

Beyond ESG: Executive Pay Metrics and Shareholder Support

Nickolay Gantchev, Mariassunta Giannetti, and Marcus Hober*

August 2025

Using a novel global dataset of executive pay contracts, we show that the surge in ESG and other compensation metrics is less about directing managerial effort and more about securing shareholder consent. ESG metrics – classified via SASB standards – are often added in areas of existing strength, with negligible effects on overall ESG outcomes. Instead, metrics of any type are added after high say-on-pay dissent and chosen to align with proxy advisors' preferences. Pay metrics raise say-on-pay approval and reduce shareholder proposals and dissent on managerial proposals. These findings challenge contract theory's prediction that metrics are selected to direct attention to neglected objectives and suggest that the surge in ESG and other metrics reflects conformity pressures and the desire to appease shareholders.

Keywords. Executive compensation, ESG metrics, CEO incentives, shareholder voting, shareholder and management proposals

JEL Codes. J33, M12, M14, G34, G32

* Gantchev (gantchev@virginia.edu) is with the McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia, CEPR, and ECGI; Giannetti (mariassunta.giannetti@hhs.se) is with the Stockholm School of Economics, the Swedish House of Finance, CEPR, and ECGI; Marcus Hober (marcus.hober@hhs.se) is with the Stockholm School of Economics. We thank Sterling Huang, Dirk Jenter, Jessica Jeffers, Denis Sosyura, and seminar and conference participants at Arizona State University, Bilkent University, the Bocconi University/JCF Conference on Information, Contracts, and Firms, the ECGI Global Corporate Governance Colloquia, the ECGI/Kelley Institute for Corporate Governance public lecture, the European Finance Association, the FMA FEB-RN seminar, the Conference on Sustainable Banking and Finance at the University of Naples Parthenope, IE Business School, Temple University, the Stockholm University Business School, and the Stockholm School of Economics for their comments. Giannetti acknowledges financial support from the Nasdaq Nordic Foundation.

Contracts linking executive compensation to shareholder wealth are viewed as the most effective way to align managers' incentives with the actions shareholders would take if they had full information about their firms (Jensen and Murphy, 1990; Hall and Liebman, 1998). Existing theories mainly focus on the features of optimal contracts that maximize shareholder value, without considering how shareholders' non-pecuniary preferences for environmental and social (E&S) policies might influence these contract features. Optimal contracts may not change much, however, because shareholders' non-pecuniary preferences for E&S policies are already reflected in stock prices, which account for the preferences of marginal investors who would sell their shares if dissatisfied with corporate policies. As a result, in most cases, stock prices effectively guide managerial E&S policies (Gantchev, Giannetti, and Li, 2022), and few impact funds directly tie compensation to E&S performance (Gezcy et al., 2021). This has prompted concerns that the increasing focus on E&S targets in executive compensation might be driven by CEO power (Bebchuk and Tallarita, 2022). Institutional investors, however, view E&S metrics in managerial remuneration as a crucial instrument to force E&S discussions between the board and management and incorporate concrete short-term steps to improve E&S performance into corporate strategy.

To contribute to this debate, we construct a unique dataset with unprecedented coverage of global firms and their detailed ESG compensation metrics, which we classify following the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) materiality map. Just as importantly, we relate firms' compensation metrics to news-based measures of firm performance along each of the SASB E&S dimensions, capturing the views of independent analysts, advocacy groups, government regulators, and media sources. We also collect information on any other metrics in the firms' remuneration contracts.

We find that companies with E&S metrics also disclose market, financial, and operational performance metrics, and boards routinely tie executive compensation to various operational targets, such as sales expansion, cost reduction, efficiency, project completion, or capital structure, which extend beyond stock returns and profits. Additionally, firms that disclose more metrics also grant their executives higher equity-based compensation, which is considered vital for aligning managerial incentives with shareholder interests.

However, companies' use of ESG and other metrics is not always consistent with contract theory. For instance, while firms tend to introduce new metrics after experiencing poor E&S performance, we observe that executive contracts emphasize E&S metrics in areas where companies have recently performed well. This suggests that these metrics are not chosen to direct CEOs towards neglected objectives deemed important by the board (Holmstrom and Milgrom, 1991). Furthermore, both total and variable compensation are linked to superior E&S performance, even in firms without explicit E&S targets. Performing well on the E&S metrics explicitly included in the contract results in only a marginal increase in total compensation. Similar patterns are observed for operating and earnings metrics.

Overall, these findings suggest that ESG metrics are similar to other metrics, and that the use of all metric types should be studied jointly. We conjecture that the surge in ESG metrics is another manifestation of institutional investors' and proxy advisors' increasing influence on executive compensation, which has led to greater uniformity and complexity of executive compensation contracts at the cost of reduced efficiency (Albuquerque et al, 2025; Cabezon, 2025; Jochem et al., 2025). Consistent with this conjecture, we find that compensation metrics, and ESG metrics in particular, are introduced after periods of high dissent on say-on-pay votes and are chosen to obtain favorable recommendations by proxy advisory firms.

To reach this conclusion, we utilize the algorithm of Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS) to select peer companies, which serve as the basis for ISS's recommendations on say-on-pay votes (Jochem et al, 2025). While firms in the same industry may use similar metrics for fundamental reasons, we exploit the fact that, depending on the focal firm's industry and size, ISS's algorithm includes some marginal firms as peers and excludes other similar firms. At the margin, firms that are considered peers and those that are excluded are very similar, yet we observe that the marginal peers' metrics have a larger effect on the propensity of a firm to introduce new metrics of any type.

All metrics, and E&S metrics in particular, should help firms gain support from proxy advisory firms and shareholders regarding the level and structure of CEO compensation, and may also help reduce shareholder interference on other matters concerning corporate strategy. To test these hypotheses, we analyze shareholder voting patterns and the incidence of shareholder proposals.

We observe that firms with more metrics have higher support on their say-on-pay votes and that the consensus-building effects associated with disclosing compensation metrics extend beyond compensation-related matters. Firms with more compensation metrics experience less dissent on managerial proposals and lower shareholder interference as captured by fewer ESG and other proposals (Aggarwal et al., 2025). Thus, our results suggest that compensation metrics appease shareholders.

While shareholders are appeased by ESG metrics and submit fewer ESG proposals, we find limited effects on firms' ESG performance. Even if an ESG metric is associated with better performance along the selected objective, it does not lead to better overall E&S performance. The conclusion that the main effect of compensation metrics is to appease shareholders is also

supported by the fact that the effects of metric usage on voting outcomes and shareholder proposals are even stronger when we instrument a firm's metric usage with that of its marginal peers, suggesting that metrics leading to favorable recommendations by ISS are particularly important in driving shareholder consent even though they do not improve a firm's overall ESG performance.

We contribute to the extensive literature on executive compensation (see Edmans, Gabaix, and Jenter (2017) and Edmans, Gosling, and Jenter (2023) for recent reviews). A more recent and growing strand of this literature examines ESG targets in managerial contracts and finds mixed results on whether ESG-linked pay is associated with future ESG performance (Homroy, Mavruk, Nguyen, 2023; Cohen, Kadach, Ormazabal, and Reichelstein, 2023; Ikram, Li, and Minor, 2023; Hazarika et al, 2022; Flammer, Hong, and Minor, 2019; Maas, 2018; Michaely, Schmid, and Wang, 2024). Qin and Yang (2022) show that turnover is less sensitive to financial performance in companies with ESG pay. To the best of our knowledge, we are the first to consider all metrics used in executive compensation and examine the role of compensation metrics in appeasing shareholders.

By highlighting that E&S metrics are merely a subset of the multitude of metrics disclosed to shareholders, we also contribute to the broader literature on executive compensation, which has largely neglected the use of diverse metrics and focused instead on CEOs' end-of-year equity, stock options, and bonus awards when studying CEO compensation. Notable exceptions include Ittner, Larker, and Rajan (1997), who find that companies with more innovative strategies and those in regulated industries tend to employ more non-financial performance measures in CEO bonus contracts. Additionally, De Angelis and Grinstein (2006) study the use of pre-specified metrics in performance-based awards. These papers find that firms choose metrics that are more informative about performance, as predicted by contract theory. Moreover, these studies were

written well before the emergence of interest in sustainability and do not consider the effects of compensation metrics on shareholder consensus. In contrast, our sample covers a period in which pay disclosure mandates were implemented across jurisdictions, leading to convergence in CEO pay levels (Jochem et al, 2025; Cabezon, 2025). Our findings indicate that information disclosure has become more detailed, with companies generally disclosing similar metrics as their peers.

1. Data

1.1 Compensation Data and Metrics Classification

We obtain compensation data for international listed companies from Executive Compensation Analytics (ECA), a dataset provided by Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS). The data include information on salaries, bonuses, equity awards, stock options, and other forms of remuneration. We focus on CEO compensation contracts, as the data contain contracts for multiple top executives in very few instances. Our sample includes 10,636 unique firms across 34 countries from 2011 to 2021, with increasing coverage over time. Notably, nearly half of the firms are from outside the U.S.

Crucially for our study, the data provide detailed textual information on the performance metrics used to determine CEOs' final remuneration.¹ Appendix B presents examples of disclosed metrics from executive compensation contracts and illustrates how we use the dictionary in Appendix C to classify these metrics. We manually review metrics with complex or ambiguous keyword combinations to improve accuracy. By combining textual analysis and manual review,

¹ Another ISS dataset – Incentive Lab – is frequently used to investigate executive compensation. Compared to the ECA data we use, Incentive Lab suffers from two disadvantages: limited company coverage (only up to 16% of the coverage of ECA) and limited data on metric categories, especially before 2018, when Incentive Lab collected only three broad categories: accounting, stock price, and other. The latter category included both operating and ESG metrics. Even after 2018, Incentive Lab distinguishes only a handful of E&S metrics, which would not allow us to investigate compensation metrics and their materiality to the level of detail we achieve with textual analysis.

we achieve an exceptionally detailed classification that enables a more nuanced analysis of compensation contracts than previous studies, which typically rely on coarse ESG metric groupings. We categorize the various metric types disclosed in compensation contracts into 31 distinct categories, each reflecting a unique aspect of executive performance evaluation.

We do not collect information on whether the metrics are qualitative or quantitative or on the proportion of compensation tied to the metrics, because the mere presence of an objective is expected to affect managerial behavior. Moreover, qualitative metrics may be optimal even if they are manipulated more easily (Ikram et al, 2023; Michaely et al., 2024). We also do not collect information on whether these metrics are related to short- or long-term performance measures. This is because ESG compensation metrics are predominantly linked to short-term targets, which allows investors to assess tangible progress towards more sustainable policies on a timely basis.²

We organize the metrics into four broad dimensions: *Earnings*, *Market*, *Operating*, and *ESG*. Earnings metrics encompass two categories: *Profitability* and *Cashflow*. *Profitability*, in turn, includes returns on assets and net income, while *Cashflow* includes operating cashflow. In contrast, market metrics are directly linked to shareholder returns and incorporate indicators related to share price performance.

The set of operating metrics includes those related to a company's business operations, organized into five key areas: *capital structure*, *efficiency*, *investment*, *sales*, and *other*. *Efficiency metrics* address aspects such as operating expenditures and asset turnover, while the category '*Other*' encompasses metrics like customer satisfaction and the successful completion of specific strategic projects.

² See, e.g., <https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2022/06/25/paying-well-by-paying-for-good/>.

We use the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) classification to categorize the ESG metrics.³ The SASB classification includes five broad dimensions of sustainability: Environmental, Social Capital, Human Capital, Business Model and Innovation, and Leadership and Governance. Each dimension contains several specific categories, providing a comprehensive framework for assessing a company’s performance in these areas. For example, the Environmental dimension covers six topics: GHG Emissions, Air Quality, Energy Management, Water and Wastewater Management, Waste and Hazardous Materials Management, and Ecological Impacts.

While the original SASB classification includes 26 categories, not all ESG metrics in the executive contracts contain the level of detail necessary for classification within these specific categories. When an ESG metric lacks sufficient specificity for precise classification, we assign it to one of five broader dimensions: Environmental, Social Capital, Human Capital, Business Model and Innovation, or Leadership and Governance, or we simply categorize it as ESG. Additionally, metrics with a clear sustainability focus that do not directly align with SASB categories, such as those related to sustainability reporting or general ESG ratings, are also grouped within the general ESG category.⁴ Furthermore, due to the overlap between specific SASB categories and the broad nature of some disclosed metrics, we have merged a few categories: Customer Privacy with Data Security, and Product Quality and Safety with Customer Welfare. Consequently, our classification comprises 24 specific ESG metrics.

Importantly, recognizing that firms across industries face distinct sustainability-related risks and opportunities, SASB has developed a *Materiality Map* that assesses the relevance (or materiality) of individual ESG metrics for the performance and risks faced by firms in different

³ The SASB is an independent, nonprofit organization that focuses on enhancing the quality and comparability of sustainability disclosures in financial reporting.

⁴ Thus, a metric aimed at limiting the firm’s environmental impact would fall under the Environmental category, while “Corporate Social Responsibility” would be classified as ESG.

industries, as defined according to SASB's Sustainable Industry Classification System (SICS). Specifically, companies are grouped into 77 industries based on their primary business activities and the most relevant ESG challenges they face. We use the SASB Materiality Map to evaluate the relevance of the ESG metrics in executive compensation contracts.

1.2 Firm-Level ESG Performance

We assess a firm's ESG performance using data from FactSet TruValue Labs (TruValue), an artificial intelligence (AI)/Big Data company that provides daily updates on companies' ESG-related information. Specifically, TruValue utilizes AI to process unstructured data from over 200,000 vetted sources, excluding companies' self-reported information. Therefore, unlike ESG scores provided by other data companies that rely on firms' disclosed information, TruValue extracts big data to capture insights from analysts, advocacy groups, government regulators, and other sources published by independent media.

TruValue algorithms identify ESG issues, quantify the sentiment in the language, and then produce indicators that allow for the measurement of a company's recent ESG performance as well as its ranking relative to industry peers. Importantly, in addition to evaluating a firm's overall ESG performance, TruValue produces separate scores of a company's recent performance according to all individual dimensions highlighted in the SASB materiality framework. Consequently, we can track not only overall scores but also annual changes in ESG performance broken down by the 26 SASB categories.

In our analysis, we utilize a company's ESG score and its ESG materiality score, which rank the company relative to its industry peers across all ESG dimensions and those that are material within the company's industry, respectively. In addition, we use firms' *Pulse Scores*,

which measure performance changes that highlight a company's performance according to each of the SASB categories, as well as its overall performance.⁵

The Pulse Scores are updated daily and are produced by applying a running-sum-average formulation to a continuous time stream of NLP-generated assessments related to the category (or any category, in the case of overall measures), with more recent events weighted more significantly (exponentially decaying with a 14-day half-life). Since executive compensation varies annually, in our analysis, we consider the maximum of a firm's *Pulse Scores* in individual SASB categories or overall. We also consider the minimum Pulse Score in each SASB category to identify the effect of ESG incidents on metric choices.

1.3 Other Data Sources

We employ various other data sources. First, we obtain firms' financial information, including stock returns, prices, profitability, and other accounting information, from Datastream and Worldscope. Second, we use FactSet Ownership data to measure firms' institutional ownership and construct proxies for the presence of institutional and non-institutional blockholders.

