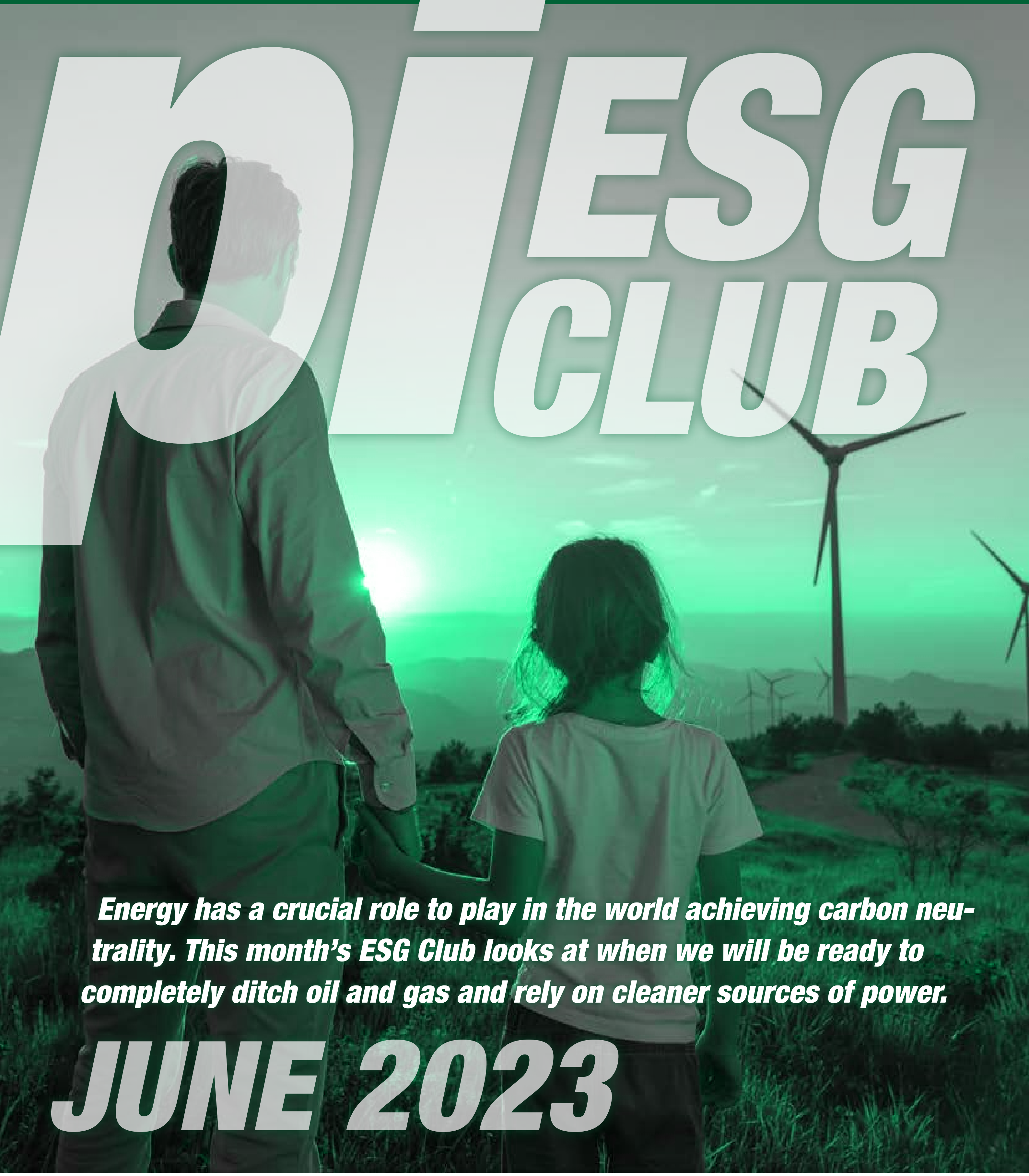

pi ESG CLUB

Energy has a crucial role to play in the world achieving carbon neutrality. This month's ESG Club looks at when we will be ready to completely ditch oil and gas and rely on cleaner sources of power.

JUNE 2023

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THE RETURN OF SUSTAINABILITY-LINKED BONDS AFTER A DISSAPOINTING 2022

Sustainable debt suffered a setback last year. While some point to that being a sign of things to come, others are more optimistic. *Andrew Holt* reports.

Debate surrounds the prospects of the sustainability-linked bond (SLB) market after 2022 proved to be a difficult year.

Sceptics say SLBs face growth obstacles, citing last year's decline in issuance as evidence, resulting in the asset class being at an 'inflection point', according to Dennis Sugrue, global insurance ESG lead at S&P Global Ratings.

Another point is that unlike green and social bonds, there are no restrictions on how those issuing SLBs can use the proceeds. Instead, the coupon is linked to the sustainable performance of the issuer.

