

BlackRock Investment Stewardship

Global Principles

Effective as of January 2023

BlackRock[®]

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The purpose of this document is to provide an overarching explanation of BlackRock’s approach globally to our responsibilities as a shareholder on behalf of our clients, our expectations of companies, and our commitments to clients in terms of our own governance and transparency.

Introduction to BlackRock

BlackRock's purpose is to help more and more people experience financial well-being. We manage assets on behalf of institutional and individual clients, across a full spectrum of investment strategies, asset classes, and regions. Our client base includes pension plans, endowments, foundations, charities, official institutions, insurers, and other financial institutions, as well as individuals around the world. As part of our fiduciary duty to our clients, we consider it one of our responsibilities to promote sound corporate governance, as an informed, engaged shareholder on their behalf. At BlackRock, this is the responsibility of the Investment Stewardship team.

Philosophy on investment stewardship

Companies are responsible for ensuring they have appropriate governance structures to serve the interests of shareholders and other key stakeholders. We believe that there are certain fundamental rights attached to shareholding. Companies and their boards should be accountable to shareholders and structured with appropriate checks and balances to ensure that they operate in shareholders' best interests to create sustainable value. Shareholders should have the right to vote to elect, remove, and nominate directors, approve the appointment of the auditor, and amend the corporate charter or by-laws. Shareholders should be able to vote on key board decisions that are material to the protection of their investment, including but not limited to, changes to the purpose of the business, dilution levels and preemptive rights, and the distribution of income and capital structure. In order to make informed decisions, shareholders need sufficient and timely information. In addition, shareholder voting rights should be proportionate to their economic ownership—the principle of “one share, one vote” helps achieve this balance.

Consistent with these shareholder rights, BlackRock has a responsibility to monitor and provide feedback to companies in our role as stewards of our clients' investments. Investment stewardship is how we use our voice as an investor to promote sound corporate governance and business practices to help maximize long-term shareholder value for our clients, the vast majority of whom are investing for long-term goals such as retirement. BlackRock Investment Stewardship (BIS) does this through engagement with management teams and/or board members on material business issues and, for those clients who have given us authority, through voting proxies in their best long-term financial interests.¹ We also contribute to consultations on public policy and private sector initiatives on industry standards, consistent with our clients' interests as long-term shareholders.

BlackRock looks to companies to provide timely, accurate, and comprehensive disclosure on all material governance and business matters. This transparency allows shareholders to appropriately understand and assess how relevant risks and opportunities are being effectively identified and managed. Where company reporting and disclosure is inadequate or where the governance approach taken may be inconsistent with durable, long-term value creation for shareholders, we will engage with a company and/or vote in a manner that advances long-term shareholders' interests.

BlackRock views engagement as an important activity; engagement provides us with the opportunity to improve our understanding of the business and of the risks and opportunities that are material to the

¹ Through [BlackRock Voting Choice](#) we have, since January 2022, made proxy voting easier and more accessible for investors in separate accounts and certain pooled vehicles. As a result, the shares attributed to BlackRock in company share registers may be voted differently depending on whether our clients have authorized BIS to vote on their behalf, have authorized BIS to vote in accordance with a third party policy, or have elected to vote shares in accordance with their own policy. We are not able to disclose which clients have opted to exercise greater control over their voting, nor are we able to disclose which proxy voting policies they have selected.

companies in which our clients invest. Engagement may also inform our voting decisions. As long-term investors on behalf of clients, we seek to have regular and continuing dialogue with executives and board directors to advance sound governance and durable business practices aligned with long-term value creation, as well as to understand the effectiveness of the company's management and oversight of material issues. Engagement is an important mechanism for providing feedback on company practices and disclosures, particularly where we believe they could be enhanced to support a company's ability to deliver financial performance. Similarly, it provides us with an opportunity to hear directly from company boards and management on how they believe their actions are aligned with durable, long-term value creation.

We generally vote in support of management and boards that exhibit an approach to decision-making that is consistent with creating durable, long-term value for shareholders. If we have concerns about a company's approach, we may choose to explain our expectations to the company's board and management. Following that engagement, we may signal through our voting that we have outstanding concerns, generally by voting against the re-election of directors we view as having responsibility for an issue. We apply our regional proxy voting guidelines to achieve the outcome that is most aligned with our clients' long-term financial interests.

Key themes

We recognize that accepted standards and norms of corporate governance can differ between markets. However, in our experience, there are certain fundamental elements of governance practice that are intrinsic globally to a company's ability to create long-term value for shareholders. These global themes are set out in this overarching set of principles (the Principles), which are anchored in transparency and accountability. At a minimum, it is our view that companies should observe the accepted corporate governance standards in their domestic market and ask that, if they do not, they explain how their approach better supports durable, long-term value creation.

These Principles cover seven key themes:

- Boards and directors
- Auditors and audit-related issues
- Capital structure, mergers, asset sales, and other special transactions
- Compensation and benefits
- Material sustainability-related risks and opportunities
- Other corporate governance matters and shareholder protections
- Shareholder proposals

Our regional and market-specific [voting guidelines](#) explain how these Principles inform our voting decisions in relation to specific ballot items for shareholder meetings.

Boards and directors

Our primary focus is on the performance of the board of directors to promote sound corporate governance. The performance of the board is critical to the economic success of the company and the protection of shareholders' interests. As part of their responsibilities, board members owe fiduciary duties to shareholders in overseeing the strategic direction and operation of the company. For this reason, BIS sees engaging with and the election of directors as one of our most important and impactful responsibilities.