Finally, we use ISS Voting Analytics to measure shareholder support for executive compensation and other management proposals, as well as the extent to which shareholders, by submitting proposals interfere with corporate strategy, potentially wasting managerial time. We also consider the frequency of shareholder-sponsored ESG proposals to evaluate the extent to which the firms' emphasis on ESG performance in compensation contracts can be viewed as a substitute for shareholders' initiatives on corporate sustainability.

⁵ We average the Pulse Scores of the two SASB ESG categories we merge in the compensation contracts.

Appendix A provides detailed definitions of all variables used in the analysis, while Table 1 reports summary statistics for the main variables.

2. Descriptive Evidence on Compensation Metrics Usage

Panel A of Figure 1 shows the proportion of firms in the ECA dataset that report at least one pay metric, as well as those using ESG and other types of metrics. Previous literature has already highlighted the rise of ESG metrics (e.g., Cohen, Kadach, Ormazabal, and Reichelstein, 2023), which are reported by almost 40% of the firms by the end of the sample period. Our findings reveal a much broader and largely overlooked phenomenon: over 80% of companies report at least one compensation metric during the sample period, and this proportion remains stable. This widespread pattern extends beyond market metrics, which are typically tied to stock options and other forms of equity-based compensation. The most common metrics are earnings and operating metrics, which have become much more prevalent, along with ESG metrics.

Panel B presents trends in ESG metrics for US and global companies, distinguishing between European firms and those in regions outside the US and Europe. Similar patterns exist internationally, despite the lower prevalence of ESG metrics in the US.⁶ The differences between the US and Europe largely reflect differences in sample composition, as our sample includes a higher proportion of smaller US companies. ESG metrics usage is comparable when we split the samples into firms with market capitalization above and below the median. As shown in Figure IA.1, the largest firms use more ESG metrics. Overall, this similarity among global companies is unsurprising because the largest companies are held by the same institutional blockholders.

⁶ Figure IA.2 shows that ESG metrics are rarely dropped during our sample period.

Figure 2 shows that half of the ESG metrics can be classified as material according to the SASB materiality map. The proportion of material ESG metrics has remained constant as the propensity to use ESG metrics has increased. Figure 3 illustrates how firms' inclination to consider different types of ESG metrics has evolved over time. It appears that the explosion in the use of ESG metrics has been driven by the SASB category Employee Health and Safety, and especially Employee Engagement, Diversity, and Inclusion. The sharp increase in diversity and inclusion targets coincides with the rise in board gender diversity, which in turn has been driven by several factors: increased public attention to gender equality (Giannetti and Wang, 2023), introduction of board gender quotas in several countries⁷ (Ferrari et al, 2022; Ferreira et al, 2020), and campaigns initiated by major institutional investors in 2017 to promote gender diversity at the board level (Gormley et al, 2023). This suggests that the push for gender equality at the top is correlated with similar efforts to foster inclusivity across lower organizational ranks.

Figure 4 examines the use of various operating metrics that have experienced a modest increase during the sample period. The increased frequency of operating metrics is attributed to the category 'Other', which encompasses specific metrics such as the completion of individual projects and may suggest a growing effort by boards and compensation committees to provide clearer explanations and rationales for executive pay decisions.

3. Which Firms Use Compensation Metrics?

3.1 ESG Metrics and Other Features of Compensation Contracts

We begin by examining the relationship between the presence of ESG metrics and other features of the compensation contract. This analysis will help us understand whether

⁷ For instance, Italy and France adopted a gender quota in 2011 and Germany in 2015.

environmental and social objectives crowd out financial performance – specifically, whether ESG metrics are a substitute for metrics related to financial performance. Panel A of Table 2 indicates that companies using ESG metrics also tend to employ operating, earnings, and market metrics, suggesting that ESG metrics are similar to other performance metrics. This is true for both ESG metrics and material ESG metrics, even though the correlations are somewhat smaller for the latter. Furthermore, the correlations are largely invariant when we introduce firm fixed effects, even though our sample is largely unbalanced and expands over time, suggesting that firms introduce new metrics of different types at the same time.

We also consider whether contracts with metrics exhibit features that are typically associated with shareholder value maximization, such as equity-based compensation. Panel B examines the relationship between the number of metric types included in a contract and the ratio of equity-based compensation to total compensation. We conduct these tests, both including and excluding market-based metrics in alternative specifications, since stock options and equity awards typically depend on market performance targets. All models show a positive correlation between the use of compensation metrics and equity-based compensation, suggesting that compensation metrics complement the broader objectives of shareholder value and market performance in determining CEO compensation.

The effects are not only statistically significant but also economically significant. Column 1 reveals that a one-standard-deviation increase in the share of equity in CEO compensation is associated with an increase of approximately 0.26 in the number of metric types used. Considering that the average firm uses just over two types of metrics, this represents a substantial 12.47% increase relative to the sample mean.

3.2 ESG Metrics Use and Firm Characteristics

To gauge the role of metrics in executive contracts and how firms select these metrics, we examine the relationship between the probability that a firm uses a specific metric type and several firm characteristics, including firm ownership structure and proxies for the informativeness of different measures of firm performance.

Table 3 examines how firm characteristics are related to ESG metric usage, considering all ESG metrics (columns 1 and 2) and material ESG metrics (columns 3 and 4). In odd-numbered columns we include industry, year, and country fixed effects, whereas in even-numbered columns, we consider firm and year fixed effects. Since our sample is highly unbalanced, the cross-sectional variation in the specifications with industry and year fixed effects provides more insightful evidence. The statistically weaker effects in the regressions with firm fixed effects indicate that most characteristics vary little over time and that the determinants of compensation metrics are largely cross-sectional.

While institutional ownership does not seem to matter per se, companies with non-institutional blockholders are generally less inclined to use ESG metrics. The effects of non-institutional block ownership are highly economically significant. Based on column 1, the presence of a non-institutional blockholder is associated with about 21% lower likelihood of using ESG metrics. To the extent that non-institutional blockholders guarantee more stable ownership, these findings suggest that ESG metrics are more likely to be used in companies with contestable control and more active external monitors, who may exit or voice dissent.

Additionally, consistent with theory (Holmström, 1979), firms with volatile market performance, captured by the volatility of daily returns, measured as in Coles, Daniel, and Naveen (2006) and Bettis, Bizjak, Coles, and Kalpathy (2018), are more likely to adopt ESG metrics in the

specifications without firm fixed effects, when the estimates exploit cross-sectional variation. This suggests that when traditional financial indicators are less reliable, boards focus more on non-financial performance through ESG metrics. However, when we include firm fixed effects, the coefficient of this variable is reversed, suggesting that firms do not introduce ESG metrics after periods of high return volatility. Furthermore, the volatility of profits does not seem to matter, and, if anything, companies with volatile profits use fewer material ESG metrics. Furthermore, higher volatility in the tone of ESG news coverage is positively associated with the adoption of ESG metrics, potentially because companies can mitigate this volatility by selecting appropriate ESG objectives and specific metrics.

To further evaluate the importance of the information environment in the selection of ESG metrics, we consider CEO tenure. Pan, Wang, and Weisbach (2015) highlight that information asymmetry about CEOs' strategies and abilities is highest immediately after appointment. As CEO tenure increases, boards and the market become more familiar with the CEO's abilities and corporate priorities, reducing the need to use and disclose as many metrics. To the extent that there is less uncertainty, these firms may be subject to less scrutiny and may not need to convey their strategy to shareholders through metrics as their CEOs' tenure increases. Consistent with this conjecture, CEO tenure is negatively associated with the use of ESG metrics, although the economic impact is modest.

Interestingly, a company's ESG performance rank is not correlated with the use of ESG metrics. In addition, we observe that larger companies use more compensation metrics. This is consistent with the fact that large firms have more complex compensation contracts but may also suggest that a company's visibility is associated with the use of more metrics.

Columns 3 and 4 indicate that the factors influencing the use of material ESG metrics are similar to those for general ESG metrics. Furthermore, the determinants of ESG metric use appear largely invariant in Panel B, where we distinguish between environmental, social, and governance metrics, despite having less statistical power in some instances. Thus, for conciseness, most of our subsequent tests do not distinguish between ESG metrics.

We also explore how specific ESG metrics are chosen. We construct a metric-level dataset and investigate how firms select which specific ESG metrics to include and when to do so. Since we have many observations per firm per year, we include firm fixed effects, which hold constant a firm's propensity to use any type of metric. As a result, slow-moving firm-level characteristics, such as ownership, lose significance.

Table 4 relates the introduction of specific ESG metrics to the sentiment of a firm's ESG news coverage during the previous year. Two interesting findings emerge – ESG metrics are more likely to be introduced when a firm's overall ESG performance is negative; however, firms tend to tie executive compensation to specific ESG metrics along dimensions that received more positive news coverage in the previous year. A one-standard-deviation increase of the metric-specific ESG news corresponds to a 0.39 percentage point increase in the probability that a firm will introduce a given metric (column 1). This represents a meaningful 65% increase relative to the unconditional probability of 0.6%. A one-standard-deviation increase in overall ESG news sentiment, by contrast, is associated with a 0.08 percentage point decrease in the probability of ESG metric introduction. This finding is robust when we focus on the introduction of material metrics only (column 4) or when we distinguish between environmental, social, and governance metrics (columns 5 to 7).

In column 2, firms appear to select metrics that are material; however, firms that rank poorly in terms of their ESG performance are not more likely than other firms to select ESG metrics.

In column 3, we also consider whether firms are more likely to introduce a specific ESG metric after experiencing particularly bad performance on that dimension or in their overall ESG performance. We capture this by considering the minimum of the Pulse Score specific to a metric, which we define as *Bad Metric-Specific News*, and proceed in the same way for general news to define *Bad All Categories Pulse News*. The coefficient on *Bad Metric-Specific News* is negative and significant, suggesting that such news is associated with a lower likelihood of introducing a specific ESG metric. A one-standard-deviation increase in *Bad Metric-Specific News* is associated with a 0.07 percentage point decrease in the likelihood of introducing a given ESG metric. This effect is meaningful relative to the unconditional probability of 0.6%, representing approximately a 12% decrease. This suggests that positive news sentiment about a firm's ESG performance influences the inclusion of individual ESG metrics in compensation contracts. In addition, *Bad All Categories Pulse News* is not statistically significant, confirming that firms do not introduce ESG metrics in response to ESG accidents.

In columns 5 to 7, our conclusion that firms introduce metrics in which they have already experienced performance improvements is invariant when we distinguish between environmental, social, and governance metrics, even though environmental metrics tend to be introduced irrespective of the firm's overall ESG performance.

3.3 Operating, Earnings, and Market Metrics

Table 5 examines the selection process for non-ESG metrics. Specifically, we investigate the relationship between ownership structure and the use of operating, earnings, and market metrics. Similar to the case of ESG metrics, we find that firms with non-institutional blockholders are less likely to use any type of metric, while companies with institutional blockholders are more likely to employ all types of metrics. To the extent that non-institutional blockholders are more closely connected to management, this pattern suggests less need for these companies to explain CEO payouts and appease shareholders. The ownership results are stronger in the specifications without firm fixed effects, where we exploit cross-sectional variation in the estimates.

All metrics are less likely to be used when CEOs have longer tenures, resulting in less uncertainty about their skills and strategic priorities.

Table 5 also shows that companies with volatile sentiment about their ESG performance are more likely to use operating and earnings metrics, similar to our findings for ESG metrics in Table 3. While the positive relationship between the volatility of ESG performance and the use of operating metrics is highly statistically significant, the economic magnitude is significantly smaller than that for ESG metrics. A one-standard-deviation increase in the volatility of ESG news is associated with a 1.40 percentage point increase in the likelihood that the CEO's compensation contract includes an operating metric (column 1).

Consistent with contract theory, companies with lower profit volatility are more likely to use earnings metrics. More surprisingly, return volatility also reduces the use of earnings metrics. Overall, the specifications with firm fixed effects suggest that an increase in return volatility is associated with a drop in the use of any type of metrics, suggesting that firms do not want to reveal clear benchmarks when they face more uncertainty.

Table IA.1 examines individual operating and earnings metrics to assess the conditions under which companies utilize these metric types. The results show that companies that lag behind their industry peers in terms of cashflows (column 1) or sales (column 3) tend to use more cashflow- or sales-based metrics, respectively. A one-standard-deviation decrease in the industry-adjusted cashflow-to-assets (sales-to-assets) ratio is associated with a 1.35 (1.31) percentage point increase in the likelihood of employing cashflow (sales) metrics. This corresponds to a 5.49% (3.98%) increase relative to the unconditional probability of 0.246 (0.329) in the sample.

While the above findings are potentially consistent with multitasking models, companies with high industry-adjusted profitability (column 2) use more profitability-based measures, suggesting that metrics do not necessarily serve the objective of directing managerial efforts towards tasks with poor past performance.

Also, it does not appear that boards necessarily select metrics with relatively lower volatility. Only the volatilities of industry-adjusted cashflow and industry-adjusted profitability are negatively related to the use of cashflow-based metrics. Volatility appears to matter less for outcomes that are more closely connected to managerial actions, such as sales and fixed investment.

In columns 5-6, we see that companies with investment-based metrics tend to have higher industry-adjusted investment in property, plant, and equipment as a percentage of total assets, suggesting that boards are directing managers toward a more active investment strategy. Similarly, firms with higher industry-adjusted book leverage tend to include capital structure metrics in the CEO contract, but less so when the volatility of book leverage is higher.

4. Consequences of Compensation Metrics on Actual Pay

We explore whether companies with ESG metrics compensate their executives more for good ESG performance than other companies do. We measure ESG performance using the sentiment of TruValue news over the previous year. Specifically, we examine the extent to which the compensation of executives at firms with particularly strong recent performance increases, and how the inclusion of ESG metrics affects pay sensitivity to ESG and other performance measures.

To test whether ESG metrics matter, we define a new variable, *Metric News*, that considers only the sum of the TruValue news associated with the specific metrics incorporated in the compensation contract. We also consider the extent to which compensation depends on news that is viewed as material for a given firm.

In Table 6, Panel A, we find that total compensation and its components, including variable compensation such as bonuses, restricted stock grants, and option awards, increase with ESG performance. Specifically, a one-standard-deviation improvement in ESG performance is associated with a 5.58% increase in CEO total compensation, as indicated by the specification in column 1.⁸ Similarly, column 3 suggests that the same improvement is associated with an 8.60% increase in option awards and restricted stock grants. Metric-specific news – news about the specific ESG metrics explicitly included in the CEO’s compensation contract – is positively related only to total compensation, but has a relatively small additional effect, with an increase of 1.61% in total compensation. This suggests that CEOs are compensated for good general ESG performance regardless of whether their contracts include ESG metrics or which targets they achieve. Furthermore, since theoretically only variable compensation is considered behavior-inducing, while the fixed component matters for retention, the fact that metric news does not affect

⁸ More precisely, the economic magnitude can be calculated as $\exp(\text{coef} \times \text{sd}) - 1 = \exp(0.0029 \times 18.74) - 1 = 5.58\%$.

variable compensation suggests that metrics are not used to give high-powered incentives, but at most to show that some issues are being addressed by management.

In columns 4 to 6, we also include a variable capturing the sentiment of all material ESG news for the company. Material ESG news appears to matter for executive payouts, in addition to general ESG news, and is more relevant than the news considered in the metrics. Column 4 indicates that a one-standard-deviation increase in material ESG news is associated with a 3.30% increase in CEO total compensation. The corresponding increases for general ESG news and metric-specific ESG news are 3.24% and 1.07%, respectively.