This is typically done through a 'step-up' mechanism whereby the issuer pays a higher coupon if it does not achieve pre-defined targets. Such an approach 'should not be allowed or encouraged,' according to the European Banking Authority.

And like the growing field of green-related investments, allegations of greenwashing are not far away. SLBs have 'lost their mojo' due to greenwashing accusations and concerns over legal repercussions from including sustainable key performance indicators in their bond documentation, according to an assessment of the market by Barclays.

The lack of a premium on SLBs also makes them less attractive, Barclays added.

Yet despite this, Moody's said in a report that it expects about $75bn (£60bn) worth of SLBs to be issued globally in 2023, an uptick from last year's decline, where $70.4bn (£57bn) was raised. Context should be noted here: one in which 2022 was tough in the debt markets overall.

Jo Richardson, head of portfolio strategy at the Anthropocene Fixed Income Institute, said any criticism of SLBs is misplaced. "They improve disclosure from issues and elevate sustainability into a key part of investor dialogue. This improves regulatory disclosure around sustainable performance."

She added that such debt products could introduce real change. "SLBs have the potential to be a transformational product; uniquely suited to raising capital to transition businesses in hard-to-abate sectors," she said.

On the decline of SLBs last year, Richardson added: "Volumes of SLBs decreased in 2022, alongside volatile market conditions. Growth is recovering, alongside positive market sentiment for the complementary role of this product alongside other sustainable debt instruments."

She said that SLB issuance is more focused amongst corporate entities, often high yield or unrated. "Investor demand appears to be strong, incorporating sustainability commitments into these debt products," she added.

Bank on the SLB

Other areas of growth in the adoption of SLBs that have been cited are among banks and sovereigns, looking to embrace the asset class as they seek to reinforce their sustainability commitments.

Chile was the first sovereign to issue an SLB in March 2022, selling $2bn (£1.6bn) worth of 20-year paper. Uruguay followed in October.

The simplicity and flexibility of SLBs could appeal to more emerging market sovereigns that may find it difficult to meet the reporting requirements for use-of-proceeds bonds, Sugrue said. A point highlighted by a World Bank survey of 28 emerging market sovereigns last year, where six said they were considering sustainability-linked bonds.

The growth of SLBs has fed across different sectors. Italian energy group Enel issued the first such debt in September 2019, agreeing to pay 15-basis points more if it missed its renewable energy target. Then rapid growth was predicted for the SLB market as the instrument would allow a broader universe of issuers to obtain sustainable financing due to the flexibility in how funds are spent.

And while this played out, with global SLB issuance growing 10-fold in 2021 to $94.38bn (£76bn), activity tailed off in 2022 to $70.4bn (£57bn), according to S&P Global Ratings.

In the financial space, mortgage lender Berlin Hyp became the first bank to issue an SLB in 2021. It allowed the bank to share its decarbonisation plans and progress with market participants and show its commitment to reaching its target, said Bodo Winkler-Viti, head of funding and investor relations.

Taking a holistic view

Another advantage of an SLB is that it takes a 'more holistic approach' because it relates to the whole organisation and not a single portfolio, Winkler-Viti added.

In addition, the short period of time SLBs have been around has to be considered when assessing them and their development, Richardson said. "The products have only been around for three-and-a-half years. If you look at how long it took green bonds to grow, it took longer."

Richardson concluded that SLBs should be a strong consideration for investor portfolios. "They are a powerful product. Elevating sustainability into the dialogue. All investors should be thinking about them, especially for fixed income.

"Investors should be thinking about the sustainability of their own portfolios and sustainability bonds enable you to have visibility over these plans. Sustainability bonds can act as a good hedge. They are a powerful complementary product."

INTERVIEW – JANE FIRTH

"Engagement alone will not result in real world change."

Andrew Holt discusses stewardship, driving real change, the data challenge and COP not being much cop with the head of responsible investment at pension pool Border to Coast.

How do you embed ESG and responsible investment into Border to Coast's investment process?

We are a long-term investor and it's therefore important that we take a holistic approach to understanding all the risks and opportunities a company faces when we are making investment decisions. Our portfolio managers incorporate material environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues into their investment decisions in the same way they think about valuation, management quality, competitive advantage and profitability.

This starts with the research we conduct, whether it's for listed equities, fixed income or private markets. ESG is factored into that initial process through detailed stock and issuer research and private markets due diligence.

It's also a central component of our external asset manager procurement and appointment process. We monitor managers quarterly and conduct an annual deep dive on how they include responsible investment in their process.

What is your approach to investing in innovative climate change technologies?

We recognise that more investment is needed in infrastructure and technology to facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy. Engagement alone will not result in real world change. We are also looking for good investment opportunities.

That's why we have committed to increasing our investment in climate solutions with the support of our partner funds through their asset allocation decisions. We are facilitating this through our private markets programme, which through the infrastructure offering includes an energy transition theme.

