



US\$1 trillion Asset Owner Platform launches solution for identifying SDG-investments

AMSTERDAM, 6 July 2020 - APG, AustralianSuper, British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI) and PGGM have jointly established the Sustainable Development Investments Asset Owner Platform (SDI AOP). The platform's standard and artificial-intelligence driven data enables investors to assess companies on their contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The product will be available via distribution partner Qontigo.

Solving data challenges

Global investors increasingly consider the SDGs relevant to their investment strategy, policy, asset allocation, investment decisions and active ownership, according to research by the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI). However, a lack of quality data to identify contributions to the SDGs has been an impediment for investors, and companies struggle to adapt their disclosures to meet investor needs. By providing a globally consistent SDG measurement framework, the SDI Asset Owner Platform helps investors to imbed the SDGs into their investment processes.

Shared understanding of Sustainable Development Investments (SDIs)

The SDI AOP allows asset owners and their managers to connect around the shared objective of measuring and understanding their portfolio investments' contributions to the SDGs. These goals, set by the United Nations in 2015, aim for a better, more prosperous world, by addressing urgent global issues such as water scarcity, healthcare access, and protecting the environment. Investments in companies whose products or services contribute to the realization of the SDGs are called Sustainable Development Investments (SDIs).

AI-driven actionable insights

The SDI Asset Owner Platform provides a common definition, taxonomy, and data source for investments into the SDGs. Powered by AI-technology, data science company Entis generates SDI classifications for 8,000 companies to date. This enables investors to assess their global capital markets' portfolios on their contribution to the SDGs and to report to their clients and external stakeholders transparently and consistently, using a common and auditable standard. The SDI classifications will be commercially available through Qontigo. The SDI definition and taxonomy are public and equally applicable to private market investments.

Asset-owner led platform

The SDI AOP is asset owner-led and asset owners make all methodological choices. The platform builds on the direct input and feedback from asset owners and their managers, and feeds the participating asset owners' policy and investment needs into the assessment process. Subscribers and other stakeholders will also be invited to provide feedback. The SDI Asset Owner Platform will host a virtual event in September to provide interested investors with additional insight into the workings of the platform.

Commitment to the SDGs

The participating asset owners believe it is essential to invest into the SDGs, and to do so at scale. In September 2019, APG and PGGM, at the behest of their pension fund clients ABP, bpfBOUW and PFZW, announced their cooperation to set up the SDI Asset Owner Platform. These pension funds, among them the two largest in the Netherlands, have set ambitious targets for investing in the SDGs. AustralianSuper and British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI) have since joined the platform. The SDI AOP welcomes investors across the globe to subscribe, creating a critical mass of investors who together define the meaning of investing in the SDGs.

Claudia Kruse, Managing Director Global Responsible Investment & Governance, APG

“The SDGs are global and launching this standard with asset owners from three continents shows our commitment to contribute to the SDGs, and we look forward to extending the collaboration. SDGs and AI-based technology are at the forefront of innovation. This investment is part of our commitment to our clients on whose behalf we invest in order to provide affordable pension in a sustainable world.”

Andrew Gray, Director ESG and Stewardship, AustralianSuper

“As a founding member of the SDI AOP, AustralianSuper strongly welcomes the opportunity to jointly establish a global standard for investors to identify sustainable development investments. The platform will progress how we assess and engage with investee companies on their SDG contribution, measurement and reporting. This will promote real world sustainable outcomes which are vital for creating long-term value for beneficiaries.”

Jennifer Coulson, Vice President ESG, BCI

“Standardization of data is one of the biggest challenges facing the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) landscape. For this reason, we are excited to be part of this asset-owner led initiative which sets a global standard on SDG contributions for all investors and brings consistency and comparability to company-level data. This is the type of quality data that BCI relies on when making investment decisions that are required to generate value-added returns for our clients.”