We also control for the four metric type dummies. Companies that use any type of metric tend to compensate their executives more, irrespective of performance. The effect is particularly pronounced for market and earnings metrics on total compensation, while companies with earnings metrics tend to have lower variable compensation, possibly due to smaller options and stock awards.

In Table IA.2., the ESG metric dummy does not appear to affect CEO excess compensation, estimated as in Core, Guay, and Larcker (2008). Market and operating metrics are positively associated with excess compensation, while earnings metrics, if anything, have a negative effect. Overall, these findings do not support the concern that ESG metrics are different from other metric types and are used for CEO rent extraction.

Panel B introduces an interaction between ESG metrics and the firm's past returns to study whether ESG-related metrics reduce the sensitivity of compensation to financial performance. The interaction with past returns is never statistically significant and has a magnitude close to zero, supporting our earlier conclusion that ESG metrics complement and do not substitute metrics based on financial targets. Similarly, in Table IA.3, we find that the inclusion of sales, profitability, or

efficiency metrics in a compensation contract raises total and variable compensation. However, the interactions of these metrics with various performance measures are always insignificant, indicating that the inclusion of sales, profitability, or efficiency metrics does not affect the sensitivity of compensation to firm performance.

Overall, these results suggest that ESG performance has a positive impact on compensation across all companies, but the presence of ESG and other metrics has limited effects on the sensitivity of total and variable compensation to ESG and financial performance. In addition, while a higher number of metric types is associated with higher compensation, the effect of ESG metrics is smaller or insignificant. Thus, ESG metric use is unlikely to be linked to rent extraction.

In general, the presence of metrics does not appear to alter how compensation is affected by changes in those performance measures. Instead, the correlation between more metric types and higher pay suggests that firms may need to explain high CEO pay to shareholders and market participants. In the next section, we test this novel rationale for why metrics are used in executive contracts.

5. The Effects of Compensation Metrics

5.1 Proxy Advisors' Practices and ESG Metrics

The choice of ESG metrics and the limited effects of all pay metrics on the way CEOs are compensated suggest that their objective may not be to direct managerial actions. We recognize, however, that the mere inclusion of pay metrics requires a strategic discussion between board and management, which may determine managerial priorities, irrespective of actual payouts. For this reason, it is important to consider the effects of ESG metrics on the firm's ESG performance.

As always, since compensation is optimally chosen, it is challenging to go beyond mere associations. In addition to providing suggestive evidence on a firm's ESG performance following the introduction of ESG metrics, we exploit the fact that the widespread use of compensation metrics may be driven by institutional investors' scrutiny and the resulting higher levels of compensation disclosure during our sample period. Specifically, many countries around the world have introduced shareholder votes on executive compensation, spurred by criticism of the increasing levels of CEO compensation. The so-called say-on-pay has been compulsory in the UK since 2002 and in the US since 2011, following the enactment of the Dodd-Frank Act. Shareholders vote on the actual executive remuneration or compensation policy, and their vote may be advisory or binding, depending on the jurisdiction. Irrespective of the specific implementation, institutional investors typically rely on the advice of proxy advisory firms, such as ISS, which has been shown to impact voting outcomes (Malenko and Shen, 2016). Since boards, for reputational reasons, care about achieving high shareholder support, directors may aim to choose features of the compensation contract that are likely to meet the approval of ISS.

Since 2011, ISS has disclosed the methodology it uses to identify a firm's peers and provide recommendations on compensation packages (ISS, 2012). This peer selection process is aimed at benchmarking executive compensation structures, but it also highlights a channel through which compensation practices can spread among firms.

We follow the algorithm to identify ISS peers as described by Jochem et al. (2025). Specifically, ISS considers companies in the same two-digit GICS industry that are similar in terms of sales and market capitalization to the focal firm. Importantly, the number of peers for firms within a two-digit GICS industry is restricted to companies that are between 0.45 and 2.1 times the focal company's annual sales and have a market capitalization between 0.2 and 5 times the

focal company's market capitalization. ISS then identifies up to 24 peers for each company, narrowing down the industry classification up to six digits as long as there are at least 14 peers. ISS peers include at least 14 companies and no more than 24. Since ISS ranks potential peers based on their absolute distance in sales from the focal firm, a firm's marginal peers are those ranked closest to the selection threshold. The marginal non-peers are those firms that just miss the selection cutoff – the next-ranked firms within the same industry (defined at the same level of industry aggregation as the marginal peers but with slightly larger distance in terms of sales.

We consider the top five peers in terms of absolute sales distance as marginal peers and define marginal non-peers as other firms in the same industry with absolute sales distance from the focal firm just higher than that of the marginal peers. We consider five marginal non-peers, which should be as similar to the focal firm in terms of fundamentals as the marginal peers .

While peer firms may optimally choose similar metrics because they face comparable challenges, we hypothesize that selecting metrics more closely aligned with those of the marginal peers than the marginal non-peers is more likely a decision driven solely by the desire to gain shareholder support.

Supporting this conjecture, marginal peers appear to have a disproportionate impact on a firm's decision to include specific metrics, relative to marginal non-peers. This is the case not only for ESG metrics but also for compensation metrics of any type. Figure 5 presents the coefficients from regressions of first-time metric adoption on the adoption rates of marginal peers (firms just above the ISS peer selection threshold) versus marginal non-peers (firms just below the threshold). Panel A reveals that both marginal peers and marginal non-peers influence metric adoption, with marginal peers showing substantially stronger effects. Panel B shows that the difference between marginal peer and marginal non-peer effects is positive and statistically significant for both ESG

metrics and all metrics, indicating that ISS peers have a stronger impact on metric adoption than non-peers. These patterns suggest that metric adoption may be driven by external pressure.

Table 7 presents multivariate evidence comparing the influence of marginal peers versus marginal non-peers on the first-time adoption of a specific metric by the focal firm. We distinguish between the whole sample of firms with 14-24 peers and firms with exactly 24 peers. In the latter group, as seen in Figure IA.3, the selected peers tend to be more similar to the marginal non-peers in terms of absolute sales difference from the focal firm. Metric usage by marginal non-peers may thus be a better control, and it may be useful to compare the estimates to evaluate the incidence of omitted factors.

The focal firm has a higher likelihood of introducing a metric if it is used by both marginal peers and marginal non-peers. However, the effect is significantly larger for marginal peers. For ESG metrics, in column 1, the probability of first-time adoption increases by 13.65 percentage points if marginal peers use that metric; the corresponding effect for marginal non-peers is 11.03 percentage points. The difference of 2.62 percentage points is statistically significant, providing evidence that ISS peer designation causally influences ESG metric adoption beyond what would be expected from industry similarity alone. The difference between marginal peers and marginal non-peers is larger or comparable in columns 3 and 4, in which the similarity between the focal firm and the marginal peers is likely lower, mitigating omitted factor concerns.

Since we control for marginal non-peer effects and other firm characteristics, the stronger effect of marginal peers arguably reflects the tendency to promote one-size-fits-all approaches driven by institutional investors' reliance on ISS recommendations, rather than firm-specific factors affecting the choice of particular metrics.

Therefore, in what follows, we instrument different proxies for a firm’s metric usage with the metric usage of its marginal peers to capture metrics that are presumably introduced to achieve more shareholder support. Since these metrics are less likely to be optimally chosen, especially because we control for the metric usage of the marginal non-peers – that is, firms with very similar fundamentals to those of marginal peers – we can mitigate endogeneity concerns in the evaluation of the effects of metrics on ESG performance and other firm outcomes.

5.2 ESG Metrics and ESG Performance

We begin by examining how metric usage impacts ESG performance. We analyze both the effect of a metric on the firm’s performance along the specific dimension captured by that metric and the metric’s influence on the firm’s overall ESG performance.

Table 8 examines whether the presence of a specific ESG metric improves a firm’s subsequent ESG performance along the dimension of that metric, measured by metric-specific ESG news sentiment in year $t+1$. Columns 1 and 4 report OLS regressions; the remaining columns present instrumental variables analysis, where we instrument the presence of an ESG metric with the lagged fraction of marginal ISS peers using the same metric, exploiting the quasi-random variation in peer composition around ISS’s peer selection thresholds.

The first-stage results (columns 2 and 5) confirm the instrument’s strength, with F-statistics well above conventional thresholds for weak instruments. Marginal peers using the same metric significantly predict a firm’s likelihood of having that metric. The IV estimates (columns 3 and 6) reveal that the presence of an ESG metric leads to substantial improvements in metric-specific ESG news sentiment the following year, with coefficients of 0.98 in column 3 and 0.96 in column

6, representing improvements of 0.18 and 0.17 standard deviations, respectively. These IV estimates are considerably larger than the corresponding OLS estimates (0.11 and 0.10).

The OLS estimates show similar results, although the economic magnitudes are smaller, indicating that companies introducing ESG metrics face challenges in improving their ESG performance even along their preferred metrics, where they historically performed better. Overall, these findings show that, while boards choose metrics where the company has performed well, adopting ESG metrics promotes meaningful improvements in the specific ESG targets.

Table 9 considers the firm's overall ESG performance. Both the OLS and the IV estimates indicate that firms with more ESG metrics do not have better overall ESG performance. The specification with firm fixed effects shows that, if anything, the firm's overall ESG performance deteriorates following the introduction of ESG metrics, suggesting that boards may introduce ESG metrics in anticipation of poor ESG performance. Results are qualitatively similar in Panel B, where we restrict the sample to firms with 24 peers. Results remain unchanged in Panel C, where we add controls for the number of operating, earnings, and market metrics. Overall, our findings provide a rationale for why boards select metrics in which the firm has experienced better performance and indicate that ESG metrics do not improve a firm's overall ESG profile.

5.3 Say-on-Pay and Shareholder Dissent

We conjecture that introducing ESG metrics, and compensation metrics in general, may be a way to appease shareholders. To evaluate whether this is the case, we start by considering whether firms introduce more compensation metrics after experiencing shareholder dissent, that is, in circumstances when they face greater pressure to appease shareholders.

Specifically, we examine shareholder opposition to say-on-pay proposals, which are not only seen as votes on executive compensation and its link to a company's performance but also as a measure of shareholders' support for a company's overall strategy (Cuñat, Giné, and Guadalupe, 2016). We conjecture that compensation metrics may help explain to outside shareholders the performance targets on which executives are rewarded, thereby building consensus around the compensation contract and limiting outside interference with corporate strategy, without meaningfully changing it.

To evaluate this conjecture, Panel A of Table 10 examines whether firms increase the number of metrics they report after experiencing dissent on say-on-pay votes. We find that firms tend to increase the number of broad metric categories and the number of specific metrics included in the CEO's contract following shareholder disapproval of say-on-pay proposals. Specifically, a one-percentage-point increase in the mean say-on-pay dissent rate leads to approximately 0.14 additional metric types and 0.25 additional individual metrics. The effect appears to be larger in magnitude when companies experience higher disapproval rates over a longer period – three years in even-numbered columns versus one year in odd-numbered columns. This result confirms that firms introduce compensation metrics when they experience dissent.

Panel B shows that compensation metrics of any type appear to have a similar positive effect in appeasing shareholders. The dependent variable is the average support for management-sponsored say-on-pay proposals voted at a company's annual meeting.⁹ Our variables of interest are proxies for the details of compensation targets in the executive contract. Specifically, we include the overall number of individual metrics across metric types while also controlling for the

⁹ In our sample, 83.2% of firms hold an annual say-on-pay vote, 16% hold it every three years, and 1% hold it every two years. The results we present hereafter are quantitatively and qualitatively similar, irrespective of the frequency of the say-on-pay vote.

number of metrics of each type (ESG, operating, earnings, and market). Following previous literature, we include controls for the level of total compensation and the company's previous returns, as shareholders are known to disagree with particularly generous compensation packages and oppose management when firms perform poorly (Ertimur, Ferri, and Muslu, 2011; Ertimur, Ferri, and Oesch, 2013). We also control for the companies' market capitalization, as compensation is expected to be higher in larger, more complex companies (e.g., Edmans, Gabaix, and Jenter, 2017).

The number of individual metrics included in the contract increases shareholder support for management-sponsored say-on-pay proposals. As shown in column 1 of Panel B, each additional individual metric is associated with a 0.2 percentage point increase in the mean say-on-pay approval rate.

If compensation metrics primarily serve the objective of appeasing shareholders, we would not expect ESG, operating, earnings, and market metrics to have different effects. To test this, we examine each metric type separately in columns 2-5 of Panel B. Consistent with our hypothesis, we find that when individual metric categories are considered separately, they do not exhibit statistically significant effects. This finding confirms that different metric types perform a similar function in appeasing shareholders.

A concern with the causal interpretation of the impact of metric usage on shareholder support is that firm-level omitted factors driving shareholders' consensus could also lead to a higher propensity to use compensation metrics. The fact that compensation metrics are introduced when firms experience dissent should mitigate this concern.

Nevertheless, to further address potential endogeneity concerns about metric selection, in Panel C, we utilize metric usage by marginal peers as an instrument, as we did in the analysis of

ESG performance in Table 9. Specifically, we instrument a focal firm's number of individual metrics using the average of the metrics of the firm's ISS marginal peers.¹⁰ We also control for the number of metrics used by the ISS marginal non-peers. The first-stage results in columns 2 and 5 show that metric usage by both ISS marginal peers and non-peers helps explain the extent to which a firm uses compensation metrics, even though the effect of marginal peers is always larger.¹¹ In columns 3 and 6, we use ISS peers' metric usage to instrument for the focal firm's metric usage, while controlling for marginal non-peers' usage. Interestingly, the latter does not appear to have an effect on shareholder support for the compensation package. In contrast, the coefficients on the instrumented number of individual metrics are positive and statistically significant. The IV estimates suggest that an additional individual metric increases say-on-pay approval by 1.50 (3.44) percentage points in column 3 (6).

The ISS-driven metric effects are also economically larger than those from the OLS regressions, suggesting that metrics adopted due to ISS peer influence (captured by the IV approach) have a stronger effect on say-on-pay approval than the average effect of the individual metrics (captured by OLS). Furthermore, as shown in Panel A, firms adopt compensation metrics when experiencing dissent and omitted factors are likely to introduce a downward bias in the OLS estimates. This supports the hypothesis that compensation metrics serve an important function of appeasing shareholders and building consensus.

5.4 ESG and Other Shareholder Proposals

We explore whether compensation metrics create consensus beyond say-on-pay votes by examining the probability that firms receive shareholder proposals. Shareholder proposals are a

¹⁰ Panel C restricts the sample to firms for which ISS peers are defined.

¹¹ The first-stage F-statistics of 87.17 and 37.17 indicate that our instruments are not weak.

form of low-cost shareholder activism that address various corporate issues, including governance (e.g., executive pay, takeover defenses, board independence), stakeholder matters (e.g., labor unions, supply chains), and other ESG concerns. Since most companies do not receive any proposals during a year, the receipt of shareholder proposals by a company is often considered a measure of shareholder dissent (Aggarwal et al., 2025). Proposals are not welcome by management, who stress their inconsistent quality and individual shareholders' limited understanding of corporate strategy and costs in terms of managerial time (Denes, Karpoff, and McWilliams, 2017; Gantchev and Giannetti, 2021). Compensation metrics may reduce the number of unwanted shareholder proposals, and ESG metrics in particular may help to weed out ESG proposals.