In 2022, we also launched a dedicated Climate Opportunities offering targeting investments that will have a material positive impact on climate change and support long-term net-zero carbon emission goals.

You have an ambitious net-zero plan. How is that going?

We have always factored climate risk into our investment analysis and have continued to evolve this process. Border to Coast has worked across the investment team to understand the climate risks and opportunities in our portfolios and conduct enhanced risk assessments for the largest emitters using a range of tools and data.

We have communicated our net-zero targets to our external managers and are working with them to implement those into the portfolios they manage. Stewardship, and working with companies to have viable transition plans, is critical to reaching net zero and so is a central component of our Net Zero Implementation Plan.

The low carbon transition is already one of our four priority engagement themes and we have developed our stewardship approach to support the ambitious targets we have for financed emissions under engagement.

Our voting policy has been strengthened again on climate change with a focus on

the oil and gas and banking sectors. We have pre-declared our voting intentions ahead of some key meetings.

As part of our net-zero goal, we have set short and medium-term emission reduction targets covering our in-scope assets.

We monitor our metrics on a quarterly basis and report annually through our climate change report. We have already made big cuts since 2019 and are confident of meeting our 2025 and 2030 targets.

What are the biggest challenges within that plan?

It's important that we look at forward-looking metrics where possible and not just focus on carbon metrics and footprinting. Carbon data can be out of date and doesn't reflect the transition plans companies have in place.

We use tools available such as the Transition Pathway Initiative tool, the Climate Action 100+ net zero company benchmark indicators along with other data metrics to assess where companies have made commitments to being net zero.

We need all sectors of the economy to make and enable the transition. Rather than excluding entire sectors we need to assess where companies have credible plans. Otherwise, there's a risk that we could end up restricting the investment universe unnecessarily and have concentrated portfolios with the associated investment risk that brings.

Data is still a challenge, especially for more esoteric asset classes. Coverage for fixed income portfolios is improving and we are engaging with external managers to improve our coverage. It is still challenging to get data for some multi-asset credit areas and private markets.

We are supporting initiatives such as the ESG Data Convergence Initiative for private markets, and the Assessing Sovereign Climate-Related Opportunities and Risks (ASCOR) project for sovereign bonds to try and correct this.

You also have a big focus on stewardship. How does that fit into your commitment to ESG?

We believe in engagement as a tool to influence change in company behaviours. As mentioned, stewardship and engaging with our investee companies is crucial for us to meet our net-zero goal. We have four priority engagement themes: low carbon transition being one, with others focused on diversity, labour, waste and water.

We have increased the size of the responsible investment team during the past year and now have a stewardship specialist supporting our approach. We also have an external engagement provider engaging on a broader range of ESG topics.

It's important that stewardship – voting and engagement – is incorporated into investment decision making and isn't something that's siloed. That's why our portfolio managers are involved in voting decisions and engagement meetings.

You have alluded to it, but data is often cited as a big problem within ESG. How can this be addressed?

Data is a challenge. There is a lack of standardisation leading to quality and credibility issues. Coverage can vary significantly across different markets, especially in emerging markets, and methodologies also vary between data providers.

Arguably data is still an issue for carbon and monitoring climate risk, but this is an even bigger challenge when looking at nature-related data and future disclosures for the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures.

Having a standardised approach is critically important, this is hopefully being addressed through having a global baseline for sustainability disclosures, which should improve the quality of disclosures and decision-useful information for investors.

Will investors using engagement to change company attitudes to ESG move the dial on climate change issues?

As long-term investors, we have chosen to use the strength of our collective voice to influence companies to drive change in the companies we invest in. We believe the most effective mechanism is through active engagement.

We do this directly and through our membership of initiatives and investor groups, such as Climate Action 100+ and the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF). This is to push businesses to take real steps, whether that's reducing emissions and setting reduction targets or addressing social aspects, such as modern slavery.

We believe engagement secures lasting, positive changes that will make a real contribution to achieving the low-carbon transition the world needs. We have seen positive outcomes with companies making net-zero commitments and improving disclosures.

However, this year we have seen some companies backsliding on previous commitments, so it's important that as an investor we continue to hold those companies to account and have those challenging conversations.

We also use the power of our collective voice to engage with and influence regulators, policymakers and the wider industry to put the measures in place required to have a real-world effect.

In what circumstances do you consider divestment? And how often have you used it?

Our belief in engagement does not mean that we will hold companies that are under engagement indefinitely. We have an engagement escalation strategy, which forms part of our responsible investment policy. If companies are not responding we may need to escalate our approach.

We will do this through a number of channels including voting and filing shareholder resolutions; divestment in individual companies is an important part of this engagement toolkit. Whether a company is responding to investor engagement or not also forms part of our investment decision-making.

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We need all sectors of the economy to make and enable the transition.

