



Integrating ESG into asset management

How KPMG can help

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Focus on ESG brings opportunities and challenges for asset managers

Institutional investors are increasingly recognizing the potential for ESG factors – such as climate risk and poor human rights performance – to affect the valuation and financial performance of the companies they invest in.

At the same time, consumer demand for responsible investments is surging, especially from the Millennial generation.¹ Regulation is emerging, for example in the EU, and the influence of initiatives including the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) and the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) continues to escalate.

As a result, capital flows into ESG funds are accelerating and asset managers are under mounting pressure to integrate ESG considerations into their investment approaches.

Yet, as the pressure grows, asset managers face multiple challenges such as:

- a complex landscape of ESG focus areas
- differing expectations from institutional investors
- the likelihood of new regulation and uncertainty over its form
- a confusing array of inconsistent ESG data
- an absence of standard ESG terms, metrics and reporting frameworks
- a lack of consensus on the effects of ESG strategies on financial returns

KPMG member firms have a network of ESG, asset management and IT professionals who can help your organization enhance its approach to ESG, whatever your current level of maturity.

¹<https://www.bloomberg.com/professional/blog/sustainable-investing-grows-pensions-millennials/>

Contact us to find out how KPMG Ireland can help you.



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How KPMG can help



01 Develop ESG strategy

- **Define the strategic approach and ambition level:** KPMG professionals identify ESG investment approaches that are appropriate for your organization and client base.
- **Analyze market trends and regulatory landscape:** KPMG specialists provide insights and intelligence to shape your ESG strategy.
- **Track and predict the ESG expectations of asset owners:** KPMG member firms offer systematic analysis using proprietary KPMG frameworks and tools.
- **Conduct peer review and benchmarking:** KPMG professionals help you understand how other asset managers are approaching ESG and what they offer to clients.
- **Analyze gaps between your current and desired approaches to ESG:** KPMG specialists conduct a thorough assessment based on interviews and a review of investment portfolios, processes and reporting.

02 Implement ESG strategy

- **Prepare an ESG roadmap:** KPMG member firms help you identify the right priorities, targets and actions to implement the ESG strategy.
- **Design your ESG governance structure:** KPMG professionals recommend the most effective governance structure based on your ESG roadmap, operations and capabilities.
- **Prepare action plans and key performance indicators (KPIs):** KPMG specialists help you develop detailed action plans and KPIs for specific work streams.
- **Implement principles and approaches across asset classes, funds and mandates:** KPMG member firms support you in applying your ESG strategy across differing asset classes, such as passive equity, active equity and bonds, as well as across varying client mandates.
- **Incorporate ESG principles into operational processes:** KPMG professionals help you integrate your ESG strategy into operations including sales and marketing, analysis, investment decisions and outsourcing.
- **Educate and train your people:** KPMG specialists develop and deliver tailored training programs for example for board directors, executives, portfolio managers and analysts.



03 Monitor and report on performance

- **Assess reporting needs and requirements:** KPMG member firms help you identify your key reporting stakeholders and advise on how you should report. This is likely to include disclosure in annual reporting, periodic disclosures to clients and fund investors, and reporting to the UN PRI and other investor communities.
- **Implement effective data collection and reporting systems:** KPMG professionals help you ensure that you have effective reporting processes and systems in place, designing bespoke IT solutions as required. We also help you to embed the reporting systems into your operations.



04 Review processes and assure disclosures

- **Review ESG processes and KPIs:** KPMG specialists help you implement appropriate internal audit processes and controls.
- **Review ESG policy statements and governance:** KPMG member firms ensure your ESG policies and governance structures are up-to-date and fit-for-purpose in the fast moving ESG industry and regulatory landscape.
- **Stress test investment portfolios:** KPMG professionals conduct stress tests on your investment portfolios, for example in the context of new regulation or climate change scenarios.
- **Review risk assessment processes:** KPMG specialists assess your risk escalation channels as well as developing bespoke risk modelling for specific high risk topics such as water scarcity or climate-driven migration.
- **Assess and advise on reporting:** KPMG specialists review your ESG reporting and provide objective recommendations for improvement, for example on UN PRI or TCFD disclosures.

Client stories

01

Helping a leading asset manager develop its sustainability and ESG strategies

One of the world's largest asset managers, with assets under management of over US\$2 trillion, is convinced that sustainable investing will become the new norm. To support its ambitions to become a market leader in sustainable investment, the company sought to develop a robust strategy that integrated ESG considerations into its investment and management practices.

A team of ESG asset management specialists from KPMG member firms worked with the client to conduct a materiality assessment to help the company understand its most significant ESG issues and shape and inform its strategy. This involved a broad-ranging review of the client's investment processes and portfolios, as well as interviews with senior management. The research identified a number of challenges including gaps in the company's ESG governance structures and sub-optimal controls.

KPMG professionals provided recommendations to help the client shape its sustainability and ESG investment strategies, such as changes to organizational structure, the introduction of new ESG policies, and improvements in accountability and traceability of assets. KPMG specialists also helped deliver ESG training for the client's senior staff members. With the support of KPMG, the client improved its approach to sustainability and ESG investment. Today the company is ranked as one of the top asset managers by leading sustainability indexes.



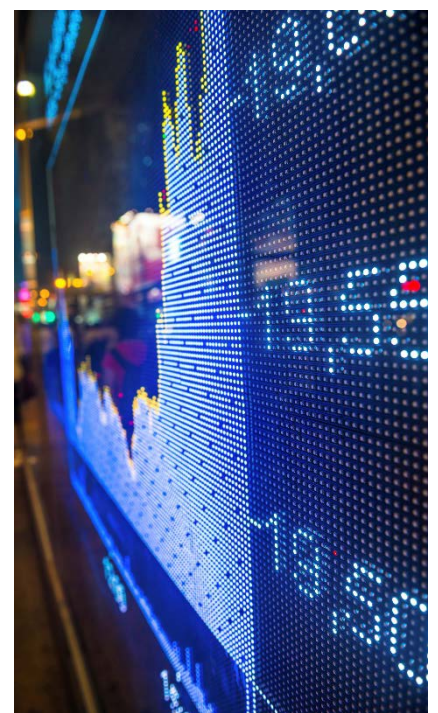
02

Improving an asset manager's ESG processes and reporting

As a signatory of the UN PRI, an asset manager wanted to make sure it was delivering on its responsible investment promises and commitments. KPMG ESG asset management professionals assessed the client's existing ESG systems, controls and reporting.

This involved reviewing and evaluating the company's ESG documentation and speaking with certain staff members to understand what processes were currently in place, how these were being implemented, and who was accountable.

The research identified significant opportunities for improvement in the company's ESG accountability structure and processes, and its ESG reporting. Based on these findings, KPMG professionals made recommendations including how to increase the quality and credibility of the client's ESG reports. With KPMG's support, the client was better able to take corrective action to improve its ESG processes and reporting.



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