Eloy Lindeijer, Chief Investment Management, PGGM

“For PGGM this platform is an important next step in a process to mobilize ever more institutional capital around the big challenges of our time, as described in the SDGs. By collaborating with asset owners from different continents we hope that this SDI AOP will contribute to being a global standard for investors.”

Sebastian Ceria, Chief Executive Officer, Qontigo

“The application of transparent rules-based methodologies, common definitions, taxonomies and strong data are the bedrock elements required for effective sustainable investing. We are proud to be a part of the SDI Asset Owner Platform’s efforts to enhance the ability of investors to achieve their commendable goals in sustainable investing.”

Wim Scheper, Managing Director, Entis

“Contributing to the development of a global standard for SDG investments is truly inspiring. It will guide the decision-making by investors and companies towards a more sustainable world.”

About APG

APG is the largest pension delivery organization in the Netherlands; its approximately 3,000 employees provide executive consultancy, asset management, pension administration, pension communication and employer services. APG performs these services on behalf of (pension) funds and employers in the sectors of education, government, construction, cleaning and window cleaning, housing associations, energy and utility companies, sheltered employment organizations, and medical specialists. APG manages approximately €512 billion/US\$576 billion (April 2020) in pension assets for the pension funds in these sectors. APG works for approximately 21,000 employers, providing the pension for one in five families in the Netherlands (about 4.6 million participants). APG has offices in Amsterdam, Heerlen, Brussels, New York and Hong Kong. APG’s largest client, civil service and teachers fund ABP, has set the target to invest 20% of AUM into the SDGs by 2025.

More information: www.apg.nl/en

About AustralianSuper

AustralianSuper is a profit for member pension fund that invests the retirement savings of its 2.2 million members to help them achieve their best possible retirement outcome. AustralianSuper is Australia’s largest pension fund, managing €106.7 billion/US\$118.7 billion in assets as at 31 May 2020. AustralianSuper manages the assets of one in every 10 working Australians, with more than 300,000 businesses making contributions on behalf of employees.

More information: www.australiansuper.com

About BCI

With C\$171.3 billion of managed assets as of March 31, 2020, British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI) is a leading provider of investment management services to British Columbia’s public sector and one of Canada’s largest asset managers. BCI generates the investment returns that help their institutional clients build a financially secure future. With a global outlook, BCI seeks investment opportunities that convert savings into productive capital that will meet their clients’ risk/return requirements over time. BCI invests across a range of asset classes: fixed income; mortgages; public and private equity; real estate; infrastructure; and renewable resources.

More information: www.bci.ca.

About PGGM

PGGM is a cooperative Dutch pension fund service provider. Institutional clients are offered: asset management, pension fund management, policy advice and management support. On December 31, 2019 PGGM had €252 billion in assets under management and was administrating pensions of 4.4 million participants. Around 750,000 workers in the Dutch healthcare are connected to PGGM&CO, our members organization. Either alone or together with strategic partners, PGGM develops future solutions by linking together pension, care, housing and work.

<https://www.pggm.nl/en/>

About Qontigo

Qontigo is a financial intelligence innovator and a leader in the modernization of investment management, from risk to return. The combination of the group's world-class indices and best-of-breed analytics, with its technological expertise and customer-driven innovation, enables its clients to achieve competitive advantage in a rapidly changing marketplace. Qontigo's global client base includes the world's largest financial products issuers, capital owners and asset managers. Created in 2019 through the combination of Axioma, DAX and STOXX, Qontigo is part of Deutsche Börse Group, headquartered in Eschborn with key locations in New York, Zug and London.

More information: www.qontigo.com

About Entis

Entis is a data science company specialized in unstructured text processing to create investable insights for asset managers. Using text documents such as annual reports, company webpages or patents, Entis classifies companies on their contribution to the UN SDGs. Entis furthermore provides services in the area of thematic investing and alpha research. Our service offering is enabled via our scalable data-platform and advanced pattern-recognition technologies.

More information: www.entis.ai

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