For example, climate change issues were part of the decision to sell our position in a range of companies, such as Exxon and Korean utility KEPCO.

What did you make of the last COP? And what do you hope for from the next one?

COP27, in the vast majority of areas, failed to live up to its billing of the 'Implementation COP'. There were some positive developments including the agreement of a formal work programme on a just transition and the establishment of a loss and damage fund. However, there remains a distinct lack of agreement on how plans should be put into action.

The main issue as an investor is that slow progress means the risk of not meeting that key 1.5-degree target by 2050 increases, and so we will continue to engage as an active steward and responsible investor to manage and mitigate that risk over the long term.

Do we expect more from COP28? It is difficult to say. As responsible investors, our fiduciary duty is to ensure that we identify the risks and opportunities of climate change and act in the best interest of all our stakeholders – and the planet.

The risks are well identified. However, with regards to the opportunities, we hope for more decisive action in the area of climate finance to scale up mobilisation of private capital in low-carbon mitigation and adaptation projects, across all sectors, vital for the rapid transition to a low-carbon economy.

Our dedicated £1.35bn Climate Opportunities offering is an example of Border to Coast's commitment to facilitating increased investment in climate transition solutions. This is invested over a three-year period targeting investments that will have a positive impact on climate change and support long-term net zero carbon emission goals. It includes investments across private equity, infrastructure and private credit.

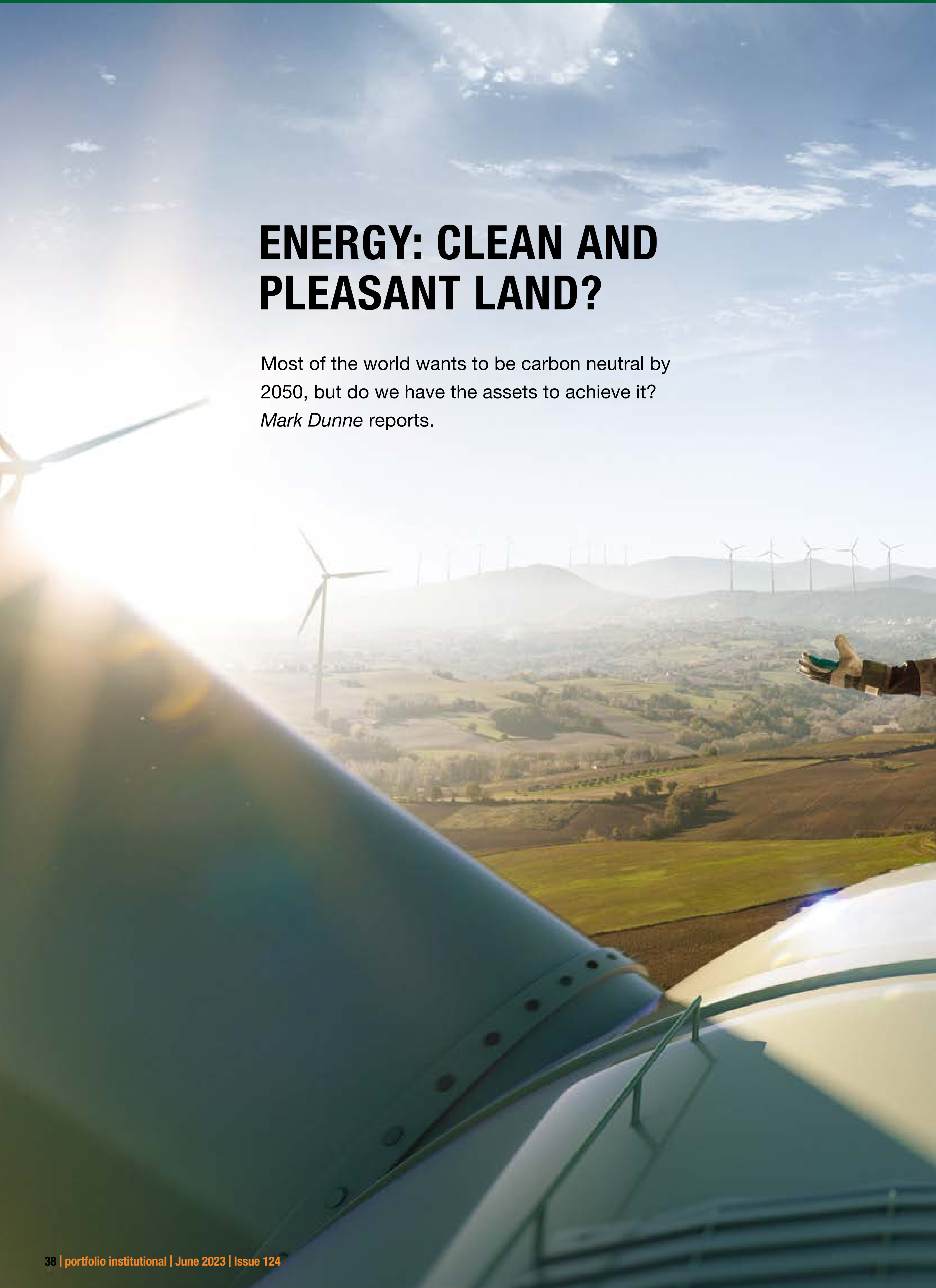
The BridgeTown initiative from COP27 – which set out to address immediate financial needs while also starting to address systemic issues requiring transformation of the financial system – was a positive start. We will be watching to see how this proposal is further developed.