We support boards whose approach is consistent with creating durable, long-term value. This includes the effective corporate governance and management of material sustainability-related risks and opportunities,² as well as the consideration of the company's key constituents including their employees, clients, suppliers, and the communities within which they operate. The board should establish and maintain a framework of robust and effective governance mechanisms to support its oversight of the company's strategic aims. We look to the board to articulate the effectiveness of these mechanisms in overseeing the management of business risks and opportunities and the fulfillment of the company's purpose. Disclosure of all material issues that affect the company's long-term strategy and ability to create value is essential for shareholders to be able to appropriately understand and assess how risks are effectively identified, managed and mitigated.

Where a company has not adequately disclosed and demonstrated that they have fulfilled these responsibilities, we will consider voting against the re-election of directors whom we consider to have particular responsibility for the issue. We assess director performance on a case-by-case basis and in light of each company's circumstances, taking into consideration our assessment of their governance, business practices that support durable, long-term value creation, and performance. In serving the interests of shareholders, the responsibility of the board of directors includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Establishing an appropriate corporate governance structure
- Supporting and overseeing management in setting long-term strategic goals and applicable measures of value-creation and milestones that will demonstrate progress, and taking steps to address anticipated or actual obstacles to success
- Providing oversight on the identification and management of material governance and sustainability-related risks
- Overseeing the financial resilience of the company, the integrity of financial statements, and the robustness of a company's Enterprise Risk Management³ framework

² By material sustainability-related risks and opportunities, we mean the drivers of risk and value creation in a company's business model that have an environmental or social dependency or impact. Examples of environmental issues include, but are not limited to, water use, land use, waste management and climate risk. Examples of social issues include, but are not limited to, human capital management, impacts on the communities in which a company operates, customer loyalty and relationships with regulators. It is our view that well-managed companies will effectively evaluate and manage material sustainability-related risks and opportunities relevant to their businesses. Governance is the core means by which boards can oversee the creation of durable, long-term value. Appropriate risk oversight of business-relevant and material sustainability-related considerations is a component of a sound governance framework.

³ Enterprise risk management is a process, effected by the entity's board of directors, management, and other personnel, applied in strategy setting and across the enterprise, designed to identify potential events that may affect the entity, and manage risk to be within the risk appetite, to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives. (Committee of Sponsoring

- Making decisions on matters that require independent evaluation, which may include mergers, acquisitions and dispositions, activist situations or other similar cases
- Establishing appropriate executive compensation structures
- Monitoring business issues including material sustainability-related risks and opportunities, that have the potential to significantly impact the company's long-term value

There should be clear descriptions of the role of the board and the committees of the board and how they engage with and oversee management. Set out below are ways in which boards and directors can demonstrate a commitment to acting in the best long-term economic interests of all shareholders.

We will seek to engage with the appropriate directors where we have concerns about the performance of the company, board, or individual directors and may signal outstanding concerns in our voting. While we consider these principles to be globally relevant, when assessing a board's composition and governance processes, we consider local market norms and regulations.

Regular accountability

It is our view that directors should stand for re-election on a regular basis, ideally annually. In our experience, annual re-elections allow shareholders to reaffirm their support for board members or hold them accountable for their decisions in a timely manner. When board members are not re-elected annually, in our experience, it is good practice for boards to have a rotation policy to ensure that, through a board cycle, all directors have had their appointment re-confirmed, with a proportion of directors being put forward for re-election at each annual general meeting.

Effective board composition

Regular director elections also give boards the opportunity to adjust their composition in an orderly way to reflect the evolution of the company's strategy and the market environment. In our view, it is beneficial for new directors to be brought onto the board periodically to refresh the group's thinking and in a manner that supports both continuity and appropriate succession planning. We consider the average overall tenure of the board, where we are seeking a balance between the knowledge and experience of longer-serving members and the fresh perspectives of newer members. We encourage companies to keep under regular review the effectiveness of their board (including its size), and assess directors nominated for election or re-election in the context of the composition of the board as a whole. This assessment should consider a number of factors, including the potential need to address gaps in skills, experience, independence, and diversity.

In our view, there should be a sufficient number of independent directors, free from conflicts of interest or undue influence from connected parties, to ensure objectivity in the decision-making of the board and its ability to oversee management. Common impediments to independence may include but are not limited to:

- Current or recent employment at the company or a subsidiary
- Being, or representing, a shareholder with a substantial shareholding in the company

Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO), Enterprise Risk Management – Integrated Framework, September 2004, New York, NY).

- Interlocking directorships
- Having any other interest, business, or other relationship which could, or could reasonably be perceived to, materially interfere with a director’s ability to act in the best interests of the company and their shareholders

In our experience, boards are most effective at overseeing and advising management when there is a senior independent board leader. This director may chair the board, or, where the chair is also the CEO (or is otherwise not independent), be designated as a lead independent director. The role of this director is to enhance the effectiveness of the independent members of the board through shaping the agenda, ensuring adequate information is provided to the board, and encouraging independent director participation in board deliberations. The lead independent director or another appropriate director should be available to shareholders in those situations where an independent director is best placed to explain and contextualize a company’s approach.

