Achieving global impact through local delivery, entrepreneurial drive, and environmental stewardship.
- 4. Innovation is our way Forward:** Creating the future of sustainable building materials and solutions.

CRH priorities sustainable development through its four strategic pillars to ensure the world is a better place for future generations.

Their commitment is supported by stakeholders and the following pillars:

- 1. Empowered Talent:** Investing in and growing skills of employees through training, creating safe and inclusive environments within the organisation through incorporating clear goals, expectations, and a culture of support.
- 2. Customer Connected:** Product and service solutions must exceed customer expectations. CRH aims to be curious to win in business alongside their customers.
- 3. Focused Growth:** Achieved through collaboration, knowledge sharing and partnerships to continue making CRH better.
- 4. Sustainability Leadership:** Built environment improvement through the integration of sustainability into all organisational practice, to create valuable sustainable solutions.

CRH has a solid inclusion and diversity vision which aims to build an organisation where “inclusion is a core leadership value, and where talented people of all backgrounds are welcome, and differences are embraced”. A key statement is that “Everyone has a fair and equal opportunity to develop and progress”, delivered by a supportive working environment. CRH emphasises that inclusion comes first as it creates an environment of high value performance, highligh-





ting a key benefit of attracting diverse talent and individual contributions. This culture allows employees to fulfil their personal objectives and “maximise their potential irrespective of gender, race, creed, sexual orientation or disability”. This is done not just through social policy but also upholding the the highest standards of corporate governance. CRH regularly reviews company structure to meet best practice, with the board focusing on leadership, oversight, control, and development integration into company culture and behaviour to ensure long-term success.



# Mainstream Renewable Power

**Mainstream Renewable Power focuses on renewable energy development and sustainable solutions, with, quality and integrity at the core of their operations. The company has committed to decarbonisation and renewable energy project development at a global scale. Their main efforts concentrate on the following areas:**

- Offshore wind
- Onshore wind
- Solar PV
- Green Hydrogen
- Hybridisation and Storage
- Power Purchase Agreements

A key example of governance at Mainstream Renewable Power is their Global Development Standard. This internal governance standard has been developed by the company themselves and integrated into its operations. It is aligned with the highest international standards to provide the highest quality of service to quality markets, investors, colleagues, communities, and the environment. Business practice focuses on environmental stewardship, respect for human rights, and empowering colleagues. The company holds a Code of Conduct, stating “We hold ourselves to the same standards of governance as a listed company” to encourage employees to speak up about any issues. It is not just the company which has to follow it though; Mainstream

expects partners, suppliers, and contractors to also adhere to these standards and comply with the Code of Conduct. Mainstream states integrity is at the forefront of their operations through business transparency, professionalism, and honesty within the business, taking a wide stance against unethical business practices. To uphold these values, the company carries out mandatory training on bribery and corruption as well as uses a disclosure tool to prevent conflicts of interest. The finance team is instructed on red flags for money laundering and the funding of terrorism.

Another example of ESG practice at Mainstream is the ‘Speak Up Line’ which creates a space and empowers employees and any other interested party outside of it to talk about any issues within the business. Examples of what the Speak Up Line can be used to include reassurance on conduct being code-compliant or the reporting of suspected code violation, with the option to remain anonymous. It is running 24/7 by an independent provider with no internal ties to the company to prevent bias.

As part of risk management, due diligence and human rights protection, Mainstream aims to protect workers within its supply chain, in accordance with section 54 of the (UK) Modern Slavery Act 2015. Furthermore, the company follows social safeguard standards from the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprise, the International Labour Organisation, and the International Bill of Human Rights.





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# Glanbia

**Glanbia stands as a globally recognised nutrition company celebrated for its dedication to sustainable sourcing and production methods geared toward reducing emissions, enhancing water efficiency, and fortifying local communities.**

The company houses various consumer brands and ingredients designed to empower individuals worldwide, nurturing strength and nourishment across all age groups. Glanbia's endeavours revolve around genuine nutritional benefits, all in pursuit of a better world for both humanity and the planet. The company has actively contributed to Turkey-Syria earthquake relief efforts while fostering an inclusive culture within its organisational structure.

In 2022, Glanbia's strides toward inclusivity were evident through an improved Inclusion Index score across all facets of the organization. The journey continues in 2023 and beyond, focusing on amplifying representation throughout the entirety of its operations. Notable within this journey is the commemoration of events such as Black History Month at Glanbia.