Hosting the conference in another influential petro-state could be seen as problematic in formalising agreement, but it is hoped that commitment to a global stocktake of the Paris agreement may help focus minds.

What is next for Border to Coast on ESG?

We will continue to progress our three-year responsible investment strategy, which is made up of four pillars: ESG integration, active ownership, industry engagement as well as reporting and governance.

This is our second year in the three-year strategy and was developed to ensure we can support our partner funds, who are, of course, local government pensions funds, in delivering against their stewardship responsibilities in line with regulations. As active stewards and our focus as long-term investors, we will continue to work to make a difference with the collective voice that pooling brings.



ENERGY: CLEAN AND PLEASANT LAND?

Most of the world wants to be carbon neutral by 2050, but do we have the assets to achieve it? *Mark Dunne* reports.

Britain is full of wind. For the first time the energy that lights up our homes at the flick of a switch and allows us to keep working when the battery powering our laptop runs flat has mostly been generated by wind turbines.

Indeed, this accounted for almost a third (32.4%) of Britain's electricity during the opening three months of the year, slightly ahead of gas (31.7%), power company Drax says.

It gets better. If solar, biomass and hydro are considered then the gap widens with renewable sources responsible for 42% of Britain's energy during the first quarter, compared to a third for oil and gas. The growing dominance of cleaner energy sources and the decline of carbon dioxide-emitting oil, gas and coal will be welcome news. To halt the damage to our climate that causes rising temperatures, extreme weather patterns and asthma, the government wants all of Britain's electricity to be generated from clean sources by 2035.

Although decarbonising the energy mix is moving in the right direction, eradicating fossil fuels from the system is a challenge. Oil and gas have powered our lives for around 200 years and developing the reliable alternatives needed for such structural change will take time. And that is something we are running out of. The world has set ambitious net-zero targets, with the typical deadline being 2050 – just 27 years away.

One of the biggest issues is that the favoured alternatives to burning oil and gas are not as reliable as fossil fuels. Wind farms only produce power when the wind blows and solar parks when the sun shines. "How can we change a grid from something which is very much in the past – coal, oil and gas – where lights come on at the flick of a switch, to a point where you have to organise the energy load around wind speeds and when the sun is shining. This is a challenge," says Gabrielle Kinder, an investment specialist in BNP Paribas Asset Management's environmental strategies group.

The problem is not limited to how we power our homes and businesses, but also how we move around the world.

Electricity is seen as the solution to stopping the pollution emanating from our roads. However, the concerns associated with battery-powered vehicles include cost, range and the size of the recharging infrastructure.

Then there is maintenance. A survey conducted by consumer group Which? found that electricity is the least reliable type of fuel, with such vehicles spending longer off the road when in need of repair. In response, battery-powered car maker Tesla cut the price of its vehicles twice this year to tempt buyers.

It is clear that transitioning the world from an extractive to a regenerative power base will take money…lots of it.

Craig Bethune, a senior portfolio manager on the capital appreciation team in Canada at Manulife Investment Management, believes that in the coming decades $6.9trn (£5.5trn) needs to be spent annually. "It's a big ask," he says, "but net zero is going to be a challenge for the world to achieve without aggressive spending."

Digging deeper

If electricity generated from renewable sources is at the heart of transition plans across the world, more natural resources, such as copper, need to be taken out of the ground to build the car batteries, wind turbines and solar panels that are crucial to eradicating the use of fossil fuels.

Wood Mackenzie, an energy consultant, says that to produce the copper, nickel and lithium needed to reach net zero, mining capex needs to rise from $30bn (£24.1bn) to at least $100bn (£80.5bn) a year until 2050. "So you get a sense of how difficult it is," says Diana Racanelli, a senior portfolio manager on the capital appreciation team in Canada at Manulife Investment Management.

More than 30 years of monitoring the mining industry has given Racanelli a greater understanding of the enormity of the net-zero challenge. "One of the problems with reaching these transition targets is that we don't have enough of the metals required.

"Copper is a big one because it is needed at so many levels of the transition, but there is just not enough of it," she adds.

The market is expected to be so tight, she says, that copper producers are starting to discuss the risk of possible substitutions for the commodity in certain uses. "There has to be alternatives and the world is starting to look at that."