When nominating new directors to the board, we look to companies to provide sufficient information on the individual candidates so that shareholders can assess the suitability of each individual nominee and the overall board composition. These disclosures should give an understanding of how the collective experience and expertise of the board aligns with the company’s long-term strategy and business model. Highly qualified, engaged directors with professional characteristics relevant to a company’s business enhance the ability of the board to add value and be the voice of shareholders in board discussions. In our view, a strong board provides a competitive advantage to a company, providing valuable oversight and contributing to the most important management decisions that support long-term financial performance.

It is in this context that we are interested in diversity in the board room. We see it as a means to promoting diversity of thought and avoiding “group think” in the board’s exercise of its responsibilities to advise and oversee management. It allows boards to have deeper discussions and make more resilient decisions. We ask boards to disclose how diversity is considered in board composition, including professional characteristics, such as a director’s industry experience, specialist areas of expertise and geographic location; as well as demographic characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity and age.

We look to understand a board’s diversity in the context of a company’s domicile, market capitalization, business model and strategy. Increasingly, we see leading boards adding members whose experience deepens the board’s understanding of the company’s customers, employees and communities. Self-identified board demographic diversity can usefully be disclosed in aggregate, consistent with local law. We believe boards should aspire to meaningful diversity of membership, at least consistent with local regulatory requirements and best practices, while recognizing that building a strong, diverse board can take time.

This position is based on our view that diversity of perspective and thought – in the board room, in the management team and throughout the company – leads to better long term economic outcomes for companies. Academic research already reveals correlations between specific dimensions of diversity and effects on decision-making processes and outcomes.⁴ In our experience, greater diversity in the board room contributes to more robust discussions and more innovative and resilient decisions. Over time, greater diversity in the board room can also promote greater diversity and resilience in the leadership

⁴ For a discussion on the different impacts of diversity see: [McKinsey](#), “Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters”, May 2022; [Harvard Business Review](#), Diverse Teams Feel Less Comfortable – and That’s Why They Perform Better, September 2016; “[Do Diverse Directors Influence DEI Outcomes](#)”, September 2022
[McKinsey](#), “Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters”, May 2022; [Harvard Business Review](#), Diverse Teams Feel Less Comfortable – and That’s Why They Perform Better, September 2016; “[Do Diverse Directors Influence DEI Outcomes](#)”, September 2022

team, and the workforce more broadly. That diversity can enable companies to develop businesses that more closely reflect and resonate with the customers and communities they serve.

There are matters for which the board has responsibility that may involve a conflict of interest for executives or for affiliated directors. It is our view that objective oversight of such matters is best achieved when the board forms committees comprised entirely of independent directors. In many markets, these committees of the board specialize in audit, director nominations, and compensation matters. An ad hoc committee might also be formed to decide on a special transaction, particularly one involving a related party, or to investigate a significant adverse event.

Sufficient capacity

As the role and expectations of a director are increasingly demanding, directors must be able to commit an appropriate amount of time to board and committee matters. It is important that directors have the capacity to meet all of their responsibilities – including when there are unforeseen events – and therefore, they should not take on an excessive number of roles that would impair their ability to fulfill their duties.

Auditors and audit-related issues

BlackRock recognizes the critical importance of financial statements, which should provide a true and fair picture of a company's financial condition. Accordingly, the assumptions made by management and reviewed by the auditor in preparing the financial statements should be reasonable and justified.

The accuracy of financial statements, inclusive of financial and non-financial information as required or permitted under market-specific accounting rules, is of paramount importance to BlackRock. Investors increasingly recognize that a broader range of risks and opportunities have the potential to materially impact financial performance. Over time, we anticipate investors and other users of company reporting will increasingly seek to understand and scrutinize the assumptions underlying financial statements, particularly those that pertain to the impact of the transition to a low carbon economy on a company's business model and asset mix. We recognize that this is an area of evolving practice and we look to international standards setters, the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) and the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) to provide additional guidance to companies.

In this context, audit committees, or equivalent, play a vital role in a company's financial reporting system by providing independent oversight of the accounts, material financial and, where appropriate to the jurisdiction, non-financial information, internal control frameworks, and in the absence of a dedicated risk committee, Enterprise Risk Management systems. In our view, effective audit committee oversight strengthens the quality and reliability of a company's financial statements and provides an important level of reassurance to shareholders.

We hold members of the audit committee or equivalent responsible for overseeing the management of the audit function. Audit committees or equivalent should have clearly articulated charters that set out their responsibilities and have a rotation plan in place that allows for a periodic refreshment of the committee membership to introduce fresh perspectives to audit oversight. We recognize that audit committees will rely on management, internal audit and the independent auditor in fulfilling their responsibilities but look to committee members to demonstrate they have relevant expertise to monitor and oversee those functions.

We take particular note of unexplained changes in reporting methodology, cases involving significant financial restatements, or ad hoc notifications of material financial weakness. In this respect, audit

committees should provide timely disclosure on the remediation of Key and Critical Audit Matters identified either by the external auditor or internal audit function.

The integrity of financial statements depends on the auditor being free of any impediments to being an effective check on management. To that end, it is important that auditors are, and are seen to be, independent. Where an audit firm provides services to the company in addition to the audit, the fees earned should be disclosed and explained. Audit committees should have in place a procedure for assessing annually the independence of the auditor and the quality of the external audit process.

Comprehensive disclosure provides investors with a sense of the company's long-term operational risk management practices and, more broadly, the quality of the board's oversight. The audit committee or equivalent, or a dedicated risk committee, should periodically review the company's risk assessment and risk management policies and the significant risks and exposures identified by management, the internal auditors or the independent accountants, and management's steps to address them. In the absence of robust disclosures, we may reasonably conclude that companies are not adequately managing risk.