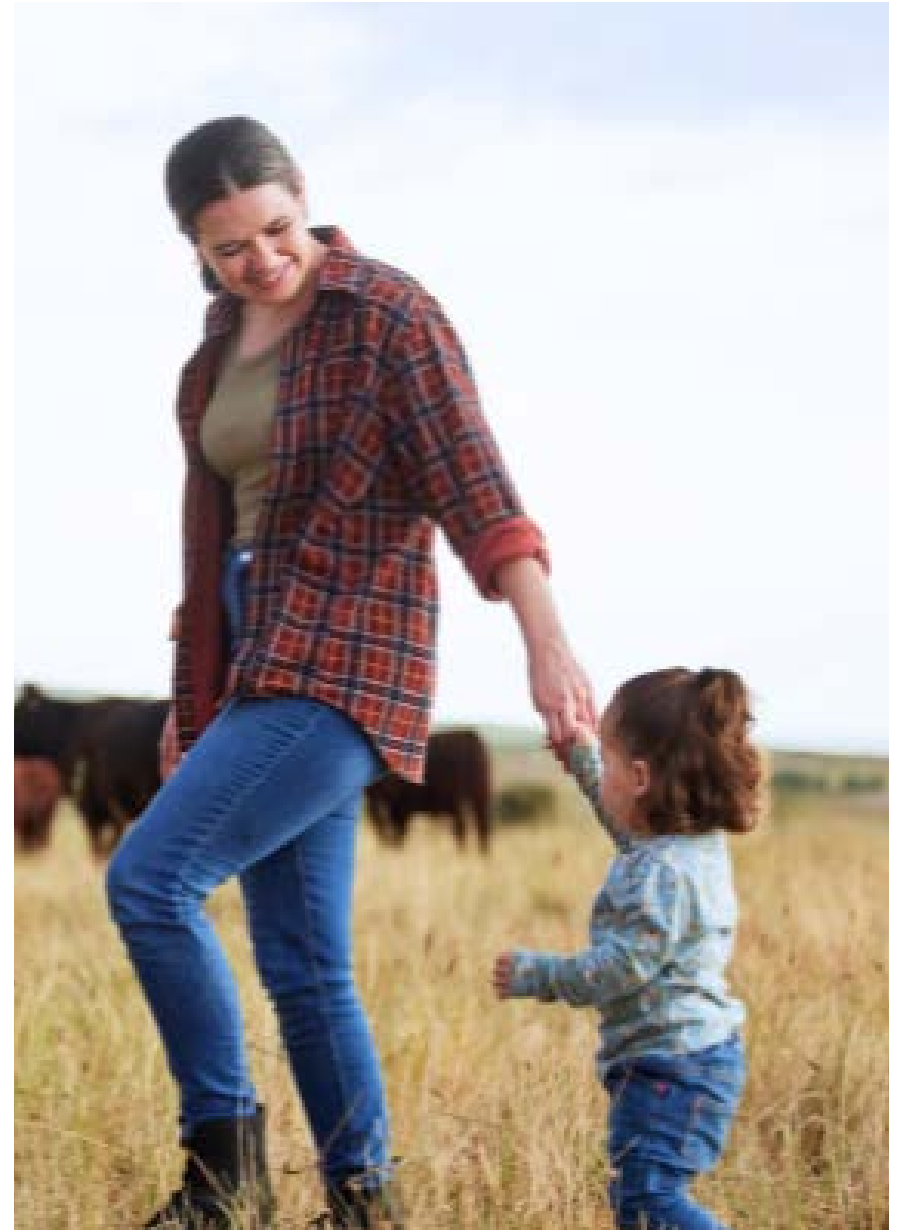
The commitment to inclusivity at Glanbia is built upon five strategic pillars guiding its Inclusion Journey:

- 1. Leadership & Education:** Glanbia has launched the 'Fostering Inclusion' education module accessible to all employees. Senior leaders have engaged in unconscious bias training, with inclusive leadership becoming an integral aspect of the company's leadership capability.
- 2. Talent Acquisition:** A robust inclusive hiring training program for managers was developed and launched in Q1 2022. Emphasis has been placed on ensuring diverse candidate pools for open positions to enhance diversity in hiring. In 2021, the gender hiring ratio stood at 48% female and 52% male, with a specific focus on promoting female leadership.
- 3. Communications and Engagement:** Initiatives include the creation of a DE&I brand identity and resource hub for employees, along with a comprehensive DE&I communications plan encompassing global events like International Women's Day and Pride. A values refresh project is underway to ensure alignment with an inclusive culture.
- 4. Commercial & Reputation:** Efforts involve establishing a global marketing communications platform for sharing knowledge and best practices, accompanied by inclusive marketing training. Partnerships, such as Optimum Nutrition's collaboration with Athlete Ally, aim to promote sports participation irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.
- 5. Employee Resource Groups:** A global Employee Resource Group framework has been outlined, marked by the inception of the first global Group-wide ERG, Glanbia NOW



(Network of Women). Regional ERGs in North America (LGBTQ+ Network; Multicultural Network) are established with intentions to expand these globally.

Glanbia's dedication extends to responsible sourcing, actively contributing to the sustainable transformation of the food system. Over 40% of the company's total procurement underwent Eco Vadis assessment by the close of 2022, aiming for 100% compliance among high and medium-risk suppliers. Furthermore, Glanbia's commitment to food safety and quality remains steadfast, with a focus on standardizing best practices across the supply chain. Transparency concerning the gender pay gap in Ireland remains a paramount commitment for Glanbia. Action plans are underway following the findings of the 2022 Glanbia Gender Pay Gap Report, aiming to advance female hiring, development, and succession planning to achieve greater gender balance and representation globally through robust Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategies.



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# Kerry Group

**The Kerry Group, established in 1972 as a small dairy company, has since developed into a leading provider of food and beverage ingredients and solutions globally. Operating across various sectors such as meat, dairy, beverages, and convenience foods, the company has expanded its presence worldwide, boasting manufacturing facilities and sales offices spanning over 30 countries.**

Emphasising sustainable food production and supply chain practices, Kerry Group focuses on responsible sourcing, waste reduction, and promoting healthy eating. Their commitment extends to reducing emissions, enhancing waste management, and minimising water consumption across their global operations. Additionally, the company actively supports employee well-being and the communities in which they operate.

The initiative, „Discovering the Heart of Our Fair-trade Organic Coffee Extracts,” showcased a visit by Johanna Kelly, Marketing Manager – Foodservice Europe, to the women-run farms of Café Femenino. This visit documented Kerry’s partnership in creating organic, ethical, and sustainable coffee. The fair-trade organic coffee, sourced from women-run Café Femenino farms

across South America, Central America, Africa, and Asia, is utilised in Kerry’s coffee extracts, reaching consumers worldwide. Kerry Group’s commitment to sustainability is further evidenced by its company-wide programme, „Sustainability Essentials.” This comprehensive sustainability training initiative, comprised of video and quiz-based modules, received recognition as the Best Organisational Development and Transformation Initiative at the 2023 Excellence in Learning Awards by the Learning & Development Institute. The programme aims not only to educate but also to inspire employees to contribute to a more sustainable company and world.

By incorporating storytelling into the six-chapter series, the initiative enhances comprehension, retention, and confidence among employees when discussing Kerry’s sustainability strategy. Since its launch, over 9,700 employees have engaged with the series, with more than 90% reporting increased confidence in discussing sustainable nutrition. This initiative seeks to instil a cultural transformation within the company, fostering a shared dialogue about sustainability, socialising specific company objectives, and encouraging personal reflection on individual contributions towards sustainability along the food and beverage supply chain. It also delves into sustainability all along the food and beverage supply chain, from farmers and suppliers to manufacturing facilities, retail locations and restaurants.





# ESB

**ESB is an electricity company, which operates across Ireland and Northern Ireland in terms of electricity networks, telecommunications, energy, e-cars, smart energy services, and trading. ESB is committed to future powered by clean and sustainable electricity through leading transition to a reliable and affordable energy in Ireland.**

ESB operates under the main strategy of ‘Driven to Make a Difference: Net Zero by 2040’ to achieve net zero emissions. Furthermore, a key best practice is an earlier dated a Science Based Target for the year 2030; 10 years before the Net Zero aim. This target will give assurance of the pace and scale of decarbonisation of ESB, allowing to make any necessary changes before 2040. To carry out the Net Zero strategy, ESB identifies four core pillars:

1. Empowered people – A flexible, values-based, and inclusive culture is necessary to empower people to deliver results and achieve their potential.
2. Digital and data driven – The use of data technology can be key in enhancing customer experiences, as well as create more efficient infrastructure.
3. Financial strength – Maintenance of financial performance means that ESB can further invest into their net zero 2040 strategy.

