



## **EDENTREE INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT LTD. (EDENTREE)** **UK STEWARDSHIP CODE STATEMENT**

The UK Stewardship Code was first published in 2010 and aims to enhance the quality of engagement between asset managers and investee companies in order to help improve long-term returns to shareholders. EdenTree fully subscribes to the concept of active share ownership and investor stewardship as long-term investors, and considers itself compliant with the principles asked of institutional investors set out in the 2012 UK Stewardship Code and the UK Corporate Governance Code as exercised through:

- a) publication of this Statement and compliance with the 2012 UK Stewardship Code's seven Principles;
- b) publication of our UK & Overseas Corporate Governance Policies, revised annually;
- c) EdenTree's process of engaging proactively with companies on material financial, environmental, social and governance issues as part of the investment management process;
- d) publication of client materials detailing how EdenTree engages with investee companies on material financial, ethical and governance issues;
- e) publication of EdenTree's quarterly proxy voting record at [www.edentreeim.com](http://www.edentreeim.com)
- f) publication of EdenTree's Reporting and Assessment under the PRI and;
- g) accreditation under the European SRI Transparency Code, which confirms and verifies our commitment to open communication and transparency.

### **2020 STEWARDSHIP CODE**

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) has announced a substantial revision to the 2012 Code which takes effect from 1 January 2020.

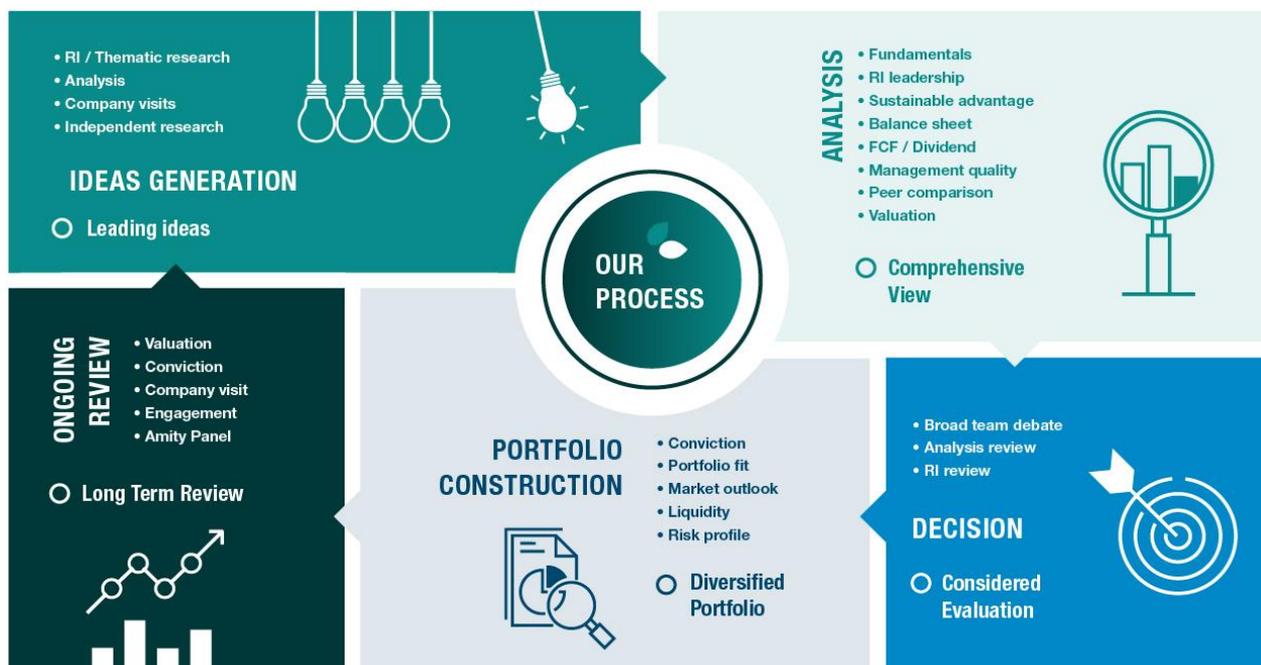
The new Code contains 12 Principles for asset managers, with a requirement to produce a Stewardship Report (rather than a Statement) explaining how the Code has been applied, the first such report to be issued by 31 March 2021. It is EdenTree's intention to report against the 2020 Code by March 2021.