But there is a conflict when it comes to producing more of the minerals needed, as investors have traditionally pushed for higher returns from their mining stocks or companies have reduced their exploration spent to pay down debt.

The barriers to producing more of the minerals needed are not just down to money. There are other issues. One is that it can take well over more than a decade for a newly discovered mine

The focus needs to be on emission reductions, not excluding one type of power over another.

Diana Racanelli, Manulife Investment Management to reach full capacity. Then some countries have political issues, labour shortages and extreme weather impacts while or regulation can beis tighter in different juris-dictions. "There is a wide range of issues making it difficult to mine some of these metals," Racanelli says.

An alternative, especially for hard to decarbonise sectors, such as transport and industrial processes, is hydrogen. Policy support in this area is strong and Morningstar expects hydrogen demand to grow substantially in the coming decades.

Hydrogen can be stored in in a transportable form and produces no carbon dioxide when burned. Morningstar says that $22bn of such projects have secured funding globally, which equates to about 26 million tons of clean hydrogen capacity, roughly a third of what will be needed to meet the IEA's 2030 net-zero targets.

Step by step

It appears unlikely that there will be one source of energy that saves the day here. Many alternatives to coal must be employed to help get us to net zero and some sources will not be on everyone's wish list. "You can't be a snob here. You can't pick and choose what you think you need," Bethune says. "The focus needs to be on emission reductions, not excluding one type of power over another. Nuclear energy, for example, is low carbon, so you need to think about that as part of the solution."

Bethune says the world can't wait for purely clean energy to be perfected. "We need to make all of our energy one step cleaner.

"For example, liquefied natural gas over coal is a net win for the world," he says. "It may still be a fossil fuel but if you look at the emissions profile of the US, there has been a dramatic reduction in emissions, mainly by moving away from coal to natural gas.

"You need to think about every step," Bethune says. "It is more about emission reduction than waiting for the perfect solution."

Liquid natural gas emits 40% less carbon dioxide on average than coal. "Liquid natural gas is a bridging fuel, but in some ways a bridge to nowhere," Kinder says.

"Whilst it has some interesting merits in introducing flexibility into the grid, it is expensive in requiring a unique infrastructure," she adds. "Ships need to be specifically retrofitted to transport this gas, while ports need to be equipped to transform it back into natural gas. It is expensive to move such amounts of gas around the planet.

"In a perfect world, whilst gas will be used to provide inertia when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining, it probably would have been best to double down into things like storage or pumped hydro, which could basically guarantee a net-zero economy," Kinder says.

The other path to achieving net zero could be to keep burning fossil fuels and offset the harmful emissions. However, the use of offsets to mitigate the damage caused by fossil fuels through funding green projects is controversial as there are question marks around the effectiveness of these markets. "[Offsets] are not a good justification for using coal," Kinder says. "This could improve, but it is a difficult one."

Finding the right alternative is not the only issue. "There are challenges putting net zero at risk which I would put higher up the concern list than the available energy sources," Kinder says.

One is the lack of consensus on net zero. While most of the world has agreed on keeping temperature rises to 1.5-degrees by 2050, some of the countries making the biggest impact on climate change are not aiming for mid-century. India, China and Indonesia, for example, have set net-zero targets for 2060 or 2070. "They have huge propensity to change whether we can stay within safe limits or not," Kinder says.

With India and China building more coal-fired power plants, fossil fuels remain part of the world's energy mix. "They can be made greener, which could be something of a positive story for coal," Kinder says. "Attaching carbon capture and utilisation technologies to coal generators could remove a lot of the negative emissions and by-products you get when coal combusts."

The transition isn't working

While investors are pushing companies to back cleaner sources of energy, they have to consider the social consequences of dumping oil and coal – people will lose their jobs, which could hit some communities hard. The good news is that jobs are being created from a decarbonised economy. The Climate Change Committee's A Net Zero Workforce report found that around 250,000 jobs have been created by the shift to net zero so far.

However, 65% of 'green' employers surveyed by Generation UK, a non-profit that supports people facing barriers to employment, confirmed it is difficult to find staff with the right skills and experience. Green-skilling initiatives need to be scaled up if we are to avoid a bottleneck on the path to net zero and growing unemployment. These skills are needed. Bethune says the world doesn't require less energy each year. "We want more green energy, but we still need more energy overall.

"You need to supply enough energy to transition because if you have high energy costs today, it slows down the transition in the future," he adds.

And the transition needs to speed up if the 2050 net-zero target has any chance of being achieved. The will is there with innovations being developed all the time, such as in electric vehicles (EV). "There's a lot on the EV horizon," Kinder says. "Re-charging is getting faster and faster every year."

Time will tell if the transition assets institutional investors are investing in will be enough to force the structural change the world needs. More reliable assets are needed. As although Britain is full of wind, it will take more than wind to get us there.