4. Sustainable and socially responsible – ESB aims to step up in environmental responsibility through growing a sustainable ethos in line with ESB values.

As an electricity and energy company, ESB aim to prioritise the transition to renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric power to decarbonize the Irish grid. However, this can be done through enhancing current strategies such as continued promotion of energy conservation and efficiency among customers. ESB provides education and incentives for the adoption of energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and practices, to drive energy saving in Ireland. This cannot be done without customer engagement and ‘empowered people’ therefore excellent customer service is crucial: user-friendly digital platforms are key in allowing the population to easily be part of the Net Zero change.

A sub-group of ESB, ESB Networks, has recently installed 1.5 million smart meters nationwide as part of the National Smart Metering Programme: this is over half of Irish homes (2.1 million).

ESB constantly looks for ways to improve and innovate. Currently, they are investing in e-car infrastructure and electric vehicle charging networks, with the target to double the number of charge points to 3,000 in the country by 2030. ESB has already built 31 high power charging hubs and has six more in construction as of date.



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Collaboration and partnerships is not only a way of ensuring ESG best practice, but it is also part of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals. To accelerate the adoption of decarbonisation initiatives, ESB has partnered with YourRetrofit.ie to support homeowners further during the retrofit process. This partnership can strengthen the ease of homeowners retrofit journey as they can provide tailor-made advice based ESB data and YourRetrofit.ie platform.



# Bord na Móna

**Bord na Móna is an Irish, semi-state climate solutions company which aims to lead Ireland towards a climate neutral future. Bord na Móna has around 1500 employees and land holding of over 80,000 hectares.**

Their ambition is to “create the right conditions to store carbon and protect biodiversity, while helping to deliver ongoing sustainable energy security for Ireland”. Their environmental and technological solutions are based around:

- Renewable energy
- Recycling
- Waste management
- Carbon sequestration
- Biodiversity conservation

To deliver ESG based solutions, partnerships are key. Bord na Móna specifies that partnerships must lead to climate action, as they partner with global leaders with the aim of sharing expertise as they work together to develop innovative practice and solutions to reach climate goals. Bord na Móna has decades worth of experience under their belt in building and maintain large-scale infrastructure. Now, they are using this experience to build a sustainable future in Ireland, building renewable energy and resource recovery developments across the country.

Bord na Móna also has a recycling division, which operates across Leinster and North Munster regions in Ireland. Their recycling strategy provides a reliable, environmentally, and conscious waste collection service for not only homes, but businesses. This is facilitated through the use of innovative recovery and recycling technologies, to steer clear from landfills and increase recycling capacity of products.

Bord na Móna used to focus its operations on fuel harvesting, as they built and maintained three power stations and two briquette factories, as well as temporary track, locomotives and peat transporting wagons. This energy and logistics experience means they can solve such problems at a national and international level, delivering energy-saving solutions into the homes that need them the most.

This is done through their social initiatives of helping to improve the quality of life for people across Ireland. Community funds, charitable contributions and local amenities are just examples of the main focus of Bord na Móna, as they state “We believe that we have a duty to do more than sustain livelihoods; we must also enrich the quality of life for the people who live and work around us. We have a duty of care”. ESG is not only about reporting and a good image, but about putting in the action as an entity of national and global reach to improve the lives of your customers and beyond, taking care of each other in a multitude of ways. Bord na Móna Recycling donates 1% of



online payments over €20 to charities nationwide, such as the Jack & Jill foundation. This initiative has led to raising over €529,000 since 2014.

To facilitate lifelong learning, Bord na Móna provides continued educational support to employees, encouraging and empowering them to expand their knowledge and skill, through continuous training. A key best practice at Bord na Móna is the offer of financial assistance to all employees who wish to take on further education.

As part of their governance policies, Bord na Móna is committed to opposing modern slavery through their Modern Slavery Statement available on the website. To do this, they have implemented the requirements of the UK Modern Slavery Act across the entire organisation.