Capital structure, mergers, asset sales, and other special transactions

The capital structure of a company is critical to shareholders as it impacts the value of their investment and the priority of their interest in the company relative to that of other equity or debt investors. Pre-emptive rights are a key protection for shareholders against the dilution of their interests.

Effective voting rights are basic rights of share ownership. It is our view that one vote for one share as a guiding principle supports effective corporate governance. Shareholders, as the residual claimants, have the strongest interest in protecting company value, and voting rights should match economic exposure.

In principle, we disagree with the creation of a share class with equivalent economic exposure and preferential, differentiated voting rights. In our view, this structure violates the fundamental corporate governance principle of proportionality and results in a concentration of power in the hands of a few shareholders, thus disenfranchising other shareholders and amplifying any potential conflicts of interest. However, we recognize that in certain markets, at least for a period of time, companies may have a valid argument for listing dual classes of shares with differentiated voting rights. In our view, such companies should review these share class structures on a regular basis or as company circumstances change. Additionally, they should seek shareholder approval of their capital structure on a periodic basis via a management proposal at the company's shareholder meeting. The proposal should give unaffiliated shareholders the opportunity to affirm the current structure or establish mechanisms to end or phase out controlling structures at the appropriate time, while minimizing costs to shareholders.

In assessing mergers, asset sales, or other special transactions, BlackRock's primary consideration is the long-term economic interests of our clients as shareholders. Boards proposing a transaction need to clearly explain the economic and strategic rationale behind it. We will review a proposed transaction to determine the degree to which it can enhance long-term shareholder value. We would prefer that proposed transactions have the unanimous support of the board and have been negotiated at arm's length. We may seek reassurance from the board that executives' and/or board members' financial interests in a given transaction have not adversely affected their ability to place shareholders' interests before their own. Where the transaction involves related parties, the recommendation to support should come from the independent directors, a best practice in most markets, and ideally, the terms should have

been assessed through an independent appraisal process. In addition, it is good practice that it be approved by a separate vote of the non-conflicted parties.

As a matter of sound governance practice, shareholders should have a right to dispose of company shares in the open market without unnecessary restriction. In our view, corporate mechanisms designed to limit shareholders' ability to sell their shares are contrary to basic property rights. Such mechanisms can serve to protect and entrench interests other than those of the shareholders. In our experience, shareholders are broadly capable of making decisions in their own best interests. We encourage any so-called "shareholder rights plans" proposed by a board to be subject to shareholder approval upon introduction and periodically thereafter.

Compensation and benefits

In most markets, one of the most important roles for a company's board of directors is to put in place a compensation structure that incentivizes and rewards executives appropriately. There should be a clear link between variable pay and operational and financial performance. Performance metrics should be stretching and aligned with a company's strategy and business model. BIS does not have a position on the use of sustainability-related criteria, but in our view, where companies choose to include them, they should be as rigorous as other financial or operational targets. Long-term incentive plans should vest over timeframes aligned with the delivery of long-term shareholder value. Compensation committees should guard against contractual arrangements that would entitle executives to material compensation for early termination of their employment. Finally, pension contributions and other deferred compensation arrangements should be reasonable in light of market practice.

We are not supportive of one-off or special bonuses unrelated to company or individual performance. Where discretion has been used by the compensation committee or its equivalent, we expect disclosure relating to how and why the discretion was used, and how the adjusted outcome is aligned with the interests of shareholders. We acknowledge that the use of peer group evaluation by compensation committees can help ensure competitive pay; however, we are concerned when the rationale for increases in total compensation at a company is solely based on peer benchmarking rather than a rigorous measure of outperformance. We encourage companies to clearly explain how compensation outcomes have rewarded outperformance against peer firms.

We believe consideration should be given to building claw back provisions into incentive plans such that executives would be required to forgo rewards when they are not justified by actual performance and/or when compensation was based on faulty financial reporting or deceptive business practices. We also favor recoupment from any senior executive whose behavior caused material financial harm to shareholders, material reputational risk to the company, or resulted in a criminal investigation, even if such actions did not ultimately result in a material restatement of past results.

Non-executive directors should be compensated in a manner that is commensurate with the time and effort expended in fulfilling their professional responsibilities. Additionally, these compensation arrangements should not risk compromising directors' independence or aligning their interests too closely with those of the management, whom they are charged with overseeing.

We use third party research, in addition to our own analysis, to evaluate existing and proposed compensation structures. We may vote against members of the compensation committee or equivalent board members for poor compensation practices or structures.

Material sustainability-related risks and opportunities

It is our view that well-managed companies will effectively evaluate and manage material sustainability-related risks and opportunities relevant to their businesses. Appropriate oversight of sustainability considerations is a core component of having an effective governance framework, which supports durable, long-term value creation.

Robust disclosure is essential for investors to effectively evaluate companies' strategy and business practices related to material sustainability-related risks and opportunities. Given the increased understanding of material sustainability-related risks and opportunities and the need for better information to assess them, BlackRock advocates for continued improvement in companies' reporting, where necessary, and will express any concerns through our voting where a company's actions or disclosures are inadequate.