## PRINCIPLE 1: POLICY DISCLOSURE

*“Institutional investors should publicly disclose their policy on how they will discharge their stewardship responsibilities”.*

Our Stewardship responsibilities are discharged as part of an integrated investment process. We are long-term investors integrating the principles of responsible stewardship into our investment philosophy and practice. As responsible owners and managers, dialogue and engagement with the companies in which we invest is a fundamental part of our due diligence and investment philosophy. We subscribe to the view that companies that take ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) issues into account as part of their business model will better deliver long-term sustainable returns to investors.

We articulate our Stewardship policy process thus:



We use an external ESG service provider, ISS-Ethix, to support and inform in-house decision making. EdenTree has an in-house Responsible Investment team of three people who conduct responsible investment research, engagement, screening and proxy voting, which forms our overarching offer to clients:

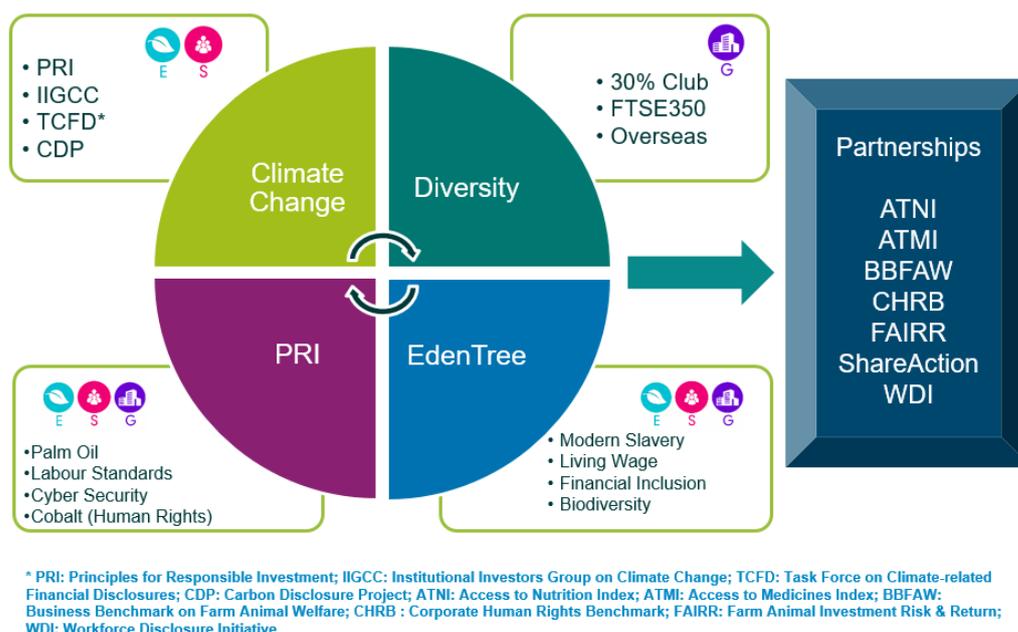


UK proxy voting is carried out in-house, with execution of overseas voting outsourced to Glass Lewis & Co., which is then overseen and monitored internally.

Our Equity Fund carbon footprints are prepared annually by CDP.

No other Stewardship activities are outsourced.

Our annual strategy sets out the issues we regard as priorities for engagement either alone or in collaboration with others. This has been articulated as:



## PRINCIPLE 2: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

*“Institutional investors should have a robust policy on managing conflicts of interest in relation to stewardship and this policy should be publicly disclosed”.*

EdenTree is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group (EIG), which in turn is wholly owned by a registered charity in England & Wales, the All Churches Trust (registered charity number 263960). EdenTree manages pooled and segregated Funds for internal and external clients, as well as a suite of award winning ethically screened Amity Funds for retail and charity clients. Investment policies, staff, systems and premises are shared across all clients without exception. Our Investment Management services are operated from a single office location in Central London.

EdenTree does not offer or publish advice that might conflict with the responsibilities of managing investments on behalf of EdenTree or its clients. As a regulated business, our policy regarding potential conflicts of interest and “Treating Customers Fairly” (TCF) in the conduct of investment business forms a key part of our overall compliance regime.

