

NORM-BASED ENGAGEMENT

TITLE

ISS ESG NORM-BASED ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

ISS ESG’s Norm-Based Engagement Solution facilitates engagement with issuers on behalf of clients who would like to encourage corporate disclosure of efforts taken to manage or mitigate the environmental and social risks connected to business activities or operations. The Norm-Based Engagement Solution enables participating asset owners and managers to wield more influence than through solo engagements, while saving time and resources.

INITIATING ENGAGEMENT

Through ISS ESG’s Norm-Based Engagement Solution, clients can focus on companies that are assessed under ISS ESG Norm-Based Research to be involved in alleged or verified severe, systematic, or systemic failures to respect international norms. Engagement under the solution is preceded by in-depth research and fact-finding dialogues with companies and stakeholders. Through these feasibility studies, ISS ESG identifies gaps in company disclosure and assesses whether investor dialogue is an appropriate means to reach the objectives set by the clients. Influential factors include an estimation of the company’s level of responsibility, steps it has taken to mitigate the possible failure to respect a norm, and availability of both stakeholder and expert sources to facilitate constructive dialogue.

At the outset of engagement, clear and actionable objectives are defined on the basis of expectations regarding the company’s ability to address shortcomings in the context of its specific business sector and relevant industry standards. These objectives fall under four key categories (Disclosure, Implementation, Remediation, Termination) and progress is measured against four milestones (No measure announced, Commitment expressed, Measures initiated, Credible measures adopted).

Information provided by the company through the dialogue and interactions under the Norm-Based Engagement process is assessed against the objectives established at the outset of engagement and then a decision is taken on the outcome of the engagement. Where the fulfilment of the objectives has been met and a determination made that the controversy, or the risk thereof, has been resolved, the engagement will be closed. If there is insufficient information to determine whether the fulfilment of objectives have been met, the engagement will be extended. Alternatively, where there is a poor outlook for the achievement of objectives for the engagement, the engagement will be discontinued.

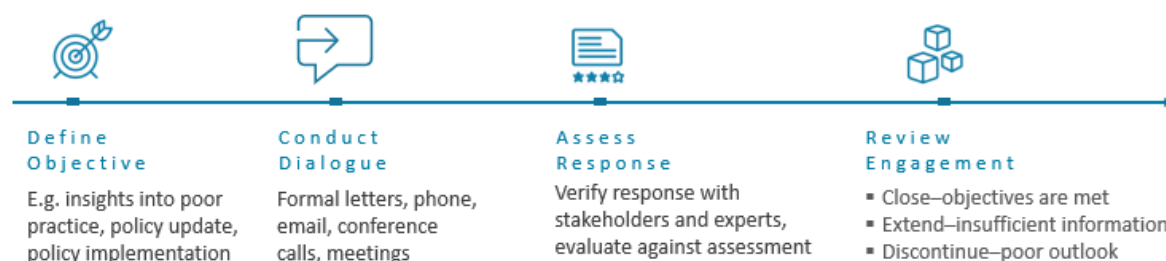


Figure 1: Simplified Norm-Based Engagement process.

CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT DIALOGUE

Norm-Based Engagement aims to build relationships that facilitate constructive dialogue, enabling investors to exercise their influence as owners. ISS ESG’s Norm-Based Engagement approach encourages companies to elaborate on efforts taken to design and implement better risk management systems to minimize the risk for re-occurrence of failures to respect international norms. Through the solution, information is sought on whether a company has proven successful in implementing a genuine reduction in risk.

ELICITING RESPONSES FROM NON-RESPONSIVE COMPANIES

Over time, responsiveness is noted with most companies with which engagement is sought. Others require repeated follow-ups to respond, and some steadfastly fail to respond to investor concerns. To address these challenges in communication, regular and courteous follow-up is built into the Norm-Based Engagement approach. Once every effort has been made to engage both Investor Relations and a company’s Executive Management, the feasibility of engagement is re-evaluated.

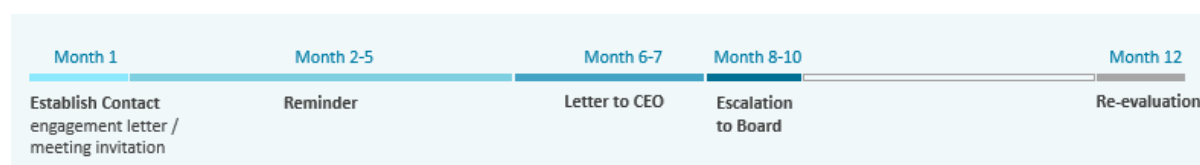






Figure 2: Simplified Norm-Based Engagement timeline.

The engagements are categorised under the four United Nations (UN) Global Compact areas: human rights, labour rights, environment, and anti-corruption. Throughout this document, these areas are depicted as follows:

UN GLOBAL COMPACT PRINCIPLES	NORM AREA	
1-2		Human Rights
3-6		Labour Rights
7-9		Environment
10		Anti-Corruption

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