BlackRock encourages companies to use the framework developed by the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) to disclose their approach to ensuring they have a sustainable business model and to supplement that disclosure with industry-specific metrics such as those identified by the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), now part of the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) under the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Foundation.⁵ While the TCFD framework was developed to support climate-related risk disclosure, the four pillars of the TCFD – governance, strategy, risk management, and metrics and targets – are a useful way for companies to disclose how they identify, assess, manage, and oversee a variety of sustainability-related risks and opportunities. SASB's industry-specific guidance (as identified in its materiality map) is beneficial in helping companies identify key performance indicators (KPIs) across various dimensions of sustainability that are considered to be financially material and decision-useful within their industry. In particular, we encourage companies to consider reporting on nature-related factors, given the growing materiality of these issues for many businesses.⁶ We recognize that some companies may report using different standards, which may be required by regulation, or one of a number of voluntary standards. In such cases, we ask that companies highlight the metrics that are industry- or company-specific.

Climate and other sustainability-related disclosures often require companies to collect and aggregate data from various internal and external sources. We recognize that the practical realities of data-collection and reporting may not line up with financial reporting cycles and companies may require additional time after their fiscal year-end to accurately collect, analyze and report this data to investors. To give investors time to assess the data, we encourage companies to produce climate and other sustainability-related disclosures sufficiently in advance of their annual meeting.

Companies may also adopt or refer to guidance on sustainable and responsible business conduct issued by supranational organizations such as the United Nations or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Further, industry initiatives on managing specific operational risks may provide useful guidance to companies on best practices and disclosures. Companies should disclose any relevant global climate and other sustainability-related standards adopted, the industry initiatives in which they

⁵ The [International Financial Reporting Standards \(IFRS\) Foundation](#) announced in November 2021 the formation of an [International Sustainability Standards Board \(ISSB\)](#) to develop a comprehensive global baseline of high-quality sustainability disclosure standards to meet investors' information needs. SASB standards will over time be adapted to ISSB standards but are the reference reporting tool in the meantime.

⁶ While guidance is still under development for a unified disclosure framework related to natural capital, the emerging recommendations of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), may prove useful to some companies.

participate, any peer group benchmarking undertaken, and any assurance processes to help investors understand their approach to sustainable and responsible business practices.

Climate risk

It is our view that climate change has become a key factor in many companies' long-term prospects. As such, as long-term investors we are interested in understanding how companies may be impacted by material climate-related risks and opportunities – just as we seek to understand other business-relevant risks and opportunities – and how these factors are considered within strategy in a manner consistent with the company's business model and sector. Specifically, we look for companies to disclose strategies they have in place that mitigate and are resilient to any material risks to their long-term business model associated with a range of climate-related scenarios, including a scenario in which global warming is limited to well below 2°C, considering global ambitions to achieve a limit of 1.5°C.⁷ It is, of course, up to each company to define their own strategy; that is not the role of BlackRock or other investors.

BIS recognizes that climate change can be challenging for many companies, as they seek to drive long-term value by mitigating risks and capturing opportunities. A growing number of companies, financial institutions, as well as governments, have committed to advancing decarbonization in line with the Paris Agreement. There is growing consensus that companies can benefit from the more favorable macro-economic environment under an orderly, timely and equitable global energy transition.⁸ Yet the path ahead is deeply uncertain and uneven, with different parts of the economy moving at different speeds.⁹ Many companies are asking what their role should be in contributing to an orderly and equitable transition – in ensuring a reliable energy supply and energy security, and in protecting the most vulnerable from energy price shocks and economic dislocation. In this context, we encourage companies to include in their disclosure a business plan for how they intend to deliver long-term financial performance through a transition to global net zero carbon emissions, consistent with their business model and sector.

We look to companies to disclose short-, medium- and long-term targets, ideally science-based targets where these are available for their sector, for Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reductions and to demonstrate how their targets are consistent with the long-term economic interests of their shareholders. Many companies have an opportunity to use and contribute to the development of low carbon energy sources and technologies that will be essential to decarbonizing the global economy over time. We also recognize that continued investment in traditional energy sources, including oil and gas, is required to maintain an orderly and equitable transition – and that divestiture of carbon-intensive assets is unlikely to contribute to global emissions reductions. We encourage companies to disclose how their capital allocation to various energy sources is consistent with their strategy.

At this stage, we view Scope 3 emissions differently from Scopes 1 and 2, given methodological complexity, regulatory uncertainty, concerns about double-counting, and lack of direct control by companies. While we welcome any disclosures and commitments companies choose to make regarding

⁷ The global aspiration to achieve a net-zero global economy by 2050 is reflective of aggregated efforts; governments representing over 90% of GDP have committed to move to net-zero over the coming decades. In determining how to vote on behalf of clients who have authorized us to do so, we look to companies only to address issues within their control and do not anticipate that they will address matters that are the domain of public policy.

⁸ For example, BlackRock's *Capital Markets Assumptions* anticipate 25 points of cumulative economic gains over a 20-year period in an orderly transition as compared to the alternative. This better macro environment will support better economic growth, financial stability, job growth, productivity, as well as ecosystem stability and health outcomes.

⁹ BlackRock, "[Managing the net-zero transition](#)", February 2022.

Scope 3 emissions, we recognize these are provided on a good-faith basis as methodology develops. Our publicly available [commentary](#) provides more information on our approach to climate risk.