In accordance with FCA rules, EdenTree is required to establish, implement and maintain an effective conflicts of interest policy appropriate to the nature and scale of the business. This

policy sets out key areas where EdenTree may be subject to a conflict of interest in the provision of services to clients whilst carrying out regulated or ancillary activities. The policy covers those circumstances which either constitute or could give rise to a conflict of interest entailing a material risk of damage to the interest of one or more clients.

The policy describes the structures that have been put in place to limit the consequences of these actual or potential conflicts of interest. These structures make use of separation of function and restrictions on activities, and are designed to ensure that relevant persons maintain an appropriate degree of independence.

EdenTree has identified its potential material conflicts as:

- Conflicts relating to the interests of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Office (EIO) Group (EIG) and the investors in the funds managed by EdenTree;
- Failing to allocate securities between fund clients on an equitable basis;
- Inappropriate use of the services of the EIO Group;
- Substantial gifts or entertainment;
- Entering into mandates where clients have conflicting interests;
- Entering into mandates where client interests may conflict with those of EIO Group;
- Misuse of information for personal gain/insider dealing;
- Inappropriate use of dealing commissions;
- Personal Account Dealing by employees, and
- Remuneration and oversight

EdenTree procedures and processes are fully documented and in place to support and comply with the conflicts of interest policy particularly regarding:

- Reporting lines; these are designed to avoid conflicts arising so that where necessary there is separation of duties and relevant staff are supervised adequately. In addition procedures are in place to minimize the exchange of information between persons where such an exchange of information could give rise to a conflict of interest. It is not entirely possible to remove conflicts therefore all relevant staff are required to report actual or potential conflicts of interest to management as they are identified.
- Remuneration structures; these are designed to avoid incentivising undue risk that may disadvantage clients
- Training; relevant and compliance focused staff training in conflicts of interest
- Restriction on Personal Account Dealing; pre-clearance by The Compliance Officer of all staff personal dealing requests
- Gifts & Entertainment; compliance with the Group policy on accepting and registering external gifts and entertainment

The conflicts of interest policy and the conflicts register are subject to periodic review by the EdenTree Board and the EdenTree Management Committee, and are maintained by the EdenTree Compliance Officer.

Without exception, proxies are cast in a uniform way across all portfolios in accordance with our published UK and Overseas Corporate Governance Policies.

We currently have no discretionary mandates requiring tailored or client specific voting execution.

### PRINCIPLE 3: MONITORING COMPANIES

*“Institutional investors should monitor their investee companies”.*

We are active fund managers. Underlying investments are closely monitored in respect of their financial and ethical performance. Engagement is prioritised according to material risk factors attendant on the underlying investments and we actively monitor ethical and financial issues as part of our standard research into companies and ongoing stewardship responsibilities. Our engagement activity is published quarterly and annually.

The EdenTree Responsible Investment Panel (‘the Panel’) has been established to provide independent advice and oversight of the Stewardship process. The Panel meets regularly to scrutinize our investment portfolios, and engagement and voting activities and priorities. The Panel have agreed Terms of Reference, which were reviewed and updated in 2019; the Panel’s remit has now been extended to encompass *all* mandates and Funds under management. Panel members are appointed by the EdenTree Board for their technical and professional expertise.

Our priorities for pro-active and ongoing engagement are currently:

- Climate change
- Diversity
- Modern Slavery
- Financial inclusion and social inequality
- Executive remuneration
- Biodiversity and Natural Capital

The Responsible Investment Team actively monitors ethical stewardship issues as part of our research into companies; we assess the material ESG risks to the business; whether the company complies with our Ethics/Values avoidance screens; areas that may require pro-active engagement; and controversies news-flow.

Resource limitations mean that it is currently our policy to notify companies when we have taken voting action either to oppose or abstain management proposals on an exceptional basis only. We participate in all remuneration consultations and take an active approach to opposing executive pay structures we view as providing poor overall value in terms of performance and the potential to be excessive in line with our published Corporate Governance Policies.