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# IDEAM cluster

**Irish Digital Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing (IDEAM) Cluster is an Irish industry cluster located in the Mid-West region of Ireland, in Limerick.**

The aim of the cluster is to support businesses to collaborate, innovate and grow with each other, using collaboration as an effective tool for business improvement, as well as to prepare organisations for opportunities in digitalisation and green transition of manufacturing. With a particular focus on SMEs, the core vision at IDEAM is to “unlock new collaborative opportunities for our members by working together and building trust”.

IDEAM Cluster is a network of industry 4.0, academia, government, and Irish society to cover the range of digital engineering and advanced manufacturing needs. IDEAM’s impact is not small: retention and attraction of 2,000 jobs and the support of over 75 manufacturing SMEs is a key statistic which highlights the importance of their work for the Irish economy. The cluster boasts over 340 active users, covering over 35 SMEs and 20 MNEs. They also work with partnership and support institutions, such as Limerick for IT, PTMA, Explore Engineering and TUS, to foster the scale of support they can provide.

IDEAM cluster centres around four main initiatives of their organisation:

1. **Talent and Skills:** For small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) looking for information on digitalising industrial processes, IDEAM acts as a common point. Their methodology entails determining knowledge gaps and defining industry demands. They then provide events, workshops, and skills courses that are specifically designed to close these gaps. The goal of these programmes is to provide members with the fundamental knowledge and skills required to lead digital transformation in their own organisations.
2. **Research and Development:** IDEAM compares SMEs’ performance to industry benchmarks by conducting evaluations to determine the present state of digitalisation inside SMEs. They pinpoint areas that need development with the help of case studies, site evaluations, and online calculators. IDEAM creates unique strategic action plans for each organisation, utilising the assistance of educational institutions.
3. **Internationalisation and Funding:** By encouraging product and process innovations, IDEAM aims to expand the worldwide reach and scaling capacities of SMEs. The IDEAM Cluster is actively involved in European programmes that facilitate the digital and green transitions





of SMEs. This engagement opens up new markets for cluster members and promotes cross-border and cross-industry cooperation.

4. **Business and Community:** IDEAM fosters resilience and increases competitiveness by fortifying ties within Ireland's engineering and advanced manufacturing ecosystem on a national and global scale. They organise networking gatherings that promote knowledge exchange, peer-to-peer learning, and the development of enduring connections. These initiatives seek to take advantage of opportunities in the industry.

A key example of ESG best practice is the widely available 'SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES: BUILDING A RESILIENT FUTURE' online webinar hosted by IDEAM Cluster in November 2023, as well as the monthly webinar series 'Tech Thursday' Cluster to enable industry and the wider enterprise community to learn about new technologies available on the market, fostering a culture of education and innovation. Furthermore, their recent project from 2022 'InterTrade-Ireland Synergy' focused on digital manufacturing and cross-border cluster collaboration to "foster new strategic value chains and enhance the digitisation and green transition uptake of manufacturing SMEs to become more competitive".





# TUS – Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest

**The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) is an Irish university with over 15000 students on 7 campuses in 4 counties in Ireland's Midlands and Midwest. At TUS, the emphasis lies in applied learning and innovation, capitalising on small class sizes and strong industry connections. This approach seamlessly connects top-notch education with exceptional employment prospects.**

At TUS, innovation, research, and development are what motivate the university. Using next-generation thinking is essential; it centres on practical research that solves issues, produces outcomes, and enhances many people's quality of life. Driven by passion and productivity, the institution creates cutting-edge knowledge and collaborates with industry to produce outstanding work. As a Technological University, one of TUS's main responsibilities is to actively participate in solving local and worldwide problems. They are in a good position to increase their influence on society even further and are still devoted to the ideals of open science.

By giving Irish businesses the opportunity to work with trans-European research teams in the field of engineering digitalisation, TUS opened up the 'Trans-European Rese-

arch Opportunities' programme for Irish Businesses. Designed as a component of the RUN EU PLUS Horizon 2020 project, this is a joint doctoral course which gives businesses in the Midlands and Mid-West areas the chance to work with trans-European research teams on digitalisation. „Collaborative RDI projects across the RUN-EU alliance are making a significant societal impact on the digital and green transformation agendas, along with social inclusion,” confirmed Dr. Paudie Murray, TUS Head of Research and RUN-EU Co-ordinator.