We first study ESG proposals, which rarely pass and can therefore be considered a nuisance for firm management, which must address the proposals' relevance in shareholder meetings (He, Kahraman, and Lowry, 2023; Michaely, Ordonez-Calafi, and Rubio, 2024). Yet, shareholders may submit ESG proposals to draw attention to firms' ESG policies, which may be unnecessary when ESG metrics are already in place. Panel A of Table 11 shows that not only ESG metrics but all types of metrics are negatively associated with the probability that a company receives a shareholder-sponsored ESG proposal. Specifically, disclosing an ESG metric in the CEO's compensation contract reduces the likelihood of receiving such proposals by approximately 2.27 percentage points (column 1), equivalent to a 17.73% reduction based on the unconditional probability of 12.8% in the sample. When we consider material ESG metrics (columns 3 and 4), the effect becomes even stronger, with material ESG metrics reducing the probability by 2.58 percentage points.

Notably, the disclosure of operating and earnings metrics also reduces the likelihood of ESG proposals by around 1.8-2.0 percentage points, as shown in columns 2 and 4. The similar effect across metrics suggests that, by enhancing the understanding of the corporate strategy, pay metrics reduce shareholder interference. Interestingly, while the disclosure of market metrics in compensation contracts also decreases the likelihood of receiving a shareholder-sponsored ESG proposal, the effect is smaller than that for other metrics at approximately 1 percentage point. Additionally, positive news related to the firm's ESG performance decreases the probability of an ESG proposal, and the effect is substantial in terms of economic magnitude. For instance, a one-standard-deviation improvement in ESG performance is associated with a 1.12% decrease in the probability of receiving an ESG proposal (column 2), corresponding to 8.78% of the unconditional probability in the sample.

Panel B of Table 11 uses instrumental variables to evaluate the effect of ESG metrics that are likely driven by ISS peers' influence. As before, we instrument a firm's use of ESG metrics with the number of individual metrics of marginal ISS peers, controlling for marginal non-peers' usage. F-statistics of the excluded instruments in the first stage is well above conventional thresholds for weak instruments. The IV estimates reveal larger effects than OLS, with ESG metrics reducing the probability of ESG proposals by 24.0 percentage points (column 3) in the broader sample, though the effect is not statistically significant in the 24-peer subsample.

Panel C considers all shareholder-sponsored proposals. We find that each additional individual metric is negatively associated with shareholders' propensity to submit proposals, reducing the probability by 0.53 percentage points (column 1). The IV estimates (columns 3 and 6) show larger effects of 5.32 and 2.98 percentage points, respectively, though only the first is statistically significant.

5.5 Opposition to Management Proposals

To further test our hypothesis that compensation metrics build shareholder consensus, we examine a direct measure of shareholder dissent against management's strategic decisions. In Table 12, we consider the average percentage of votes cast against management proposals at a firm's annual meeting. Consistent with our earlier results, we find that a higher number of metrics in the executive contract is associated with less dissent. The effect is not only statistically significant but also economically significant. The OLS results in columns 1 and 4 show that each additional individual metric type is associated with a 0.12 and 0.13 percentage point reduction in average opposition respectively. Given the mean opposition rate of 5.7% in our sample, these results represent economically meaningful reductions of 2.1% and 2.3%, respectively.

To address potential endogeneity in metric selection, columns 2-3 and 5-6 present instrumental variable estimates using ISS peer metric usage as instruments, following our earlier approach. The first-stage results demonstrate strong instruments with F-statistics of 87.17 and 37.17. As shown in columns 3 and 6, the IV estimates reveal larger economic effects –each additional individual metric reduces the average vote against management by 0.95 and 1.26 percentage points, equivalent to 16.7% and 22.1% lower shareholder dissent relative to the mean dissent of 5.7%.

Overall, the evidence supports our conjecture that metrics are used to justify CEO compensation and appease shareholders. The fact that compensation metrics reduce opposition to all types of management proposals, not just compensation-related ones, suggests that the consensus-building effect extends well beyond executive compensation to encompass broader corporate governance and strategic decisions.

6. Conclusions

The existing literature primarily focuses on how bonuses, stock, and option awards affect the sensitivity of a CEO's pay to a firm's market performance and earnings, with the objective of aligning managerial incentives with shareholder interests. In contrast, we focus on the wide range of metrics included in executive contracts and argue that the recent proliferation of ESG metrics must be understood in the context of the usage of other metrics.

While contractual metrics have limited effects on the sensitivity of CEO pay to specific performance outcomes, they play a crucial role in reducing shareholder dissent on compensation and other management proposals. By building consensus and increasing shareholder awareness of corporate strategy, they also decrease the probability of shareholder proposals, suggesting that compensation metrics are mainly used to create consensus on CEO pay and align shareholders' expectations with corporate strategy.

References

- Aggarwal, R., Briscoe-Tran, H., Erel, I. and Starks, L.T., 2025. Public sentiment decomposition and shareholder actions. *Available at SSRN 5040715*.
- Bebchuk, L.A. and Tallarita, R., 2022. The perils and questionable promise of ESG-based compensation. *J. Corp. L.*, 48, p.37.
- Bettis, J.C., Bizjak, J., Coles, J.L. and Kalpathy, S., 2018. Performance-vesting provisions in executive compensation. *Journal of Accounting and Economics*, 66(1), pp.194-221.
- Brav, A., Jiang, W. and Li, R., 2022. Governance by persuasion: Hedge fund activism and market-based shareholder influence. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Economics and Finance 2022*. Oxford University Press.
- Cabazon, F., 2025. Executive compensation: The trend toward one-size-fits-all. *Journal of Accounting and Economics*, 79(1), p.101708.
- Cohen, S., Kadach, I., Ormazabal, G. and Reichelstein, S., 2023. Executive compensation tied to ESG performance: International evidence. *Journal of Accounting Research*, 61(3), pp.805-853.
- Coles, J.L., Daniel, N.D. and Naveen, L., 2006. Managerial incentives and risk-taking. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 79(2), pp.431-468.
- Core, J.E., Guay, W. and Larcker, D.F., 2008. The power of the pen and executive compensation. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 88(1), pp.1-25.
- Cuñat, V., Giné, M. and Guadalupe, M., 2016. Say pays! Shareholder voice and firm performance. *Review of Finance*, 20(5), pp.1799-1834.
- De Angelis, D. and Grinstein, Y., 2015. Performance terms in CEO compensation contracts. *Review of Finance*, 19(2), pp.619-651.
- Denes, M.R., Karpoff, J.M. and McWilliams, V.B., 2017. Thirty years of shareholder activism: A survey of empirical research. *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 44, pp.405-424.
- Edmans, A., Gabaix, X. and Jenter, D., 2017. Executive compensation: A survey of theory and evidence. *The Handbook of the Economics of Corporate Governance*, 1, pp.383-539.
- Edmans, A., Gosling, T. and Jenter, D., 2023. CEO compensation: Evidence from the field. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 150(3), p.103718.
- Ertimur, Y., Ferri, F. and Muslu, V., 2011. Shareholder activism and CEO pay. *The Review of Financial Studies*, 24(2), pp.535-592.

- Ertimur, Y., Ferri, F. and Oesch, D., 2013. Shareholder votes and proxy advisors: Evidence from say on pay. *Journal of Accounting Research*, 51(5), pp.951-996.
- Ferrari, G., Ferraro, V., Profeta, P. and Pronzato, C., 2022. Do board gender quotas matter? Selection, performance, and stock market effects. *Management Science*, 68(8), pp.5618-5643.
- Ferreira, D., Ginglinger, E., Laguna, M.A. and Skalli, Y., 2020. Closing the gap: Gender quotas and corporate board composition. *Available at SSRN 2992213*.
- Flammer, C., Hong, B. and Minor, D., 2019. Corporate governance and the rise of integrating corporate social responsibility criteria in executive compensation: Effectiveness and implications for firm outcomes. *Strategic Management Journal*, 40(7), pp.1097-1122.
- Gantchev, N. and Giannetti, M., 2021. The costs and benefits of shareholder democracy: Gadflies and low-cost activism. *The Review of Financial Studies*, 34(12), pp.5629-5675.
- Gantchev, N., Giannetti, M. and Li, R., 2022. Does money talk? Divestitures and corporate environmental and social policies. *Review of Finance*, 26(6), pp.1469-1508.
- Geczy, C., Jeffers, J.S., Musto, D.K. and Tucker, A.M., 2021. Contracts with (social) benefits: The implementation of impact investing. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 142(2), pp.697-718.
- Giannetti, M. and Wang, T.Y., 2023. Public attention to gender equality and board gender diversity. *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*, 58(2), pp.485-511.
- Gormley, T.A., Gupta, V.K., Matsa, D.A., Mortal, S.C. and Yang, L., 2023. The big three and board gender diversity: The effectiveness of shareholder voice. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 149(2), pp.323-348.
- Hall, B.J. and Liebman, J.B., 1998. Are CEOs really paid like bureaucrats?. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 113(3), pp.653-691.
- Hazarika, S., Kashikar, A., Peng, L., Röell, A. and Shen, Y., 2022. ESG-Linked Pay Around the World—Trends, Determinants, and Outcomes. Working paper, Imperial College.
- He, Y.E., Kahraman, B. and Lowry, M., 2023. ES risks and shareholder voice. *The Review of Financial Studies*, 36(12), pp.4824-4863.
- Holmström, B., 1979. Moral hazard and observability. *The Bell journal of economics*, pp.74-91.
- Holmström, B. and Milgrom, P., 1991. Multitask principal–agent analyses: Incentive contracts, asset ownership, and job design. *The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, 7, pp.24-52.
- Homroy, S., Mavruk, T. and Nguyen, V.D., 2023. ESG-linked compensation, CEO skills, and shareholder welfare. *The Review of Corporate Finance Studies*, 12(4), pp.939-985.

Ikram, A., Li, Z.F. and Minor, D., 2023. CSR-contingent executive compensation contracts. *Journal of Banking & Finance*, 151, p.105655.

ISS, 2012. Evaluating for Performance Alignment: ISS's Quantitative and Qualitative Approach. Technical note. Available at: [https://www.issgovernance.com/file/files/EvaluatingPayForPerformance final updated 02172012.pdf](https://www.issgovernance.com/file/files/EvaluatingPayForPerformance%20final%20updated%2002172012.pdf).

Ittner, C.D., Larcker, D.F. and Rajan, M.V., 1997. The choice of performance measures in annual bonus contracts. *Accounting Review*, pp.231-255.

Jensen, M.C. and Murphy, K.J., 1990. Performance pay and top-management incentives. *Journal of Political Economy*, 98(2), pp.225-264.

Jochem, T., Ormazabal, G. and Rajamani, A., 2025. Why have CEO pay levels become less diverse?. *Journal of Finance*, forthcoming.

Maas, K., 2018. Do corporate social performance targets in executive compensation contribute to corporate social performance? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 148, pp.573-585.

Malenko, N., and Shen Y., 2016. The role of proxy advisory firms: Evidence from a regression-discontinuity design. *Review of Financial Studies* 29:3394–427.

Manski, C.F., 1993, Identification of Endogenous Social Effects: The Reflection Problem, *Review of Economic Studies*, 60, 531–542.

Matusaka, J.G., Ozbas, O. and Yi, I., 2019. Opportunistic proposals by union shareholders. *The Review of Financial Studies*, 32(8), pp.3215-3265.

Michaely, R., Ordonez-Calafi, G. and Rubio, S., 2024. Mutual funds' strategic voting on environmental and social issues. *Review of Finance*, 28(5), pp.1575-1610.

Michaely, R. Schmid, T. and Wang, M., 2024. Implicit versus Explicit Contracting in Executive Compensation for Environmental and Social Performance. Working Paper.

Pan, Y., Wang, T.Y. and Weisbach, M.S., 2015. Learning about CEO ability and stock return volatility. *Review of Financial Studies*, 28(6), pp.1623-1666.

Qin, B. and Yang, L., 2022. CSR contracting and performance-induced CEO turnover. *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 73, p.102173

Appendix A: Variable Definition

Variable	Definition	Source
<i>Compensation Variables</i>		
ESG Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes at least one ESG metric in a given year, and zero otherwise.	ISS Executive Compensation Analytics (ECA)
Material ESG Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes at least one ESG metric in a given year that is material for the firm, and zero otherwise. Materiality is determined by SASB.	ISS ECA
First ESG Metric (<i>firm-year-metric-level</i>)	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes a specific ESG metric for the first time, and zero otherwise.	ISS ECA
First Material ESG Metric (<i>firm-year-metric-level</i>)	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes a material ESG metric for the first time, and zero otherwise. Materiality is determined by SASB.	ISS ECA
Operating Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes at least one operating metric in a given year, and zero otherwise. Operating metrics include metrics related to sales, investment, efficiency, and capital structure.	ISS ECA
Earnings Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes at least one earnings metric in a given year, and zero otherwise. Earnings metrics include metrics related to profitability and cashflow.	ISS ECA
Market Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes at least one market-related metric in a given year, and zero otherwise.	ISS ECA
ISS Peers' Number of Metric Types	Average number of broad metric types (ESG, operating, earnings, market) used by a firm's ISS-designated peers in a given year.	ISS ECA
ISS Peers' Number of Indiv. Metrics	Average number of individual compensation metrics used by a firm's ISS-designated peers in a given year.	ISS ECA
Other Peers' Number of Metric Types	Average number of broad metric types (ESG, operating, earnings, market) used by non-ISS peer firms in the same 6-digit GICS industry in a given year.	ISS ECA
Other Peers' Number of Indiv. Metrics	Average number of individual compensation metrics used by non-ISS peer firms in the same 6-digit GICS industry in a given year.	ISS ECA
ISS Peers - Same Metric	Fraction of a firm's ISS-designated peers that use the same specific compensation metric in a given year.	ISS ECA
Other Industry Peers - Same Metric	Fraction of non-ISS peer firms in the same 6-digit GICS industry that use the same specific compensation metric in a given year.	ISS ECA
Num Metric Types	Sum of different types of compensation metrics included in a CEO's contract in a given year. There are 4 types of metrics – ESG, operating, earnings, and market.	ISS ECA
Num Metric Types Excl. Mkt	Sum of different types of compensation metrics included in a CEO's contract in a given year, excluding the market metric.	ISS ECA
Num Indiv. Metrics	Sum of individual compensation metrics included in a CEO's contract in a given year. These include 26 SASB	ISS ECA

	categories of ESG metrics, 5 categories of operating metrics, 2 categories of earnings metrics, and a market metric.	
Num ESG Metrics	Sum of up to 26 SASB categories of ESG metrics included in the compensation contract of a firm's CEO in a given year.	ISS ECA
Num Operating Metrics	Sum of up to 5 operating metrics included in the compensation contract of a firm's CEO in a given year.	ISS ECA
Num Earnings Metrics	Sum of up to 2 earnings metrics included in the compensation contract of a firm's CEO in a given year.	ISS ECA
Equity Comp	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes stock options or restricted stock grants, and zero otherwise.	ISS ECA
Share of Equity Comp	Ratio of stock options and restricted stock grants divided by CEO's total compensation in a given year.	ISS ECA
Cashflow Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes a cashflow metric in a given year, and zero otherwise.	ISS ECA
Profitability Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes a profitability metric in a given year, and zero otherwise.	ISS ECA
Sales Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes a sales metric in a given year, and zero otherwise.	ISS ECA
Efficiency Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes an efficiency metric in a given year, and zero otherwise.	ISS ECA
Investment Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes an investment metric in a given year, and zero otherwise.	ISS ECA
Capital Structure Metric	Indicator variable equal to one if the compensation contract of a firm's CEO includes a capital structure metric in a given year, and zero otherwise.	ISS ECA
Total Comp	Log of a CEO's total compensation in a given year.	ISS ECA
Stock + Options + Bonus	Log of a CEO's option awards, restricted stock grants, and bonus in a given year.	ISS ECA
Stock + Options	Log of a CEO's option awards and restricted stock grants in a given year.	ISS ECA
<i>ESG News Variables</i>		
St. Dev. All Pulse News	Standard deviation over a firm's fiscal year of daily TruValue Pulse Score that aggregates ESG related news in all SASB categories.	FactSet TruValue
Metric-specific Pulse News (<i>firm-year-metric-level</i>)	Maximum over a firm's fiscal year of daily TruValue Pulse Score in a specific SASB category of ESG news.	FactSet TruValue
All Categories Pulse News	Maximum over a firm's fiscal year of daily TruValue Pulse Score across all SASB categories of ESG news.	FactSet TruValue
Bad All Categories Pulse News	Minimum over a firm's fiscal year of daily TruValue Pulse Score across all SASB categories of ESG news.	FactSet TruValue
Material Pulse News	Maximum over a firm's fiscal year of daily TruValue Pulse Score across SASB categories of ESG news that are material for a firm.	FactSet TruValue
Bad Material Pulse News	Minimum over a firm's fiscal year of daily TruValue Pulse Score across SASB categories of ESG news that are material for a firm.	FactSet TruValue