From time to time, EdenTree may become involuntary ‘insiders’. We do not seek insider status, and should this occur, we have robust internal compliance procedures in place to report it in accordance with best practice. The principal contact for insider and compliance issues is the EdenTree Head of Compliance [jenny.nolan@edentreeim.com](mailto:jenny.nolan@edentreeim.com)

#### PRINCIPLE 4: ESCALATION POLICY

*“Institutional investors should establish clear guidelines on when and how they will escalate their activities as a method of protecting and enhancing shareholder value”.*

We have a process for the escalation of engagement depending on the nature of the issue. As responsible investors we engage with company management in an open and constructive manner in order to understand the issues and to raise concerns.

Escalation would normally occur if a request goes unanswered or is inadequately addressed.

Typically we engage with companies via email. In the first instance these are directed to:

*Environment and Social issues* – Investor Relations or Head of Sustainability/CR  
*Corporate Governance* – Company Secretary or Counsel  
*Financial and Corporate Strategy* – Investor Relations

Companies are normally given two to three weeks to respond before a second attempt is made via the same contact. The usual method of escalating contact with investee companies is then via senior management; the Chief Executive (for strategic and operational matters) or the Chairman or Senior Independent Non-executive Director for governance and other issues. In the event of the company failing to reply after a second or third attempt, we may utilise House brokers to facilitate contact and dialogue.

We are willing to make our views known when concerns are not fully met, and in some circumstances we will actively collaborate with other like-minded investors in the event of an escalated approach.

#### PRINCIPLE 5: COLLECTIVE ACTION

*“Institutional investors should be willing to act collectively with other investors where appropriate”.*

We are members or signatories to several industry collaborative partnerships involving the responsible investment community. We work collaboratively with coalitions of investors where this adds value. These partnerships include:

- Access to Medicine Index (ATMI)
- Access to Nutrition Index (ATNI)
- Business Benchmark on Farm Animal Welfare (BBFAW)
- Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP including CDP-Water and Forest Footprint)
- Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (CHRB)
- Farm Animal Investment Risk & Return (FAIRR)
- Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change (IIGCC)
- The 30% Club
- Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI)
- PRI Montréal Pledge and Paris Pledge
- Workforce Disclosure Initiative (WDI)
- Share Action
- Oxfam

Membership of the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) affords specific opportunity to work with like-minded global investors on material issues. We are members of several PRI work-streams, including cobalt sourcing.

We collaborate regularly with investor members of the 30% Club in promoting diversity, with ShareAction on initiatives such as their Living Wage campaign and through the Workforce Disclosure Initiative (WDI) and with IIGCC on climate change public policy engagement.

The principal contact at EdenTree for collective action is the Head of RI Policy & Research [neville.white@edentreeim.com](mailto:neville.white@edentreeim.com)

## PRINCIPLE 6: VOTING DISCLOSURE

*“Institutional investors should have a clear policy on voting and disclosure of voting activity”.*

EdenTree supports the principle of considered voting, believing that shareholders have a vital role to play in encouraging and promoting high standards of corporate governance. EdenTree has adopted a policy of voting to support company management except where proposals are considered to be in breach of UK or in-country governance best practice or reflect poor shareholder value.

EdenTree actively votes all equity holdings within its UK and overseas portfolios except at meetings which are shareblocked, where we opt to withhold rather than waive shareholder rights. Our UK and overseas corporate governance policies are revised annually and are published on our website at [www.edentreeim.com](http://www.edentreeim.com)

EdenTree UK voting decisions (including Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man registered holdings) are informed by the IA (Investment Association) Institutional Voting Information Service (IVIS), by engagement with companies, and by active monitoring of any “comply or explain” statements issued by the investee company. IVIS does not provide voting recommendations, although a steer is provided via a ‘traffic light’ system, which helps inform our decision making. All UK voting is researched by the RI team and then exercised in-house with each ballot signed off by an appropriate Fund Manager. Proxies are executed in-house by the RI team, and routinely audited by the Compliance team.

We actively contribute to company consultations on executive remuneration proposals.

Overseas (ex-UK) voting research and execution is outsourced to Glass Lewis & Co., based on an agreed voting template which is reviewed annually. Execution of overseas voting is subject to close and regular manual intervention by the RI team.

It is not EdenTree policy to stock-lend.

It is our policy to provide comprehensive and regular disclosure on UK and overseas voting activity. These reports include overall voting statistics, where oppose or abstain action has been taken, and the reason for the action, a list of companies where no action was taken, FTSE100 and 250 diversity statistics, and in the United States, disclosure of shareholder resolutions supported.