NAVIGATING NET ZERO TO ACHIEVE REAL-WORLD DECARBONISATION

In June 2022, Newton announced its approach to net zero. We aligned ourselves with the Science Based Targets initiative, which involves a commitment to aim for an interim target of 50% of the financed emissions from the investments we make on behalf of our clients being covered by credible transition plans by 2030 with 100% covered by 2040.

It is not credible to decarbonise portfolios simply by cutting out certain sectors; that is not necessarily going to translate into decarbonising the real world, which is ultimately what we want to achieve. In practice, the path of real-world decarbonisation looks different depending on the portfolio.

In some of our sustainable strategies, for example, we look for companies that are either supplying solutions to climate-change challenges or are aligning themselves to a net-zero pathway. Infrastructure-related strategies might contain net-zero targets that are perfectly achievable for some companies, but for investments in utilities it can be more difficult as they have the transition in front of them, although that may be where a lot of the value creation will lie.

We believe that there are significant opportunities to invest in companies or lend to entities that are going to enable this transition. Members of our investment team have undertaken a mapping exercise to look at the emissions that are being produced across all sectors.

We have examined the solutions that can address each layer of those emissions, as well as the marginal cost and the viability of each step of CO_2 mitigation. This gives us a structure to know exactly what to look for, which ideas to pursue, and where we should focus our fundamental analysis.

Our multi-dimensional research platform underpins this process, and brings together colleagues from across the business, including the responsible investment and data teams, as well as our fundamental analysts and portfolio managers.

Our mapping exercise has highlighted that the backbone infrastructure that our economy runs on is going to require an energy-focused and material-intensive overhaul. The framework helps us to look right across the value chain, for example, identifying copper and lithium as key commodities, finding mining businesses to invest in, and investigating supply-chain companies feeding into mining operations, such as specialist underground mining equipment.

We also explore where these materials, such as copper and lithium, are being used and applied, for example, in solar-panel batteries and wind turbines, and can think about what the supply chains and component parts for those products look like.

In addition, we can look at who is ultimately using these products, including the developers looking for the sites and doing the construction, along with the companies operating the facilities.

Rolling out renewables

Before the Covid-19 pandemic hit, there was already a progressive renewable energy agenda being pushed out in Europe. During the pandemic, policymakers were trying to pull the agenda forward to get the economy going again, but, with the energy crisis taking hold, energy independence has become more important for many.

The main limiting factor on building renewables is not supply of solar panels, or labour shortages, but regulation. In areas where the regulator is accelerating the permitting process, the rollout of renewables is going to be faster.

When the conflict between Russia and Ukraine broke out, the European Union wasted no time in fully accelerating the permitting process. Understanding the direction of travel for regulation is therefore likely to be critical in order to determine whether there will be a faster push towards renewables. It has been suggested that the best cure for high energy prices is high energy prices, and we are now starting to see that the current crisis is accelerating the growth of renewables.

Engagement

It is important to be actively engaged with companies that have credible transition plans in place, and to understand their net-zero ambitions. This enables us to assess how realistic their goals are and to track the signposts along the way.

When we are engaging, we are on the same side of the table as these businesses. If the company is taking the right action that is going to improve its path towards net zero, that may also create a good deal of shareholder value. We want these companies to do the right thing for the right reasons, and ultimately we believe this should result in good outcomes not only for the company itself, but for the world and for our clients too.

ESG CLUB CONFERENCE 2023: DRIVING CHANGE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

After the success of *portfolio institutional's* first in-person ESG conference last year, we are returning to The Shard in September to dissect another set of sustainability issues.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, inequality and corporate governance are some of the biggest issues of our time.

Working to create an ecosystem that can support life on Earth, while boosting societal equality and encouraging organisations to behave appropriately are the goals of a growing number of citizens across our planet.

Such is the importance in phasing out oil and gas from our energy system, or providing access to healthcare, or how well employees are treated and local communities are respected that governments have adopted targets in some of these areas to drive change.

But there is a problem, and institutional investors are right in the middle of it. How can pension schemes, charities and insurers make sure the companies in their portfolios have practices that are kind to the environment and respect human rights in their supply chains?

It is a lot harder than it sounds to spot if a company is as 'green' as it claims, remember Volkswagen's pollution test scandal? Then there is the issue of is it treating its employees fairly. Boohoo is an example of a company worth billions of pounds where the workers making its clothing were being paid less than minimum wage to work in unsafe conditions.

pi ESG CLUB CONFERENCE

The Shangri-La Hotel, The Shard
13 September 2023
09:00 – 15:30

To strip away the complexity and to highlight best practice on sustainability, *portfolio institutional* formed an ESG Club where assets owners, those investing on their behalf and consultants discuss issues such as ensuring access to fresh water, how to sustainably dispose of waste, are we winning the race to net zero and how can we grow enough food without damaging the ecosystem.