Metric News	Sum of the maximum over a firm's fiscal year of the news associated with the specific metrics incorporated in the CEO compensation contract.	FactSet TruValue
Below Avg ESG Rank	Indicator variable equal to one if a company is "Below Average" or "Laggard" based on industry percentiles across all SASB categories of ESG news.	FactSet TruValue
<i>Other Variables</i>		
3-yr return	Firm's return, including dividends, over the past three years.	Worldscope
Log(Var Daily Returns)	Log of the variance of daily stock returns.	Datastream
St. Dev. Ind-adj. ROE	Rolling five-year standard deviation of country-industry-year-adjusted return on equity.	Worldscope
Log Mkt Cap	Log of the firm's market capitalization.	Worldscope
Inst Block Own	Combined ownership of a firm's equity by institutional owners with at least 5% ownership stakes.	FactSet Ownership
Large Non-Inst Block	Indicator variable equal to one if at least one non-institutional owner of a firm's equity exceeds 10% ownership.	FactSet Ownership
New 1% (5%) Block	Indicator variable equal to one if in a given year, at least one new institutional owner acquires a stake of a firm's equity exceeding 1% (5%).	FactSet Ownership
New 1% (5%) Active Block	Indicator variable equal to one if in a given year, at least one new active institutional owner acquires a stake of a firm's equity exceeding 1% (5%). Active owners are hedge funds, private equity, and venture capital.	FactSet Ownership
CEO Tenure	The difference in years between the year in which an executive assumes the CEO role and the current fiscal year.	ISS ECA
Mean Say-on-Pay Approval	Average pass rate of say-on-pay management proposals in a given year.	ISS Voting Analytics
Avg. Vote Against Mgmt	Average rate of "against" vote on all management proposals in a given year.	ISS Voting Analytics
ESG Proposal	Indicator equal to one if a firm receives at least one shareholder-sponsored ESG proposal in a given year.	ISS Voting Analytics
Num Shr. Prop	Number of all shareholder-sponsored proposals (excluding proxy contests) submitted to a firm in a given year.	ISS Voting Analytics
Ind-adj. CF/Assets	Ratio of a firm's cashflow to total assets, adjusted by subtracting the country-industry-year mean.	Worldscope
St. Dev. Ind-adj. CF/Assets	Rolling five-year standard deviation of country-industry-year-adjusted ratio of a firm's cashflow to total assets.	Worldscope
Ind-adj Profitability	Ratio of a firm's operating income before depreciation to total assets, adjusted by subtracting the country-industry-year mean.	Worldscope
St. Dev. Ind-adj Profitability	Rolling five-year standard deviation of country-industry-year-adjusted ratio of a firm's operating income before depreciation to total assets.	Worldscope
Ind-adj Sales/Assets	Ratio of a firm's sales to total assets, adjusted by subtracting the country-industry-year mean.	Worldscope
St. Dev. Ind-adj Sales/Assets	Rolling five-year standard deviation of country-industry-year-adjusted ratio of a firm's sales to total assets.	Worldscope
Ind-adj. COGS/Sales	Ratio of a firm's cost of goods sold to total assets, adjusted by subtracting the country-industry-year mean.	Worldscope
St. Dev. Ind-adj. COGS/Sales	Rolling five-year standard deviation of country-industry-year-adjusted ratio of a firm's cost of goods sold to total assets.	Worldscope

Ind-adj. PPE/Assets	Ratio of a firm's property, plant and equipment to total assets, adjusted by subtracting the country-industry-year mean.	Worldscope
St. Dev. Ind-adj. PPE/Assets	Rolling five-year standard deviation of country-industry-year-adjusted ratio of a firm's property, plant and equipment to total assets.	Worldscope
Ind-adj. Book Leverage	Ratio of a firm's total debt to total assets, adjusted by subtracting the country-industry-year mean.	Worldscope
St. Dev. Ind-adj. Book Leverage	Rolling five-year standard deviation of country-industry-year-adjusted ratio of a firm's total debt to total assets.	Worldscope

Appendix B. Examples of metric descriptions

This appendix presents examples of disclosed metrics from executive compensation contracts and illustrates how we use the dictionary in Appendix C to classify these metrics into various types – ESG, earnings, operating, and market metrics, which include our 31 specific metric categories. Compensation data are obtained from Executive Compensation Analytics (ECA) provided by Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS). The international sample includes firms from 34 countries from 2011 to 2021.

Company	Year	Metric Description	Specific Metric Type	Broad Metric Type
EMCOR Group, Inc.	2021	Continue to emphasize long-term goal of a 20 percent per capita reduction in GHG by 2035	GHG Emissions	ESG
Liontrust Asset Management Plc	2020	Improve gender diversity at senior levels and introduction of measures to increase gender diversity in the recruitment process	Employee Engagement, Diversity & Inclusion	ESG
Barloworld Ltd.	2021	Safety through targets that included zero fatalities and achievement of LTIFR targets	Employee Health & Safety	ESG
Endo International Plc	2020	Deliver on year-end 2020 net debt leverage ratio objectives	Capital Structure	Operating
Laredo Petroleum, Inc.	2016	General and administrative expense (\$/BOE)	Efficiency	Operating
Kosmos Energy Ltd.	2019	Project Capital Expenditure (CapEx) of less than \$500 million	Investment	Operating
The Descartes Systems Group Inc.	2014	Cash generated from operations	Cashflow	Earnings
Aimia Inc.	2019	TSR relative to the companies in the TSX Small Cap Index	Market	Market

Appendix C. Dictionary for classifying ESG and other compensation metrics

This appendix lists the set of keywords we use to classify firms' disclosed compensation metrics into broad category types – ESG, earnings, operating, and market metrics and then in 31 specific categories. Compensation data are obtained from Executive Compensation Analytics (ECA) provided by Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS). The international sample includes firms from 34 countries from 2011 to 2021.

ESG Keywords

(1)	AAIR (Average Accident Incident Rate)	(58)	BEE (Black Economic Empowerment)	(109)	CHESM (Contractor Health Environmental Safety Management)
(2)	abatement	(60)	behaving	(110)	child
(3)	abating	(61)	behavior	(111)	CIFR (Critical Incident Frequency Rate)
(4)	Aboriginal	(62)	behavior-based	(112)	CIGS (Copper Indium Gallium Selenide)
(5)	ACCC (Australian Competition and Consumer Commission)	(63)	behavioral	(113)	circular
(6)	access	(64)	behaviors	(114)	circularity
(7)	accessible	(65)	beneficial	(115)	citizenship
(8)	accident	(66)	BIFR (Brambles Injury Frequency Rate)	(116)	clean
(9)	accidents	(67)	bio	(117)	cleaner
(10)	adopt	(68)	biodiversity	(118)	cleantech
(11)	adverse	(69)	biofuel	(119)	climate
(12)	advertising	(70)	biomass	(120)	climate-positive
(13)	affordability	(71)	biosecurity	(121)	climate-related
(14)	affordable	(72)	BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color)	(122)	climates
(15)	AFR (Accident Frequency Rate)	(73)	black	(123)	climatic
(16)	African	(74)	breach	(124)	CMVI (Controllable Motor Vehicle Incidents)
(17)	aid	(75)	breaches	(125)	CNMC (Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia)
(18)	AIFR (All Injury Frequency Rate)	(76)	BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method)	(126)	CO (carbon monoxide)
(19)	air	(77)	bribery	(127)	CO2
(20)	AIRR (All Incident Recordable Rate)	(78)	BSEE (Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement)	(128)	CO2 emission
(21)	alarms	(79)	bullying	(129)	CO2-equivalent
(22)	alert	(80)	bushfire	(130)	CO2-reduced
(23)	all-electric	(81)	CAHPS (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems)	(131)	CO2 reduction
(24)	all-employee	(82)	CAIDI (Customer Average Interruption Duration Index)	(132)	CO2e
(25)	all-injury	(83)	carbon	(133)	CO2eq
(26)	allegations	(84)	carcinogens	(134)	coal-based
(27)	AML (anti-money laundering)	(85)	care	(135)	coal-exit
(28)	animal	(86)	caseload	(136)	collaborate
(29)	antibias	(87)	catastrophic	(137)	collaborative
(30)	antibribery	(88)	catchment	(138)	collaboratively
(31)	anticorruption	(89)	CCUS (Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage)	(139)	collaborators
(32)	antidumping	(90)	CCV (critical control verification)	(140)	colleague
(33)	antimicrobial	(91)	CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)	(141)	colleagues
(34)	anti-money	(92)	CDIs (Community Development Initiatives)	(142)	collision
(35)	antiracist	(93)	CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project)	(143)	collisions
(36)	antislavery	(94)	CE marking	(144)	color
(37)	antitrust	(95)	Celsius	(145)	colored
(38)	arsenic	(96)	censure	(146)	commit
(39)	ASAO (Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent)	(97)	certificates	(147)	committed
(40)	assault	(98)	certification	(148)	committing
(41)	assistance	(99)	certifications	(149)	communities
(42)	assisting	(100)	certified	(150)	community
(43)	atmosphere	(101)	CFC (chlorofluorocarbon)	(151)	community-backed
(44)	attitude	(102)	CFPB (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau)	(152)	commuting
(45)	attitudes	(103)	CG (Corporate Governance)	(153)	competition
(46)	audit	(104)	CGA (Culture, Governance, and Accountability)	(154)	complaint
(47)	auditing	(105)	chargeable	(155)	complaints
(48)	auditors	(106)	charitable	(156)	complex-recycling
(49)	authority's	(107)	charities	(157)	compliance
(50)	avoidable	(108)	charity	(158)	compliances
(51)	avoidance			(159)	compliant
(52)	awareness			(160)	compliantly
(53)	AWRCR (All Worker Recordable Case Rate)			(161)	complying
(54)	BaCE (Building a Community of Equity)			(162)	compostable
(55)	BAIR (Bristow Aircraft Incident Rate)			(163)	concerns
(56)	BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic)			(164)	conflict
(57)	B-BBEE (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment)			(165)	conflicts
				(166)	conservancy
				(167)	conservation

(168)	consumed	(234)	EACC (Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission)	(298)	environmentally
(169)	consumer			(299)	environmentally-friendly
(170)	consumption	(235)	e-buses	(300)	environments
(171)	contaminated	(236)	eco	(301)	EOS (employee opinion survey)
(172)	contamination	(237)	eco-design	(302)	EPC (energy performance certificate)
(173)	cooperation	(238)	eco-efficient	(303)	equality
(174)	COP21	(239)	eco-labeled	(304)	equitable
(175)	CORESafety	(240)	ecological	(305)	ergonomic
(176)	corporate social responsibility	(241)	ecologically	(306)	ERIF (Environmental Recordable Incident Frequency)
(177)	corrupt	(242)	ECOLOGO		
(178)	corruption	(243)	ecosystem	(307)	ESCG (Environment, Social, and Corporate Governance)
(179)	coworker	(244)	EcoVadis		
(180)	CPMM (crashes per million miles)	(245)	educate	(308)	ESCMP (Environmental and Safety Compliance Management Program)
(181)	CRD (Credit Requirements Directive)	(246)	educating		
(182)	credible	(247)	education	(309)	ESE (Environmental, Social, and Economic)
(183)	Cree	(248)	educational		
(184)	CRI (Compliance Risk Index)	(249)	EEAFR (Environmental Enforcement Action Frequency Rate)	(310)	ESG
(185)	crime			(311)	ESG reporting
(186)	criticality	(250)	efficiencies	(312)	ESG targets
(187)	CSA (Corporate Sustainability Assessment)	(251)	efficiency	(313)	ESG-criteria
(188)	CSAP (Climate Strategy and Action Plan)	(252)	efficient	(314)	ESG-dedicated
		(253)	EHS (Environment, Health, and Safety)	(315)	ESG-integrated
(189)	CSR (corporate social responsibility)	(254)	EHS-related (Environmental, Health, and Safety-related)	(316)	ESG-oriented
(190)	CTF (Counter-Terrorism Financing)			(317)	ESG-related
(191)	cultivate	(255)	EHSS (Environment, Health, Safety, and Sustainability)	(318)	ESPC (Energy Savings Performance Contracting)
(192)	cultural			(319)	Ethibel
(193)	culture	(256)	EI (Engagement Index/Environmental Incident)	(320)	ethic
(194)	CVIR (Chargeable Vehicle Incident Rate)	(257)	EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment)	(321)	ethical
				(322)	ethically
(195)	CWI (Community Workforce Initiative)	(258)	EIR (Environmental Incident Rate)	(323)	ethics
(196)	cyber	(259)	elearning	(324)	EthiFinance
(197)	cybersecurity	(260)	electric	(325)	ethnic
(198)	D&I (Diversity and Inclusion)	(261)	electrical	(326)	ethnically
(199)	damage	(262)	electricity	(327)	ethnicity
(200)	damages	(263)	electrification	(328)	e-trucks
(201)	danger	(264)	ELMUS (Executive-Level Minorities, U.S.)	(329)	EV (electric vehicle)
(202)	dangerous			(330)	EV charging (electric vehicle charging)
(203)	DART (Days Away, Restricted, or Transferred/Days Away Restricted Time)	(265)	ELWG (Executive-Level Women, Global)	(331)	EXI (employee experience index)
				(332)	fair
(204)	Days Away Restricted Time	(266)	EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme)	(333)	fairly
(205)	deadly	(267)	emergencies	(334)	family
(206)	deaths	(268)	emergency	(335)	fatal
(207)	decarbonization	(269)	emission	(336)	fatalities
(208)	decarbonized	(270)	emissions	(337)	fatality
(209)	decarbonization	(271)	emitted	(338)	fatigue
(210)	DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)	(272)	empathetic	(339)	fatigue-violation
(211)	demographic	(273)	employability	(340)	FCA (Financial Conduct Authority)
(212)	demographics	(274)	employee	(341)	FCPA (Foreign Corrupt Practices Act)
(213)	derailments	(275)	employee-based	(342)	female
(214)	dielectric	(276)	employee-evaluation	(343)	female-owned
(215)	diesel	(277)	employee-initiated	(344)	females
(216)	DIFR (Disabling Injury Frequency Rate)	(278)	employee-led	(345)	feminization
		(279)	employees	(346)	feminizing
(217)	dioxide	(280)	employer	(347)	fiduciary
(218)	DIR (Disabling Injury Rate)	(281)	employers	(348)	FIR (Fatality Incident Rate)
(219)	disability	(282)	employment	(349)	fire
(220)	disaster	(283)	energies	(350)	fire-related
(221)	discrimination	(284)	energy	(351)	fires
(222)	disposal	(285)	engage	(352)	Fitwel
(223)	disposals	(286)	engaged	(353)	flooding
(224)	disturbance	(287)	engagement	(354)	FOFA (Future of Financial Advice)
(225)	diverse	(288)	engagements	(355)	food
(226)	diversity	(289)	engages	(356)	foods
(227)	DJSI (Dow Jones Sustainability Indices)	(290)	engaging	(357)	footprint
		(291)	engender	(358)	footprinting
(228)	DJSIW (Dow Jones Sustainability Index World)	(292)	enjoyable	(359)	forest
		(293)	ENSR (Energia Non Servita di Riferimento)	(360)	forestry
(229)	DOJ (Department of Justice)			(361)	FOS (Financial Ombudsman Service)
(230)	donations	(294)	environment	(362)	foster
(231)	DOT (Department of Transportation)	(295)	environment-linked	(363)	fostering
(232)	drops	(296)	environmental	(364)	fosters
(233)	e-waste	(297)	environmental-related	(365)	freedom
				(366)	frequency