TUS has developed a new strategy plan to reshape apprenticeships (job-based education) in the future. The Level 9 Advanced Quantity Surveyor Apprenticeship, the first of its kind in Ireland, was introduced in October 2023 with the release of the 'TUS Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan'. The university doubled the campus's current capacity earlier this year when it opened their apprenticeship facility on the Athlone Campus, accommodating up to 1,000 apprentices annually. Quantity surveyors incorporate social impact, ethical decision-making, sustainable practises, and responsible governance as core components of their work.

The goal of an EU-China research team headed by TUS was to create sustainable biobased plastic substitutes. By working together with Chinese partners, they share research and knowledge and build a strong foundation for future success.



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By being at the forefront of sustainable technology and concentrating on the degradation of plastics to produce high-value bioproducts that can be regularly used and reused, the EU-China initiative will promote ecological innovation in addressing the pollution caused by plastic waste. This helps the local, national, and global economies in addition to improving environmental sustainability and the circular economy.

Furthermore, the sharing of best practice between the two countries has also occurred with Shandong University's 'Clean the Beach' programme, which focuses on 'Plastic Hazards and Microbial Degradation'. This has brought together researchers, students, and teachers to raise awareness about plastic degradation's impact on the environment.



# daa – Dublin Airport Authority

**Daa is a global airports and travel retail Group with operations in 15 countries around the world, with businesses of Dublin Airport, Cork Airport, ARI and daa International.**

Kenny Jacobs, Chief Executive Officer has stated that there are many challenges for the aviation and travel industry as it seeks to fully recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic which restricted travel over the last three years, aiming to meet the daa respective climate change and sustainability targets. The vision of daa is “To be airport industry leaders, delivering excellence in a sustainable future”.

Daa works strongly on their values. The core values of their business operations include being:

- **Honest:** Speaking the truth with openness and transparency.
- **Clear:** Avoiding confusing or misleading language.
- **Respecting of each other's value:** Working as a team where everyone has a distinct and valuable role to play, appreciating diverse contributions.
- **Inclusive:** Everyone has a voice and an equal right to be heard.
- **Respectful:** Working with mutual respect, regardless of titles, rank or position.

- **Adaptive:** Communication is flexible to reach people in all our operating countries and make sure everyone is heard and informed.

Compared to a baseline average of 2018, the corporation cut its carbon emissions by 24% at Dublin Airport and 38% at Cork Airport in 2022. This was accomplished by putting in place a strong energy management procedure, carrying out ongoing LED upgrades, replacing the fleet, and taking part in the Reduce Your Use Campaigns by OPW and SEAI. By reaching a 46% recycling rate at Dublin Airport, daa has additionally surpassed its recycling goal.

In an effort to encourage airlines to fly aircraft with fewer CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at Dublin Airport, daa has released ideas for further sustainability requirements. The ultra-low-cost aeronautical charges at Dublin Airport, the lowest of any capital city airport in Europe, will be subject to a low emissions discount under the new proposed incentive programme. The airport operator, daa, will impose additional fees on airlines operating high emission aircraft. All airlines operating the most ecologically friendly aircraft throughout the day will receive a new 25% discount off all runway expenses.

Dublin Airport has demonstrated its commitment to a sustainable future by being carbon neutral for emissions under its direct control. A significant step towards realising this ambi-



tion is the introduction by daa of innovative airline incentives designed to incentivize the use of aircraft types with lower CO2 emissions. Daa highlights the shared commitment of all aviation stakeholders to work together to fulfil global climate change and sustainability targets, while also addressing the challenges faced by the aviation and tourism sector in recovering from the repercussions of the previous three years.

Kenny Jacobs has further said they are “embedding environmental sustainability... are acutely aware of the scale of the task of achieving the government’s target of a 51% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions at our airports by 2030, [with] ... our ultimate goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.”

With an emphasis on the introduction of a new reporting standard and the creation of an updated ESG action plan for the company that will be implemented starting in 2024, daa hopes to keep developing and improving its ESG programme and credentials in 2023.





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Foundation Ignacy Krasicki's XBW (FXBW) is a non-governmental organisation established in 2018. Among its goals is to support the economic development of Poland and promote good practices in the field of CSR and ESG. As part of FXBW, a dedicated advisory and analytical team has been established: Instytut ESG.



EDU SMART Training Center Limited (EDUS) is an organisation operating in the field of vocational training that cooperates with the employer community. It conducts multilateral educational, consulting, business, and training activities in the field of ESG. He is also an experienced implementer of Erasmus+ projects.