Key stakeholder interests

In order to advance long-term shareholders' interests, companies should consider the interests of the various parties on whom they depend for their success over time. It is for each company to determine their key stakeholders based on what is material to their business and long-term financial performance. Most commonly, key stakeholders include employees, business partners (such as suppliers and distributors), clients and consumers, regulators, and the communities in which they operate.

Considering the interests of key stakeholders recognizes the collective nature of long-term value creation and the extent to which each company's prospects for growth are tied to its ability to foster strong sustainable relationships with and support from those stakeholders. Companies should articulate how they address adverse impacts that could arise from their business practices and affect critical business relationships with their stakeholders. We encourage companies to implement, to the extent appropriate, monitoring processes (often referred to as due diligence) to identify and mitigate potential adverse impacts and grievance mechanisms to remediate any actual adverse material impacts. In our view, maintaining trust within these relationships can contribute to a company's long-term success.

As a long-term shareholder on behalf of our clients, we find it helpful when companies disclose how they have identified their key stakeholders and considered their interests in business decision-making. We are also interested to understand the role of the board, which is well positioned to ensure that the approach taken is informed by and aligns with the company's strategy and purpose.

Other corporate governance matters and shareholder protections

It is our view that shareholders have a right to material and timely information on the financial performance and viability of the companies in which they invest. In addition, companies should publish information on the governance structures in place and the rights of shareholders to influence these structures. The reporting and disclosure provided by companies help shareholders assess whether their economic interests have been protected and the quality of the board's oversight of management. We believe shareholders should have the right to vote on key corporate governance matters, including changes to governance mechanisms, to submit proposals to the shareholders' meeting, and to call special meetings of shareholders.

Corporate Form

In our view, it is the responsibility of the board to determine the corporate form that is most appropriate given the company's purpose and business model.¹⁰ Companies proposing to change their corporate form to a public benefit corporation or similar entity should put it to a shareholder vote if not already required to do so under applicable law. Supporting documentation from companies or shareholder proponents proposing to alter the corporate form should clearly articulate how the interests of shareholders and different stakeholders would be impacted as well as the accountability and voting mechanisms that would be available to shareholders. As a fiduciary on behalf of clients, we generally

¹⁰ Corporate form refers to the legal structure by which a business is organized.

support management proposals if our analysis indicates that shareholders' interests are adequately protected. Relevant shareholder proposals are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Shareholder proposals

In most markets in which BlackRock invests on behalf of clients, shareholders have the right to submit proposals to be voted on by shareholders at a company's annual or extraordinary meeting, as long as eligibility and procedural requirements are met. The matters that we see put forward by shareholders address a wide range of topics, including governance reforms, capital management, and improvements in the management or disclosure of sustainability-related risks.

BlackRock is subject to certain requirements under antitrust law in the United States that place restrictions and limitations on how BlackRock can interact with the companies in which we invest on behalf of our clients, including our ability to submit shareholder proposals. As noted above, we can vote, on behalf of clients who authorize us to do so, on proposals put forth by others.

When assessing shareholder proposals, we evaluate each proposal on its merit, with a singular focus on its implications for long-term value creation. We consider the business and economic relevance of the issue raised, as well as its materiality and the urgency with which we believe it should be addressed. We take into consideration the legal effect of the proposal, as shareholder proposals may be advisory or legally binding depending on the jurisdiction. We would not support proposals that we believe would result in over-reaching into the basic business decisions of the company.

Where a proposal is focused on a material governance or sustainability-related risk that we agree needs to be addressed and the intended outcome is consistent with long-term value creation, we will look to the board and management to demonstrate that the company has met the intent of the request made in the shareholder proposal. Where our analysis and/or engagement indicate an opportunity for improvement in the company's approach to the issue, we may support shareholder proposals that are reasonable and not unduly prescriptive or constraining on management. Alternatively, or in addition, we may vote against the re-election of one or more directors if, in our assessment, the board has not responded sufficiently or with an appropriate sense of urgency. While we may not agree with all aspects of a shareholder proponent's views or all facets of the proponent's supporting statement, we may still support proposals that address material governance or sustainability-related risks where we believe it would be helpful for shareholders to have more detailed information on how those risks are identified, monitored, and managed to support a company's ability to deliver long-term financial returns. We may also support a proposal if management is on track, but we believe that voting in favor might accelerate progress.

BlackRock's oversight of its investment stewardship activities

Oversight

BlackRock maintains three regional advisory committees (Stewardship Advisory Committees) for a) the Americas; b) Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA); and c) Asia-Pacific, generally consisting of senior BlackRock investment professionals and/or senior employees with practical boardroom experience. The regional Stewardship Advisory Committees review and advise on amendments to BIS proxy voting guidelines covering markets within each respective region (Guidelines). The advisory committees do not determine voting decisions, which are the responsibility of BIS.

In addition to the regional Stewardship Advisory Committees, the Investment Stewardship Global Oversight Committee (Global Committee) is a risk-focused committee, comprised of senior representatives from various BlackRock investment teams, a senior legal representative, the Global Head of Investment Stewardship (Global Head), and other senior executives with relevant experience and team oversight. The Global Oversight Committee does not determine voting decisions, which are the responsibility of BIS.

The Global Head has primary oversight of the activities of BIS, including voting in accordance with the Guidelines, which require the application of professional judgment and consideration of each company's unique circumstances. The Global Committee reviews and approves amendments to these Principles. The Global Committee also reviews and approves amendments to the regional Guidelines, as proposed by the regional Stewardship Advisory Committees.