(367)	freshwater	(426)	HESS (Health, Environment, Safety, and Security)	(477)	incidence
(368)	FSI (Fatal and Serious Injuries)			(478)	incidences
(369)	FTSE4Good	(427)	high-hazard	(479)	incident
(370)	FVR (Fatigue-Violation Rate)	(428)	high-severity	(480)	incident-based
(371)	GAIA	(429)	HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)	(481)	incidents
(372)	Gallup			(482)	inclusion
(373)	Gallup's	(430)	HIRR (Hazard Identification Reporting Rate)	(483)	inclusion-related
(374)	gaps			(484)	inclusiveness
(375)	gas outages	(431)	HIV	(485)	inclusivity
(376)	GCA (Governance, Culture, and Accountability)	(432)	HMDA (Home Mortgage Disclosure Act)	(486)	Indigenous
(377)	gCO2	(433)	homes	(487)	infractions
(378)	gCO2e	(434)	hospice	(488)	inhalable
(379)	GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)	(435)	hospital	(489)	injuries
(380)	GED (General Educational Development)	(436)	hospitality	(490)	injury
(381)	gender	(437)	hospitalization	(491)	Innu
(382)	Gender-Equality Index	(438)	house	(492)	inpatient
(383)	GHG	(439)	housing	(493)	inspires
(384)	GHG-related	(440)	HPI (High-Potential Incident)	(494)	integrity
(385)	GHGE	(441)	HPIFR (High-Potential Incident Frequency Rate)	(495)	intensity
(386)	GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress and Safety System)	(442)	HPIs (High-Potential Incidents)	(496)	interpersonal
(387)	GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice)	(443)	HPN (High-Performing Norm)	(497)	Inuit
(388)	GMP-compliant (Good Manufacturing Practice-compliant)	(444)	HQE (Haute Qualité Environnementale)	(498)	involvement
(389)	GMP-ready (Good Manufacturing Practice-ready)	(445)	HRA (Health Risk Assessment)	(499)	IOSA (IATA Operational Safety Audit)
(390)	GMR (Global Minimum Requirements)	(446)	HRI (High-Risk Incident)	(500)	ISO-compliance
(391)	governance	(447)	HSE (Health, Safety, and Environment)	(501)	ISP (Incidents with Serious Potential)
(392)	GPG (gender pay gap)	(448)	HSEC (Health, Safety, Environment, and Community)	(502)	ISS ESG
(393)	green	(449)	HSEIP (Health, Safety, and Environment Improvement Plan)	(503)	ISS ESG rating
(394)	greener	(450)	HSEMS (Health, Safety, and Environment Management System)	(504)	ISS-oekom
(395)	greenhouse	(451)	HSEQ (Health, Safety, Environment, and Quality)	(505)	JCI (Joint Commission International)
(396)	greening			(506)	job
(397)	GRESB (Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark)	(452)	HSER (Health, Safety, Environment, and Regulatory)	(507)	job-safety
(398)	GRI (Global Reporting Initiative)	(453)	HSES (Health, Safety, Environment, and Sustainability/Health, Safety, and Environmental Standards/Health, Safety, Environment, and Security)	(508)	jobs
(399)	GSCOP (Grocery Supply Code of Practice)			(509)	JSEA (Job Safety and Environmental Analysis)
(400)	GWh			(510)	justice
(401)	GxP (Good x Practice)	(454)	HSMSO (Health and Safety Management System Objective)	(511)	kCO2
(402)	HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust)	(455)	HSS (Health, Safety, and Sustainability)	(512)	kgCO2
(403)	happier			(513)	kgCO2e
(404)	happiness	(456)	HSSD (Health, Safety, and Sustainable Development)	(514)	kids
(405)	harassment			(515)	kWh
(406)	harm	(457)	HSSE (Health, Safety, Security, and Environment)	(516)	KYC (Know Your Customer)
(407)	harmful			(517)	L6
(408)	harms	(458)	HSSEC (Health, Safety, Security, Environment, and Community)	(518)	labor
(409)	hazard			(519)	landfill
(410)	hazardous	(459)	HSSEQ (Health, Safety, Security, Environment, and Quality)	(520)	landscape
(411)	hazards			(521)	Latinx
(412)	HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems)	(460)	HTA (Health Technology Assessment)	(522)	laundrying
(413)	HDSA (Historically Disadvantaged South Africans)	(461)	human	(523)	lawfully
(414)	HDSAs (Historically Disadvantaged South Africans)	(462)	human-resource	(524)	LDAR (Leak Detection and Repair)
(415)	health	(463)	human-resources	(525)	leader
(416)	Health-e Workforce Solutions	(464)	humanitarian	(526)	leaders
(417)	healthcare	(465)	humanity	(527)	leadership
(418)	healthcare-associated	(466)	hygiene	(528)	leakage
(419)	healthier	(467)	ICAM (Incident Cause Analysis Method)	(529)	leaks
(420)	healthy			(530)	LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)
(421)	heat	(468)	IDEAL (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access and Leadership)	(531)	legal
(422)	help			(532)	legislation
(423)	helped	(469)	IIR (Illness Incident Rate/Injury Incident Rate)	(533)	LFTR (Lost-Time Injury Frequency Rate)
(424)	helping			(534)	LGBTQ
(425)	HES (Health, Environment, and Safety)	(470)	illegal	(535)	life-changing
		(471)	illness	(536)	life-enhancing
		(472)	illnesses	(537)	LifeSkills
		(473)	impact	(538)	literacy
		(474)	impacted	(539)	litigations
		(475)	impacting	(540)	livelihood
		(476)	impacts	(541)	lives
				(542)	LMICs (Low- and Middle-Income Countries)
				(543)	local
				(544)	LOCIs (Loss-of-Containment Incidents)
				(545)	LOPC (Loss of Primary Containment)

(546)	lost	(609)	NABERS (National Australian Built Environment Rating System)	(671)	peatland
(547)	Lost-Time	(610)	nationality	(672)	people
(548)	low-carbon	(611)	native	(673)	people-based
(549)	low-emission	(612)	near-miss	(674)	peoples
(550)	LTAFR (Lost-Time Accident Frequency Ratio)	(613)	NECEC (New England Clean Energy Connect)	(675)	personnel development
(551)	LTAR (Lost-Time Accident Rate)	(614)	neighborhoods	(676)	PHC (Plant Health Committee)
(552)	LTAs (Lost-Time Accidents)	(615)	net-zero	(677)	PHEV (plug-in hybrid vehicle)
(553)	LTDF (Lost-Time and Disabling Injury Frequency)	(616)	ISNetworld	(678)	philanthropic
(554)	LTFIR (Lost-Time Injury Frequency Rate)	(617)	neutralize	(679)	philanthropy
(555)	LTI (Lost-Time Incidents/Long-Term Injuries)	(618)	newborn	(680)	phishing
(556)	LTIF (Lost-Time Injury Frequency)	(619)	NFDL (Non-Fatal Days Lost)	(681)	photovoltaic
(557)	LTIFR (Lost-Time Injury Frequency Rate)	(620)	nitrogen	(682)	physician
(558)	LTIFR (Lost-Time Injury Frequency Rate)	(621)	noise	(683)	planet
(559)	LTIR (Lost-Time Injury Rate)	(622)	noise-related	(684)	plant-based
(560)	LTIS (Lost-Time Injury Severity)	(623)	non-compliance	(685)	planting
(561)	LTIs (Lost-Time Injuries)	(624)	non-compliances	(686)	plastic
(562)	LTISR (Lost-Time Incident Severity Rate)	(625)	non-compliant	(687)	plastics
(563)	LWCR (Lost Workday Case Rate)	(626)	non-discrimination	(688)	PLMUS (Professional-Level Women, U.S.)
(564)	LWDIR (Lost Workday Case Incidence Rate)	(627)	non-emitting	(689)	PLWG (Professional-Level Women, Global)
(565)	LWDR (Lost Workday Rate)	(628)	non-fatal	(690)	PM10 (Particulate Matter 10)
(566)	MAIFI (Momentary Average Interruption Frequency Index)	(629)	non-fresh	(691)	PMVA (Preventable Motor Vehicle Accidents)
(567)	malaria	(630)	non-hazardous	(692)	PMVAR (Preventable Motor Vehicle Accident Rate)
(568)	males	(631)	non-injury	(693)	policies
(569)	managerial	(632)	non-renewable	(694)	policy
(570)	managers	(633)	non-reportable	(695)	polymaker
(571)	materiality	(634)	non-white	(696)	pollution
(572)	maternal	(635)	norms	(697)	pollutions
(573)	Mecheshoo	(636)	NPS (Net Promoter Score)	(698)	population
(574)	Medicaid	(637)	NQS (National Quality Standard)	(699)	populations
(575)	medical	(638)	nurture	(700)	positivity
(576)	medically	(639)	nurturing	(701)	potable
(577)	medicine	(640)	nutrition	(702)	poverty
(578)	medicines	(641)	occupational	(703)	POW (Program of Work)
(579)	men	(642)	ODMs (organizational diversity metrics)	(704)	prejudice
(580)	mental	(643)	odor	(705)	preventable
(581)	mentality	(644)	Ofcom	(706)	preventative
(582)	mentor	(645)	offset	(707)	prevention
(583)	mentoring	(646)	offsets	(708)	preventive
(584)	mentorship	(647)	offsetting	(709)	privacy
(585)	methane	(648)	Ofwat	(710)	products
(586)	microplastics	(649)	OHC (Organizational Health Check)	(711)	prosecution
(587)	middle-income	(650)	OHES (Occupational Health, Environmental, and Safety)	(712)	prosper
(588)	migrant	(651)	OHI (Organizational Health Index)	(713)	protect
(589)	minorities	(652)	OHSAS (Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series)	(714)	protected
(590)	minority	(653)	OHSE (Occupational Health, Safety, and Environment)	(715)	protecting
(591)	mitigate	(654)	OII (Occupational Illnesses and Injuries)	(716)	protection
(592)	mitigating	(655)	OIIR (Occupational Illness and Injuries Rate)	(717)	PSER (Process Safety Event Rate)
(593)	mitigation	(656)	oil-to-gas	(718)	PSEs (Process Safety Events)
(594)	MMTCO2e	(657)	ombudsman	(719)	PSIR (Process Safety Incident Rate)
(595)	mobility	(658)	ORIR (Occupational Safety and Health Administration Recordable Incident Rate)	(720)	PSIs (Potentially Serious Incidents)
(596)	monitor	(659)	OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration)	(721)	PSPS (Public Safety Power Shutoff)
(597)	morale	(660)	OSHA-recordable (Occupational Safety and Health Administration-recordable)	(722)	psychologically
(598)	morbidity	(661)	outpatient	(723)	PUE (Power Usage Effectiveness)
(599)	mortality	(662)	OWL (Online Wisdom of Linamar)	(724)	PV (photovoltaics)
(600)	MOSWEC (Mass-on-Spring Wave Energy Converter)	(663)	P1 (Priority 1)	(725)	PVAR (Preventable Vehicle Accident Rate)
(601)	motivated	(664)	palm	(726)	PVIR (Preventable Vehicle Incident Rate/Preventable Vehicle Injury Rate)
(602)	motivating	(665)	parental	(727)	QHSE (Quality, Health, Safety, and Environment)
(603)	MSCI	(666)	passion	(728)	QHSES (Quality, Health, Safety, Environment, and Security)
(604)	MSHA (Mine Safety and Health Administration)	(667)	patient	(729)	QualityScore
(605)	MTIFR (Medically Treated Injuries Frequency Rate)	(668)	patient-centric	(730)	race
(606)	multicultural	(669)	patient-focused	(731)	racial
(607)	multiracial	(670)	patients	(732)	racialized
(608)	MVI (Motor Vehicle Incident)			(733)	RCFR (Recordable Case Frequency Rate)
				(734)	RCR (Recordable Personal Injury Case Rate)
				(735)	recordable