Our comprehensive global voting reports are available online and are published quarterly at [www.edentreeim.com](http://www.edentreeim.com)

## PRINCIPLE 7: PERIODIC REPORTING

*“Institutional investors should report periodically on their stewardship and voting activities”.*

EdenTree was accredited for the 7<sup>th</sup> successive time under the European SRI Transparency Code Scheme in 2019, and has a strong commitment to transparent reporting. Our submission is available on the Eurosif website and on the EdenTree website.

EdenTree has been a party to the PRI (Principles for Responsible Investment) since 2012 and participates in the annual Reporting and Assessment process as a committed signatory. Our annual Public Transparency Report and the PRI Full Assessment Report of EdenTree’s performance are publicly disclosed on the EdenTree website and fully accessible by third parties on the PRI website on request. In 2018 we achieved A+ for the fifth consecutive year for Strategy & Governance and our individual performance was assessed as:



Internal Stewardship records are maintained and reported to the independent EdenTree Responsible Investment Panel which meets regularly and advises on ethical and responsible investment matters.

Our regular financial performance, Fund activity reports and Fund Annual Reports are published and are all available online.

Our quarterly RI Activity Report for clients provides information on policy, Stewardship and engagement activities undertaken during the period. An Annual Review of our activity was published for the first time in 2019, relating to the 2018 calendar reporting year.

We publish a quarterly Global Proxy Voting Report detailing voting statistics and action taken relating to UK and overseas proxy voting, with the fourth quarter report containing Annual Voting Statistics. These are published at [www.edentreeim.com](http://www.edentreeim.com).

We publish three thematic research pieces on investment and sustainability related topics under our flagship 'EdenTree Insight' format each year, recent examples include:

- Economic Inequality
- Sustainability
- The Life Code
- Waste
- Food Sustainability ('Hungry Planet')
- Sustainable Cities
- Water Scarcity & Sustainability ('Thirsty Planet')
- The Future of Work
- The Energy Paradox
- Cyber Security
- Natural Capital
- Corporate Governance
- Aviation
- Life Ethics
- Shipping
- Education
- Human Rights
- Healthcare
- Corporate Misconduct
- Big Data
- Digital Planet

These Amity Insights are complemented by our RI Expert Briefings on focused ESG issues of interest to clients. Examples include:

- Banks
- Executive Remuneration
- Tax
- Gilts
- Sugar
- Our Approach to Responsible Investment
- Oppressive Regimes
- Gender Diversity
- Zero-Hours Contracts
- Nutrition & Wellbeing
- Investing in the FAANGs
- The Sustainable Development Goals
- Sand Mining
- Modern Slavery
- Farm Animal Welfare
- Access to Medicine Index 2018
- Biofuels
- Fossil Fuel Divestment
- Palm Oil
- GMOs

- The How & Why of Voting

In 2019 we introduced a new strand of Expert Briefing looking at ‘emerging issues’. To date three have been published:

- Cannabis
- Hydrogen
- Non-Meat Proteins

The EdenTree Responsible Investment Panel provides independent assessment and oversight of our responsible investment process and practice and is made up of experts relevant to the fields of investment and sustainability. It is currently chaired by the former Bishop of Brechin, the Rt. Rev. Dr Nigel Peyton.



**Rt Rev Dr Nigel Peyton**  
Panel Chair



**Helen Crosby**  
Environmental Consultant



**Julie McDowell**  
Independent Consultant



**Bill Seddon**  
Former CEO CFB Methodist  
Church



**Julian Parrott**  
Client Member, Ethical  
Futures

The Panel, which meets three times a year has a series of items reserved for its oversight including:

- EdenTree Insight pre-publication presentation
- Screening examples
- RI Client enquiries
- Specific ethical issues and cases
- Engagement activity
- Emerging issues
- Publications and media

The Panel serves as an independent, external assurance function, and given the strong focus of Stewardship across the business, we believe this currently provides an appropriate and relevant external oversight function.

The Panel’s Terms of Reference were reviewed and refreshed in 2019, and its remit extended to encompass all client mandates and Funds under management. The Panel’s Terms of Reference are available on request.

More information on the responsibilities and membership of the EdenTree Responsible Investment Panel is available at [www.edentreeim.com](http://www.edentreeim.com).

**December 2019**