

Your investments can make a world of difference

We live in an age when corporations are expected to be more than profitable. We expect them to care about issues like protecting the environment and respecting human rights.

It's important to us that the companies you invest in are good corporate citizens. So, through Counsel Portfolio Services and IPC Private Wealth, we maintain active engagement with the companies we hold through our ESG policy (ESG stands for environmental, social and governance factors).

WHAT DOES ESG INVOLVE?

ESG is a rapidly growing area of focus in the investment community. It encompasses all of the major factors that determine whether a corporation is acting ethically and responsibly to individuals, society and the world.



Environmental: A focus on any activity or negligence that result in harmful effects on the natural environment. Issues include hazardous waste, carbon emissions, energy consumption, water management and protection of habitats.



Social: Situations that affect the welfare of a company's employees, customers or suppliers are identified. Issues include employee safety, labour rights, conditions of workplaces where supplies are sourced, how communities are impacted and how consumer relations are managed.



Governance: Assessing governance involves whether or not a company operates in a responsible manner. Issues include independence of its board, executive compensation reflecting shareholder interest, anti-corruption measures, and proper accounting and audit practices.



PROMOTING POSITIVE CHANGE



Investment Process: Socially responsible investing has evolved over the years from the straight out exclusion of certain industries from portfolios, to designing investment solutions that incorporate ESG criteria. This type of integrated approach where ESG factors are embedded in the investment philosophy enables investment managers to be influencers and hold companies accountable.



Active Ownership: We approach responsible investing through active ownership. It means that we actively work on influencing the ESG behaviour of companies we own, when improvement is needed. This approach aims to make a difference in the way all companies respect the environment, society and their shareholders. We practise active ownership through voting activity and corporate engagement.



Voting activity: Shareholders are eligible to vote on particular corporate decisions, and we use these voting rights to support ESG issues. We enlisted the proxy voting services of Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS), a leading firm in the ESG field to execute votes on our behalf. ISS combines our votes with those of like-minded shareholders to exert greater influence over resolutions involving environmental, social or governance issues.



Corporate engagement: Communication with specific companies is also managed on our behalf by ISS, whose analysts monitor policies and practices of the companies we invest in. If a company falls short on ESG standards, concern is voiced to the company's management. ISS also engages management if a company is at risk of ESG issues developing, or if greater disclosure of ESG matters is required.

HAVING THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

As an individual, you want an investment portfolio designed to reach your financial objectives and life goals. As a member of the larger community, you want to invest in companies held accountable to certain ethical standards. Our active ownership approach gives you the best of both worlds. We have the freedom to seek investment opportunities wherever they may be, while influencing environmental, social and governance practices of companies at home and globally.



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