(736)	recordables	(801)	RIR (Recordable Incident Rate/Reportable Incident Rate)	(856)	SIP (Sustainable Improvement Program)
(737)	recruit	(802)	Robeco	(857)	slates
(738)	recruiting	(803)	RobecoSAM	(858)	slavery
(739)	recyclability	(804)	rPET (recycled polyethylene terephthalate)	(859)	SLO (Social License to Operate)
(740)	recyclable	(805)	RSE (Responsabilité Sociétale des Entreprises)	(860)	smallholder
(741)	recycle	(806)	RVIR (Recordable Vehicular Incident Rate)	(861)	SMBs (Small and Micro Businesses)
(742)	recycled	(807)	SACIFR (Serious Actual Consequence Incidence Frequency Rate)	(862)	SMCR (Senior Managers and Certification Regime)
(743)	recycling	(808)	SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel)	(863)	SO2 (sulfur dioxide)
(744)	reduce	(809)	safe	(864)	social
(745)	reduction	(810)	safeguarding	(865)	social-economical
(746)	reductions	(811)	safely	(866)	social health
(747)	refuel	(812)	safer	(867)	socially
(748)	regeneratively	(813)	safety	(868)	societal
(749)	regime	(814)	safety-first	(869)	societies
(750)	regulation	(815)	safety-related	(870)	society
(751)	regulations	(816)	SAIDI (System Average Interruption Duration Index)	(871)	society's
(752)	regulator	(817)	SAIFI (System Average Interruption Frequency Index)	(872)	socioeconomic
(753)	regulators	(818)	salary	(873)	soil
(754)	regulatory	(819)	saltwater	(874)	solar
(755)	rehab	(820)	SAM (Sustainable Asset Management)	(875)	solidarity
(756)	rehabilitate	(821)	sanitation	(876)	SOX (Sarbanes-Oxley)
(757)	rehabilitated	(822)	Sapin	(877)	SOX deficiencies (Sarbanes-Oxley deficiencies)
(758)	rehabilitation	(823)	Sarbanes-Oxley	(878)	SOX-compliant (Sarbanes-Oxley-compliant)
(759)	rehospitalization	(824)	SASB (Sustainability Accounting Standards Board)	(879)	species
(760)	relations	(825)	satisfaction	(880)	spill
(761)	relationship	(826)	satisfactory	(881)	spilled
(762)	reliability	(827)	satisfied	(882)	spills
(763)	reliance	(828)	satisfy	(883)	SPMVI (Serious Preventable Motor Vehicle Incident)
(764)	remotely	(829)	SBTi (Science Based Targets initiative)	(884)	SSOFR (Significant Safety Occurrence Frequency Rate)
(765)	removals	(830)	SBTi-approval (Science Based Targets initiative-approval)	(885)	staff
(766)	renewable	(831)	SCFR (Serious Case Frequency Rate)	(886)	stakeholders
(767)	renewables	(832)	science-based	(887)	StakeholderWatch
(768)	replacements	(833)	scope	(888)	STARR (Safety, Teamwork, Accountability, Respect and Results)
(769)	represented	(834)	scopes	(889)	statutorily
(770)	resilience	(835)	SDG (Sustainable Development Goal)	(890)	stewardship
(771)	resilience-based	(836)	secrecy	(891)	stress
(772)	resiliency	(837)	security	(892)	succession
(773)	resilient	(838)	SEEC (Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition)	(893)	suicide
(774)	reskilling	(839)	SEIFR (Significant Environmental Incident Frequency Rate)	(894)	supervisors
(775)	resource	(840)	self-care	(895)	supplied
(776)	resources	(841)	self-development	(896)	support
(777)	resources-related	(842)	serious	(897)	supported
(778)	respecting	(843)	severity	(898)	supporting
(779)	respects	(844)	sexual	(899)	supportive
(780)	responsibilities	(845)	SF6 (sulfur hexafluoride)	(900)	supports
(781)	responsibility	(846)	shared-value	(901)	surveillance
(782)	responsible	(847)	SHECR (Safety, Health, Environment, and Community Relations)	(902)	SustainAbilities
(783)	responsibly	(848)	SHECS (Safety, Health, Environment, and Sustainability)	(903)	sustainability
(784)	restoration	(849)	SHS (Safety, Health, and Sustainability)	(904)	sustainability-based
(785)	retention	(850)	sick	(905)	sustainability-labelled
(786)	retirees	(851)	sickness	(906)	sustainability-linked
(787)	retraining	(852)	SICR (Serious Injury Case Rate)	(907)	sustainability-related
(788)	reusable	(853)	SIF (Serious Incidents and Fatalities/Serious Injury and Fatality/Serious Injuries and Fatalities)	(908)	sustainable
(789)	reusables	(854)	SIFR (Serious Injury Frequency Rate/Significant Injury Frequency Rate)	(909)	sustainable-development
(790)	reuse	(855)	sinks	(910)	sustainably
(791)	reused			(911)	Sustainagility
(792)	RGMP (Responsible Gold Mining Principles)			(912)	Sustainalytics
(793)	Ribbon			(913)	SWD (saltwater disposal)
(794)	RICI (Road Injury Crash Index)			(914)	system average
(795)	RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)			(915)	tailings
(796)	RIDDORs (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)			(916)	tails
(797)	RIF (Reportable Incident Frequency/Reportable Injury Frequency)			(917)	talent
(798)	RIFR (Recordable Injury Frequency Rate/Reportable Injury Frequency Rate)			(918)	talents
(799)	rights			(919)	TAR (Total Accident Rate)
(800)	RightShip			(920)	taxonomy
				(921)	TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)
				(922)	TCF (Treating Customers Fairly)

Operating Keywords

(1) A&D activities
(2) access
(3) ACQ
(4) acquire
(5) acquisition
(6) AER
(7) AISC
(8) allocation of assets
(9) allocation of capital
(10) annual spend
(11) ARIS
(12) asset base
(13) asset growth
(14) asset quality
(15) asset turns
(16) ATWC
(17) AWC
(18) balance sheet
(19) borrowings
(20) C&E
(21) CapEx
(22) capital
(23) capital adequacy
(24) capital allocation
(25) capital and exploratory
(26) capital deployment
(27) capital expenditure
(28) capital expense
(29) capital growth
(30) capital level
(31) capital position
(32) capital program
(33) capital project
(34) capital ratio
(35) capital recycling
(36) capital spend
(37) capital structure
(38) capital turnover
(39) cash conversion cycle
(40) cash cycle
(41) CASM
(42) CET1
(43) charge-off
(44) CIR
(45) classified
(46) combined ratio
(47) combined trade ratio
(48) common equity
(49) corporate expenditure
(50) cost
(51) credit loss
(52) credit provision
(53) credit quality
(54) criticized asset
(55) criticized loans
(56) days of inventory
(57) days sales
(58) DBAR
(59) debt
(60) default
(61) delinquency
(62) development cost
(63) DIO
(64) DSO
(65) DUAR

(66) DWC
(67) efficiencies
(68) efficiency
(69) equity
(70) equity ratio
(71) equity/assets
(72) expand asset base
(73) expenditure
(74) expense
(75) F&D
(76) FD&A
(77) fee
(78) financial flexibility
(79) financial position
(80) financial resources
(81) financial stability
(82) financial strength
(83) financing
(84) finding and development
(85) finding cost
(86) finding development
(87) funding
(88) G&A
(89) gearing
(90) general and administrative
(91) GMV
(92) gross asset base
(93) grow asset base
(94) growth in assets
(95) growth in core assets
(96) growth in unencumbered asset pool
(97) growth of assets
(98) growth rate in assets
(99) GWP
(100) impairment
(101) increase asset base
(102) inorganic
(103) internal capital generation
(104) inventories
(105) inventory
(106) invested capital
(107) investment
(108) leverage
(109) liability
(110) loan loss
(111) loan quality
(112) loan to value
(113) LOE
(114) loss ratio
(115) LTV
(116) M&A
(117) management fee growth
(118) megawatts
(119) merchandise volume
(120) modernize asset base
(121) NCO
(122) new assets growth
(123) NIW
(124) non-accrual
(125) non-acquired growth
(126) non-performing
(127) NPA
(128) NPE
(129) NPL
(130) NSFR
(131) NWC

(132) O&M
(133) operating
(134) operating leverage
(135) operating ratio
(136) operational effectiveness
(137) OpEx
(138) optimize our current asset base
(139) organic growth
(140) overhead
(141) OWC
(142) policyholder's surplus
(143) premium
(144) project finance
(145) provision expense
(146) provision for
(147) provision of
(148) provision rate
(149) PWCPS
(150) R&D
(151) raise
(152) raising
(153) ratio
(154) receivable
(155) research
(156) research and development
(157) revenue
(158) risk-based
(159) risk-weighted
(160) RWA
(161) sales
(162) saving
(163) shareholder's equity
(164) solvency
(165) spend
(166) stock cover
(167) stockholder's equity
(168) surplus growth
(169) Texas ratio
(170) tier
(171) total asset
(172) total capital
(173) turnover
(174) WCRR
(175) WCT
(176) working capital
(177) written
(178) written premium

Market Keywords

(1) index outperformance
(2) market cap
(3) market performance
(4) market value
(5) market-related
(6) price to
(7) securityholder return
(8) share price
(9) share valuation
(10) shareholder return
(11) stock performance
(12) stock price
(13) stockholder return
(14) TSR

Figure 1. Pay metrics and other metric types

This figure plots the proportion of firms that report different types of compensation metrics, both globally and across regions. Compensation data are obtained from Executive Compensation Analytics (ECA) provided by Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS). The international sample includes firms from 34 countries from 2011 to 2021.

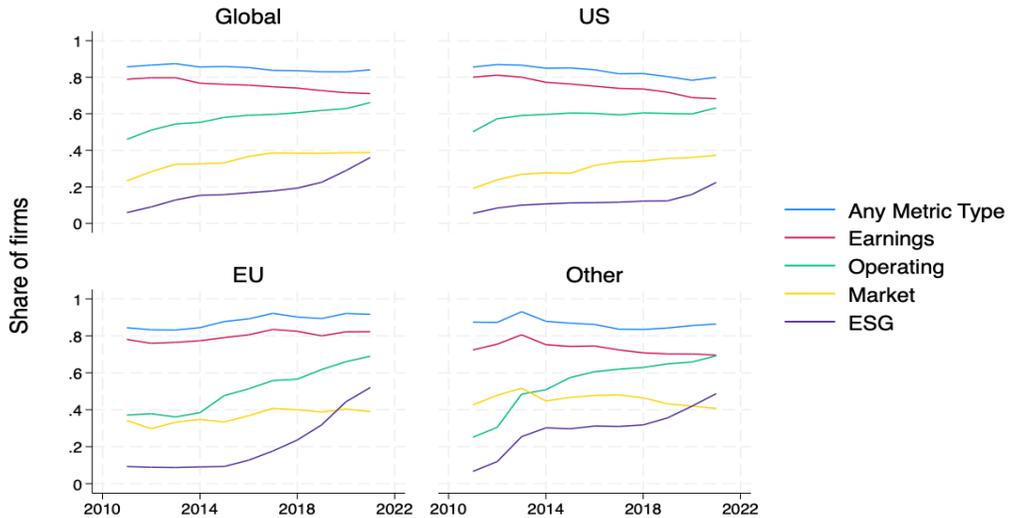


Figure 2. ESG metrics materiality

This figure plots the share of firms with ESG metrics over time, distinguishing between firms with and without material ESG metrics. Compensation data are obtained from Executive Compensation Analytics (ECA) provided by Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS). The international sample includes firms from 34 countries from 2011 to 2021.

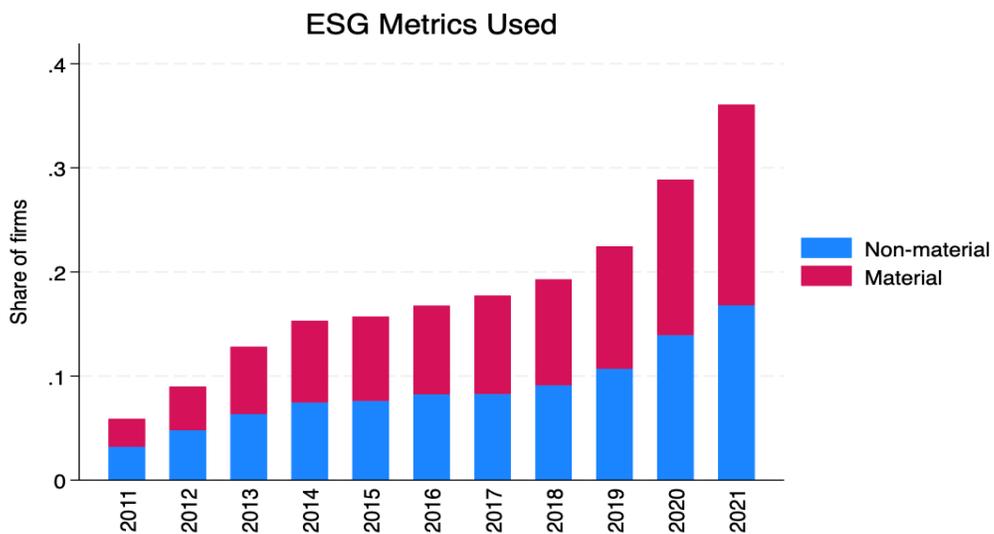


Figure 3. Types of ESG metrics

This figure plots the share of sample firms using different types of ESG metrics. Panel A considers the broad SASB categories, while Panel B focuses on the specific categories. Compensation data are obtained from Executive Compensation Analytics (ECA) provided by Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS). The international sample includes firms from 34 countries from 2011 to 2021.

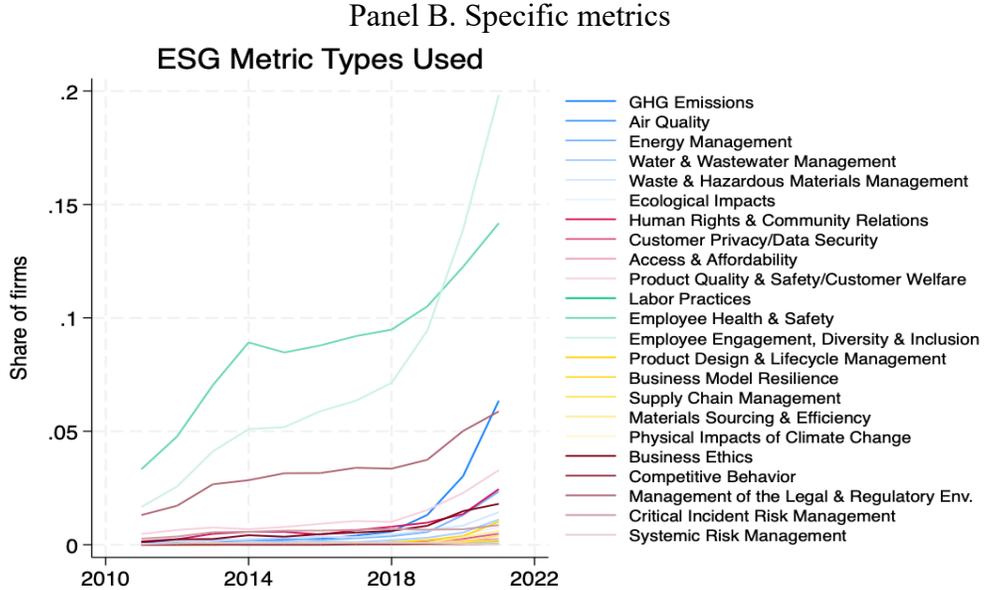
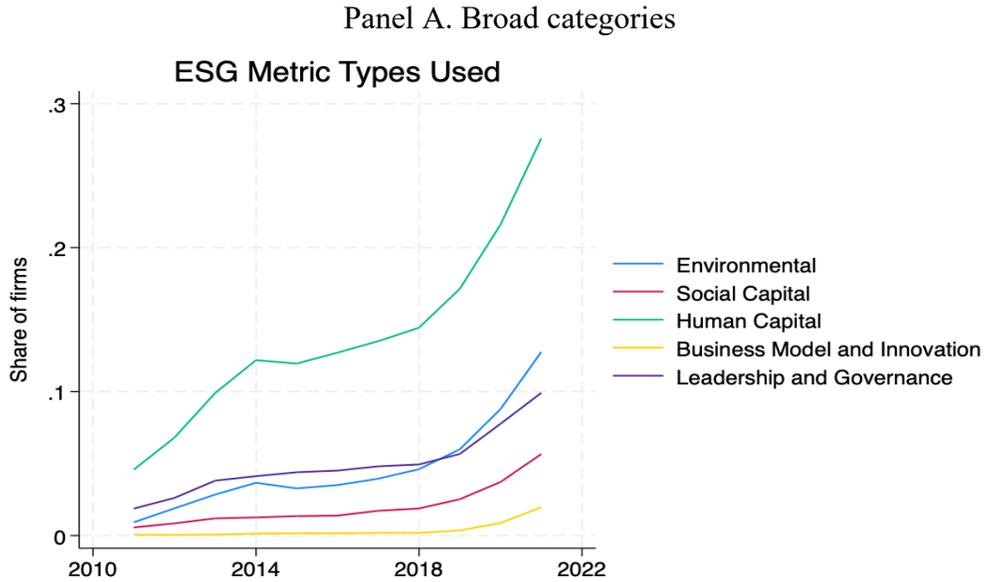


Figure 4. Operating metrics

This figure plots the share of sample firms using different types of operating metrics. Compensation data are obtained from Executive Compensation Analytics (ECA) provided by Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS). The international sample includes firms from 34 countries from 2011 to 2021.