ESG is a broad church. With an abundance of topics within the E, the S and the G, we decided to bring our ESG Club directly to institutional investors. More than 100 people attended our first in-person event last year and with more questions on sustainability being asked as each year goes by, we are returning for our second ESG Club Conference in September at the Shangri-La Hotel in the Shard.

This year representatives of The Pensions Regulator, Scottish Widows, WWF-UK, ShareAction, the PLSA, MSCI, Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation and the Church Commissioners for England will be discussing topics such as transition assets, biodiversity, ESG data and making a social impact.

So don't miss this chance to engage with institutional investors on the big sustainability issues. We hope to see you there.

TO REGISTER TO ATTEND, PLEASE CONTACT:

Mary – m.brocklebank@portfolio-institutional.co.uk

Silvia – s.silvestri@portfolio-institutional.co.uk

Or visit: portfolio-institutional.co.uk/esg-club-conference-2023/

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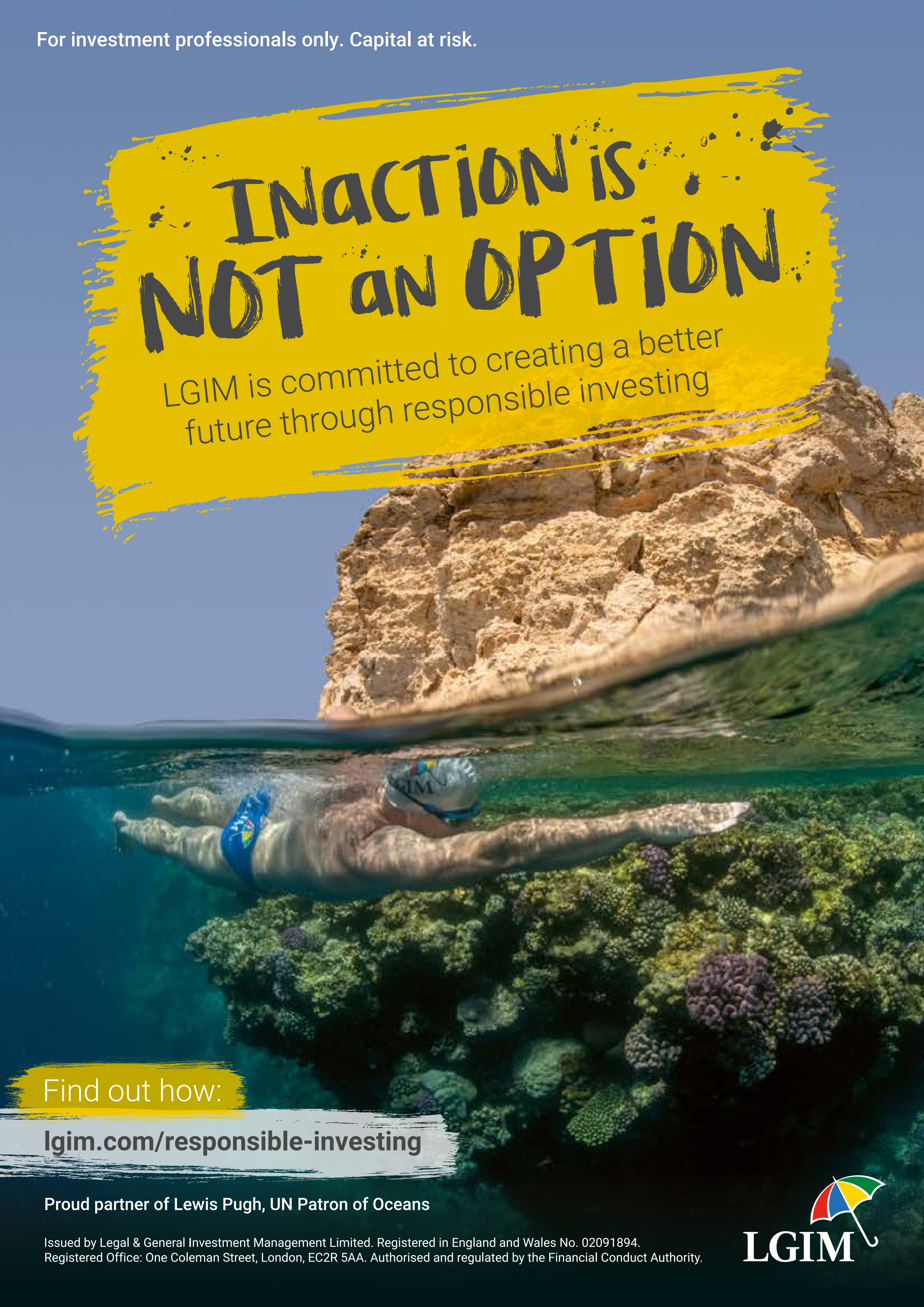
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