

Rate the Raters: Questionnaire for Raters

Please use the free-form text entry spaces and drop-down menus to input your answers. While we have not set a minimum or maximum number of words for your responses, we would appreciate you answering the questions in sufficient detail for us to understand your practices. We recognize that certain questions may not be pertinent to every rating. If you find this to be the case, please indicate this and provide a brief explanation.


0. Rating Overview

1. Rating Name:
2. Please describe the primary objectives and motivations for your rating.
3. Do you measure or evaluate the impact or success of your ratings? If so, how?
4. Please identify your audience or customer base, and, if possible how they use your rating in their decision making.

1. Governance and Transparency

1.1 Disclosure of Methodology

1. Describe how you make available the details of your methodology to the public, rated companies and other stakeholders.

 If your methodology is publically disclosed, or if you feel comfortable sharing it with us, please attach a copy with your submission. We will keep this confidential if it is not in the public domain.

1.2 Conflict Management

1. Do you have a policy (or guidelines, standards, etc.) that addresses potential conflicts of interest?

If so, is it disclosed publicly?

If answering, please describe the key elements of the policy.

2. Do you disclose the relationships and independence of board members, advisory panel members, partners and/or other involved third-parties?

If so, how?

How do you manage potential conflicts of interest with these entities?

3. Do you offer for-fee services to the companies that you rate (including benchmark reports)? If yes, please describe these services. How do you avoid conflicts of interest in these situations?
4. Do you have any other financial relationships (e.g. sponsorships) with companies you rate? If so, describe these relationships.

1.3 Regular Review

1. Do you have a regular approach to updating your methodology over time? If yes, describe this approach.
2. Describe how you communicate any changes in your methodologies to affected companies and other stakeholders, and how you work with them to adapt to and understand the implications of the changes.

1.4 Stakeholder Involvement

1. Does the rating have an external and/or independent advisory body in place? If so, describe how this body is involved in the rating's construction and maintenance and the scoring, rating, or selection of companies.
2. Describe how you involve / solicit feedback from external stakeholders in the development and ongoing maintenance of the rating. Please provide an example of how you revised your methodology based on stakeholder input.
3. How do you communicate the output / summary from this engagement? For example, do you make public the stakeholder comments?


2. Quality of Inputs

2.1 Information Sources

1. Please list and describe the information sources that you utilize to develop your rating.
2. Please describe how this information is obtained (i.e. from publicly available documents, partner organizations, directly from companies). If your rating is based on other ratings or third-party research firms, please describe how they obtain their information.
3. How often do you refresh information / inputs on companies?
4. How do you deal with non-disclosure by companies in your rating?

2.2 Company Engagement

1. Describe the process by which you engage / interact with the companies that you rate (i.e. frequency, nature, format).
2. On average, how much time do your analysts spend engaging with each rated company on an annual basis?
3. Please describe if and how feedback from rated companies is incorporated into your research and ratings process.

 Please attach a sample questionnaire or survey that you administer to rated companies.

2.3 Input Verification

1. Describe your approach to verifying the information used to assess companies. Is this approach captured in any sort of policy or guidance document?
2. Is external or third-party verification a consideration in assessing the quality of information sources?
If so, please explain.

3. Research Process

3.1 Experience and Capacity of Research Team

1. On average, how many years of experience do your analysts (internal or contract) have working in or analyzing the industries they cover?
2. Describe your approach to ongoing training and industry education for your analysts.
3. On average, how many companies do your analysts cover each year?

3.2 Quality Management

1. Describe your approach to ensuring quality control throughout the ratings process. Is this process documented or codified?
2. Have your research systems or processes been certified, assured or verified by an external organization?
If so, please describe.

3.3 Sector Specificity

1. Does your rating use the same criteria and weightings for all sectors and companies?
If so, explain why.
2. Describe how you take into account industry and company specific issues and context.

 Please attach a list of the criteria you use to rate companies.

3.4 Basis for Rating

1. Describe the basis for your rating of companies, including how you determine what constitutes the different degrees of performance. For example, if you grade companies on an A-F scale, how do you determine these levels?
2. Do you factor company-specific context into your rating?
If so, please explain how. For example, if assessing a company on water consumption, do you consider the geographic context for this assessment (e.g. some regions are more arid than others)?
3. Do you incorporate external norms, standards or principles (e.g. UN MDGs, GRI, UNGC) into your rating or process?
If so, describe how you use these to calibrate or assess company performance.
4. How do you deal with unforeseen, negative company events in your ratings process (e.g. environmental incidents, ethics breaches)?

4. Outputs

4.1 Validation of Results

1. Describe the steps you take to verify your rating results (including scores and reports) prior to their finalization.
2. Do you give rated companies an opportunity to review draft scores or reports?
If yes, describe this process, including timeframe given for review.
3. Do you have a formal policy and/or process for addressing challenges or disputes presented by companies or other stakeholders?
If yes, describe this policy and/or process. If no, explain how you address challenges or disputes.

4.2 Accessibility

1. Describe how you disclose and explain your results to rated companies. Do you share the full details of the assessment or results? If no, explain why not.

2. Describe how and to what extent stakeholders (other than rated companies) can access the details and results of your rating.