In addition, the Global Committee receives and reviews periodic reports regarding the votes cast by BIS, as well as updates on material process issues, procedural changes, and other risk oversight considerations. The Global Committee reviews these reports in an oversight capacity as informed by the BIS corporate governance engagement program and the Guidelines.

BIS carries out engagement with companies, monitors and executes proxy votes, and conducts vote operations (including maintaining records of votes cast) in a manner consistent with the relevant Guidelines. BIS also conducts research on corporate governance issues and participates in industry discussions to contribute to and keep abreast of important developments in the corporate governance field. BIS may utilize third parties for certain of the foregoing activities and performs oversight of those third parties. BIS may raise complicated or particularly controversial matters for internal discussion with the relevant investment teams and governance specialists for discussion and guidance prior to making a voting decision.

Vote execution

BlackRock votes on proxy issues when our clients authorize us to do so. We offer certain clients who prefer their holdings to be voted consistent with specific values or views Voting Choice.¹¹ When BlackRock votes on behalf of our clients, we carefully consider proxies submitted to funds and other fiduciary account(s) (Fund or Funds) for which we have voting authority. BlackRock votes (or refrains from voting) proxies for each Fund for which we have voting authority based on our evaluation of the best long-term economic interests of our clients as shareholders, in the exercise of our independent business judgment, and without regard to the relationship of the issuer of the proxy (or any shareholder proponent or dissident shareholder) to the Fund, the Fund's affiliates (if any), BlackRock or BlackRock's affiliates, or BlackRock employees (see "Conflicts management policies and procedures", below).

When exercising voting rights, BlackRock will normally vote on specific proxy issues in accordance with the Guidelines for the relevant market. The Guidelines are reviewed annually and are amended consistent with changes in the local market practice, as developments in corporate governance occur, or as otherwise deemed advisable by the applicable Stewardship Advisory Committees. BIS analysts may, in the exercise of their professional judgment, conclude that the Guidelines do not cover the specific matter upon which a proxy vote is required or that an exception to the Guidelines would be in the best long-term economic interests of BlackRock's clients.

¹¹ To learn more visit <https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/about-us/investment-stewardship/blackrock-voting-choice>

In the uncommon circumstance of there being a vote with respect to fixed income securities or the securities of privately held issuers, the decision generally will be made by a Fund's portfolio managers and/or BIS based on their assessment of the particular transactions or other matters at issue.

In certain markets, proxy voting involves logistical issues which can affect BlackRock's ability to vote such proxies, as well as the desirability of voting such proxies. These issues include, but are not limited to: i) untimely notice of shareholder meetings; ii) restrictions on a foreigner's ability to exercise votes; iii) requirements to vote proxies in person; iv) "share-blocking" (requirements that investors who exercise their voting rights surrender the right to dispose of their holdings for some specified period in proximity to the shareholder meeting); v) potential difficulties in translating the proxy; vi) regulatory constraints; and vii) requirements to provide local agents with unrestricted powers of attorney to facilitate voting instructions. We are not supportive of impediments to the exercise of voting rights such as share-blocking or overly burdensome administrative requirements.

As a consequence, BlackRock votes proxies in these situations on a "best-efforts" basis. In addition, BIS may determine that it is generally in the best interests of BlackRock's clients not to vote proxies (or not to vote our full allocation) if the costs (including but not limited to opportunity costs associated with share-blocking constraints) associated with exercising a vote are expected to outweigh the benefit the client would derive by voting on the proposal.

Portfolio managers have full discretion to vote the shares in the Funds they manage based on their analysis of the economic impact of a particular ballot item on their investors. Portfolio managers may, from time to time, reach differing views on how best to maximize economic value with respect to a particular investment. Therefore, portfolio managers may, and sometimes do, vote shares in the Funds under their management differently from BIS or from one another. However, because BlackRock's clients are mostly long-term investors with long-term economic goals, ballots are frequently cast in a uniform manner.

Conflicts management policies and procedures

BIS maintains policies and procedures that seek to prevent undue influence on BlackRock's proxy voting activity. Such influence might stem from any relationship between the investee company (or any shareholder proponent or dissident shareholder) and BlackRock, BlackRock's affiliates, a Fund or a Fund's affiliates, or BlackRock employees. The following are examples of sources of perceived or potential conflicts of interest:

- BlackRock clients who may be issuers of securities or proponents of shareholder resolutions
- BlackRock business partners or third parties who may be issuers of securities or proponents of shareholder resolutions
- BlackRock employees who may sit on the boards of public companies held in Funds managed by BlackRock
- Significant BlackRock, Inc. investors who may be issuers of securities held in Funds managed by BlackRock
- Securities of BlackRock, Inc. or BlackRock investment funds held in Funds managed by BlackRock
- BlackRock, Inc. board members who serve as senior executives or directors of public companies held in Funds managed by BlackRock

BlackRock has taken certain steps to mitigate perceived or potential conflicts including, but not limited to, the following:

- Adopted the Guidelines which are designed to advance our clients' interests in the companies in which BlackRock invests on their behalf
- Established a reporting structure that separates BIS from employees with sales, vendor management, or business partnership roles. In addition, BlackRock seeks to ensure that all engagements with corporate issuers, dissident shareholders or shareholder proponents are managed consistently and without regard to BlackRock's relationship with such parties. Clients or business partners are not given special treatment or differentiated access to BIS. BIS prioritizes engagements based on factors including, but not limited to, our need for additional information to make a voting decision or our view on the likelihood that an engagement could lead to positive outcome(s) over time for the economic value of the company. Within the normal course of business, BIS may engage directly with BlackRock clients, business partners and/or third parties, and/or with employees with sales, vendor management, or business partnership roles, in discussions regarding our approach to stewardship, general corporate governance matters, client reporting needs, and/or to otherwise ensure that proxy-related client service levels are met
- Determined to engage, in certain instances, an independent third party voting service provider to make proxy voting recommendations as a further safeguard to avoid potential conflicts of interest, to satisfy regulatory compliance requirements, or as may be otherwise required by applicable law. In such circumstances, the voting service provider provides BlackRock with recommendations, in accordance with the Guidelines, as to how to vote such proxies. BlackRock uses an independent voting service provider to make proxy voting recommendations for shares of BlackRock, Inc. and companies affiliated with BlackRock, Inc. BlackRock may also use an independent voting service provider to make proxy voting recommendations for:
 - public companies that include BlackRock employees on their boards of directors
 - public companies of which a BlackRock, Inc. board member serves as a senior executive or a member of the board of directors
 - public companies that are the subject of certain transactions involving BlackRock Funds
 - public companies that are joint venture partners with BlackRock, and
 - public companies when legal or regulatory requirements compel BlackRock to use an independent voting service provider

In selecting a voting service provider, we assess several characteristics, including but not limited to: independence, an ability to analyze proxy issues and make recommendations in the best economic interest of our clients in accordance with the Guidelines, reputation for reliability and integrity, and operational capacity to accurately deliver the assigned recommendations in a timely manner. We may engage more than one voting service provider, in part to mitigate potential or perceived conflicts of interest at a single voting service provider. The Global Committee appoints and reviews the performance of the voting service providers, generally on an annual basis.

Securities lending

When so authorized, BlackRock acts as a securities lending agent on behalf of Funds. Securities lending is a well-regulated practice that contributes to capital market efficiency. It also enables funds to generate additional returns for a fund, while allowing fund providers to keep fund expenses lower.

With regard to the relationship between securities lending and proxy voting, BlackRock's approach is informed by our fiduciary responsibility to act in our clients' best interests. In most cases, BlackRock anticipates that the potential long-term value to the Fund of voting shares would be less than the potential revenue the loan may provide the Fund. However, in certain instances, BlackRock may determine, in its independent business judgment as a fiduciary, that the value of voting outweighs the securities lending revenue loss to clients and would therefore recall shares to be voted in those instances.

The decision to recall securities on loan as part of BlackRock's securities lending program in order to vote is based on an evaluation of various factors that include, but are not limited to, assessing potential securities lending revenue alongside the potential long-term value to clients of voting those securities (based on the information available at the time of recall consideration).¹² BIS works with colleagues in the Securities Lending and Risk and Quantitative Analysis teams to evaluate the costs and benefits to clients of recalling shares on loan.

Periodically, BlackRock reviews our process for determining whether to recall securities on loan in order to vote and may modify it as necessary.

Voting guidelines

The issue-specific Guidelines published for each region/country in which we vote are intended to summarize BlackRock's general philosophy and approach to issues that may commonly arise in the proxy voting context in each market where we invest. The Guidelines are not intended to be exhaustive. BIS applies the Guidelines on a case-by-case basis, in the context of the individual circumstances of each company and the specific issue under review. As such, the Guidelines do not indicate how BIS will vote in every instance. Rather, they reflect our view about corporate governance issues generally, and provide insight into how we typically approach issues that commonly arise on corporate ballots.

Reporting and vote transparency

We are committed to transparency in the stewardship work we do on behalf of clients. We inform clients about our engagement and voting policies and activities through direct communication and through disclosure on our [website](#). Each year we publish an annual report that provides a global overview of our investment stewardship engagement and voting activities and a voting spotlight that summarizes our voting over a proxy year.¹³ Additionally, we make public our market-specific voting guidelines for the benefit of clients and companies with whom we engage. We also publish commentaries to share our perspective on market developments and emerging key themes.

¹² Recalling securities on loan can be impacted by the timing of record dates. In the United States, for example, the record date of a shareholder meeting typically falls before the proxy statements are released. Accordingly, it is not practicable to evaluate a proxy statement, determine that a vote has a material impact on a fund and recall any shares on loan in advance of the record date for the annual meeting. As a result, managers must weigh independent business judgement as a fiduciary, the benefit to a fund's shareholders of recalling loaned shares in advance of an estimated record date without knowing whether there will be a vote on matters which have a material impact on the fund (thereby forgoing potential securities lending revenue for the fund's shareholders) or leaving shares on loan to potentially earn revenue for the fund (thereby forgoing the opportunity to vote).

¹³ The proxy year runs from July 1 to June 30 of the proceeding calendar year.

At a more granular level, we publish quarterly our vote record for each company that held a shareholder meeting during the period, showing how we voted on each proposal and explaining any votes against management proposals or on shareholder proposals. For shareholder meetings where a vote might be high profile or of significant interest to clients, we may publish a vote bulletin after the meeting, disclosing and explaining our vote on key proposals. We also publish a quarterly list of all companies with which we engaged and the key topics addressed in the engagement meeting.

In this way, we help inform our clients about the work we do on their behalf in promoting the governance and business models that support durable, long-term value creation.

Want to know more?

blackrock.com/stewardship | contactstewardship@blackrock.com

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