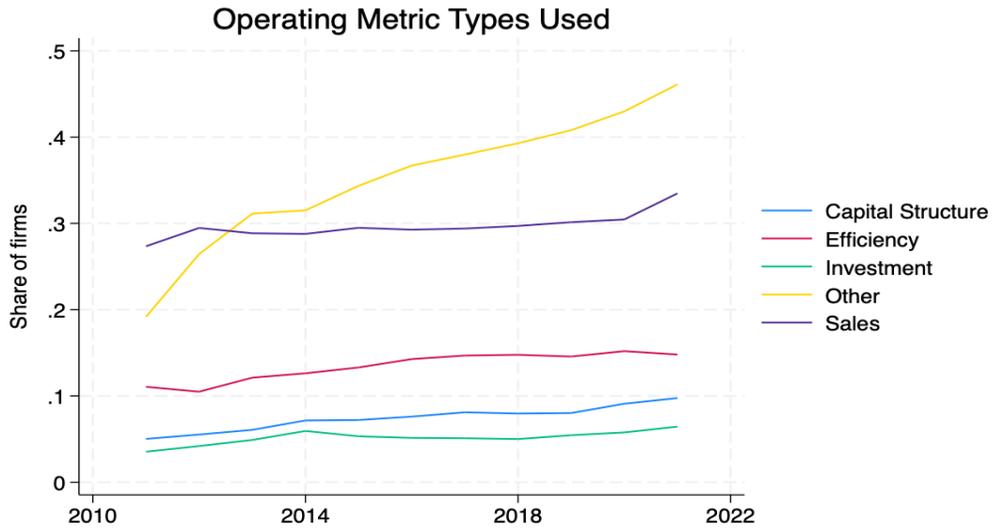


Figure 5. Marginal peer effects on compensation metric adoption

This figure examines the influence of marginal peers (firms just above the ISS peer selection threshold) versus marginal non-peers (firms just below the threshold) on compensation metric adoption decisions. The sample includes all firm-year-metric observations with at least 14 total peers, consistent with ISS minimum requirements. Panel A shows the regression coefficients of marginal peers and marginal non-peers on the probability of first-time adoption of ESG metrics and all metrics (ESG plus operating, earnings, and market metrics). Panel B displays the difference between these coefficients (marginal peers minus marginal non-peers) with 95% confidence intervals. A positive difference indicates that marginal peers have stronger influence on metric adoption than marginal non-peers. All regressions include firm and year fixed effects with standard errors clustered by firm.

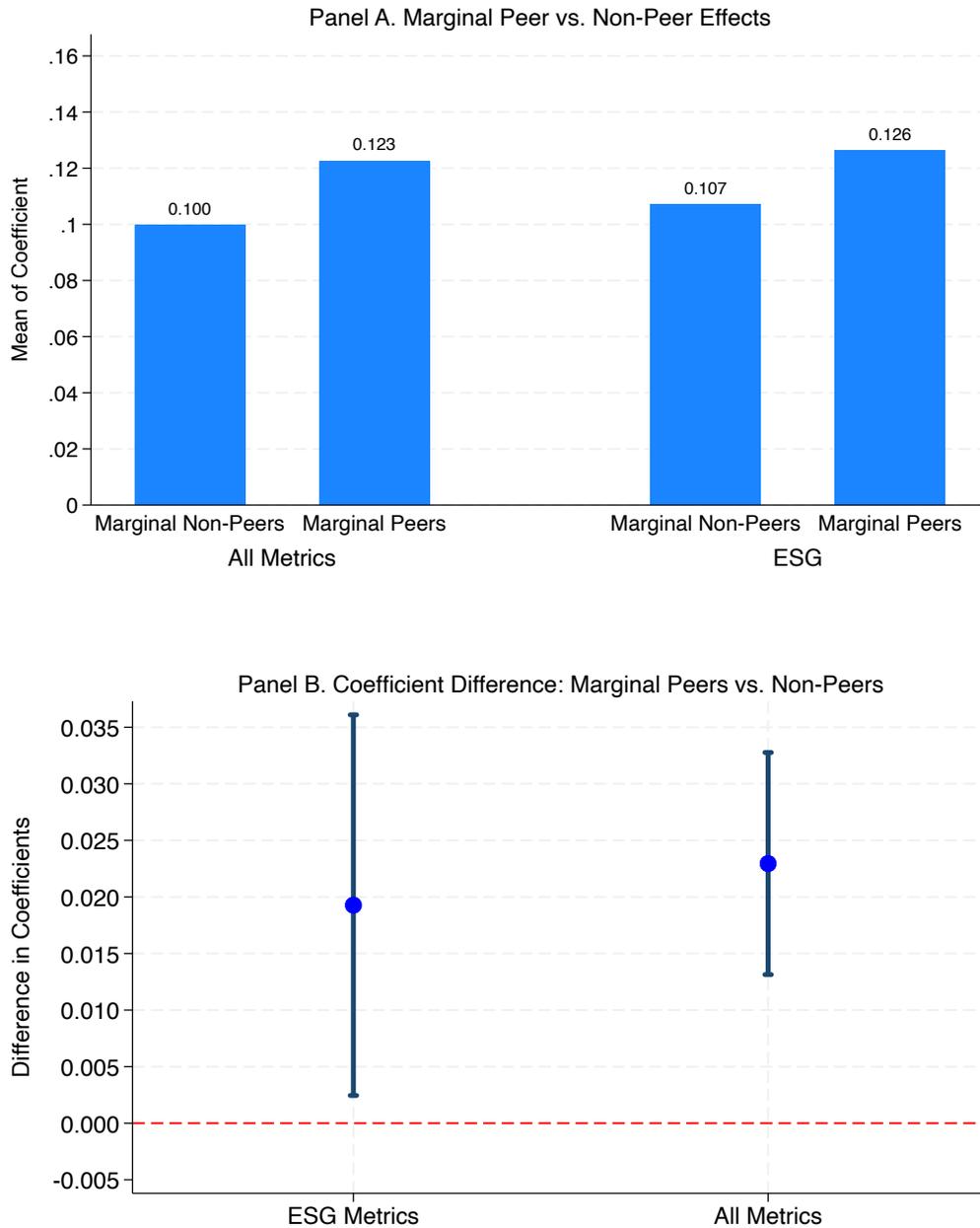


Table 1. Summary statistics

The table presents summary statistics across three groups of variables, with compensation variables in Panel A, ESG news in Panel B, and other variables in Panel C. The sample covers the period from 2011 to 2021. All variables are defined in Appendix A.

	N	Mean	St. Dev.	10%	Median	90%
<i>Panel A. Compensation Variables</i>						
ESG Metric	44,348	0.22	0.414	0	0	1
Material ESG Metric	43,766	0.122	0.328	0	0	1
First ESG Metric (firm-year-metric level)	1,099,677	0.006	0.079	0	0	0
Operating Metric	44,348	0.627	0.484	0	1	1
Earnings Metric	44,348	0.804	0.397	0	1	1
Market Metric	44,348	0.392	0.488	0	0	1
Num Metric Types	44,348	2.043	1.143	0	2	4
Num Metric Types Excl. Mkt	44,348	1.651	0.899	0	2	3
Num Individ. Metrics	44,348	2.739	1.937	0	3	5
Num ESG Metrics	44,348	0.332	0.85	0	0	1
Num Operating Metrics	44,348	1.004	0.995	0	1	2
Num Earnings Metrics	44,348	1.012	0.635	0	1	2
Share of Equity Comp	42,488	0.375	0.292	0	0.394	0.751
Cashflow Metric	44,348	0.246	0.431	0	0	1
Profitability Metric	44,348	0.766	0.424	0	1	1
Sales Metric	44,348	0.329	0.47	0	0	1
Efficiency Metric	44,348	0.152	0.359	0	0	1
Investment Metric	44,348	0.054	0.226	0	0	0
Capital Structure Metric	44,348	0.081	0.273	0	0	0
Total Comp	42,351	14.92	1.232	13.48	14.97	16.36
Stock + Options + Bonus	38,238	14.26	1.464	12.37	14.43	15.96
Stock + Options	32,442	14.29	1.475	12.31	14.48	15.98
<i>Panel B. ESG News Variables</i>						
St. Dev. All Pulse News	44,343	10.02	7.782	0	9.612	20.37
Metric-specific Pulse News (firm-year-metric level)	447,452	60.48	21.34	32.77	59.1	90.36
All Categories Pulse News	44,348	71.20	18.74	47.83	74.36	92.93
Material Pulse News	40,896	69.67	20.32	43.77	73.21	93.43
Metric News	44,348	17.23	53.27	0	0	72.42
Below Avg ESG Rank	44,348	0.205	0.404	0	0	1
<i>Panel C. Other Variables</i>						
3-yr return	40,779	9.984	34.85	-20.22	9.56	36.98
Log(Var Daily Returns)	40,986	-7.529	1.158	-8.788	-7.656	-6.188
St. Dev. Ind-adj. ROE	43,918	0.299	0.575	0.029	0.092	0.739
Log Mkt Cap	44,034	21.25	1.901	18.83	21.26	23.72
Inst Block Own	41,518	0.174	0.171	0	0.133	0.418
Large Non-Inst Block	43,065	0.345	0.475	0	0	1
CEO Tenure	35,910	8.242	7.411	1	6	18
Mean Say-on-Pay Approval	32,140	0.909	0.123	0.758	0.955	0.991
Avg. Vote Against Mgmt	40,167	0.057	0.067	0.011	0.036	0.124
ESG Proposal	44,348	0.128	0.335	0	0	1

Num Shareholder Prop	40,170	0.175	0.769	0	0	0
Ind-adj. CF/Assets	43,977	0.312	0.299	-0.004	0.315	0.651
St. Dev. Ind-adj. CF/Assets	43,906	0.076	0.160	0.011	0.041	0.132
Ind-adj Profitability	43,480	0.260	0.291	-0.004	0.270	0.595
St. Dev. Ind-adj Profitability	43,326	0.076	0.160	0.010	0.042	0.130
Ind-adj Sales/Assets	43,984	0.104	0.623	-0.503	-0.016	0.873
St. Dev. Ind-adj Sales/Assets	43,920	0.122	0.147	0.014	0.080	0.269
Ind-adj. COGS/Sales	37,677	-11.610	53.110	-54.970	-4.967	24.340
St. Dev. Ind-adj. COGS/Sales	37,328	8.349	24.350	1.350	3.554	15.140
Ind-adj. PPE/Assets	43,394	0.012	0.237	-0.215	-0.018	0.376
St. Dev. Ind-adj. PPE/Assets	43,213	0.036	0.044	0.004	0.022	0.079
Ind-adj. Book Leverage	41,576	-5.936	22.040	-33.980	-6.287	18.620
St. Dev. Ind-adj. Book Leverage	39,210	3.996	6.262	0.788	2.519	7.839

Table 2. ESG and other compensation metrics

This table presents firm-year-level regressions of ESG metrics on other compensation metrics. Panel A reports regressions of an indicator for the presence of an *ESG Metric (Material ESG Metric)* on contemporaneous indicators for operating, earnings, and market metrics. Panel B presents regressions of the number of broad metric types (ESG, operating, earnings, and market), including and excluding market metrics, on the ratio of equity-linked compensation to total executive pay. Odd-numbered columns include year, industry, and country fixed effects, while even-numbered columns include firm and year fixed effects. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the firm level, are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

Panel A. ESG and material ESG metrics				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	ESG Metric		Material ESG Metric	
Operational Metric	0.1507*** (22.22)	0.1172*** (15.72)	0.0810*** (14.88)	0.0716*** (12.21)
Earnings Metric	0.0534*** (6.68)	0.0901*** (9.02)	0.0364*** (5.49)	0.0563*** (6.49)
Market Metric	0.0742*** (10.35)	0.0287*** (3.83)	0.0452*** (7.83)	0.0263*** (4.47)
Observations	41,516	43,385	40,982	42,823
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	NO	YES	NO
Country FE	YES	NO	YES	NO
Firm FE	NO	YES	NO	YES
Adjusted R2	0.283	0.578	0.266	0.594
Panel B. Metrics and equity compensation				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Num Metric Types		Num Metric Types Excl. Mkt	
Share of Equity Comp	0.8722*** (22.63)	0.1620*** (6.85)	0.5093*** (16.53)	0.0450** (2.29)
Observations	39,982	41,587	39,982	41,587
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	NO	YES	NO
Country FE	YES	NO	YES	NO
Firm FE	NO	YES	NO	YES
Adjusted R2	0.186	0.681	0.127	0.628

Table 3. Determinants of ESG metric usage

This table presents firm-year-level regressions of (material) ESG compensation metrics in Panel A and environmental, social, and governance metrics in Panel B. Odd-numbered columns include year, industry, and country fixed effects, while even-numbered columns include firm and year fixed effects. All firm-level variables (except *CEO Tenure*) are lagged and described in Appendix A. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the firm level. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

Panel A. ESG and material ESG metrics				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	ESG Metric		Material ESG Metric	
CEO Tenure	-0.0016*** (-3.45)	-0.0004 (-0.66)	-0.0011*** (-2.95)	-0.0008* (-1.76)
Log(Var Daily Returns)	0.0168*** (4.22)	-0.0059* (-1.82)	0.0161*** (5.11)	-0.0075*** (-3.00)
St. Dev. All Pulse News	0.0008** (2.26)	0.0000 (0.01)	0.0005* (1.92)	-0.0000 (-0.25)
St. Dev. Ind-adj. ROE	0.0057 (0.79)	0.0017 (0.21)	-0.0079* (-1.68)	-0.0024 (-0.38)
Below Avg ESG Rank	-0.0081 (-1.09)	-0.0015 (-0.26)	-0.0053 (-0.89)	0.0006 (0.12)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0277*** (10.72)	0.0032 (0.60)	0.0147*** (7.11)	-0.0043 (-1.01)
Inst Block Own	0.0069 (0.29)	-0.0028 (-0.13)	-0.0001 (-0.00)	-0.0158 (-0.98)
Large Non-Inst Block	-0.0468*** (-5.20)	-0.0175 (-1.54)	-0.0382*** (-5.14)	-0.0214** (-2.46)
Observations	26,731	26,298	26,493	26,071
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	NO	YES	NO
Country FE	YES	NO	YES	NO
Firm FE	NO	YES	NO	YES
Adjusted R2	0.274	0.621	0.291	0.667

Panel B. Environmental, social and governance metrics

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Env Metric		Social Metric		Gov Metric	
CEO Tenure	-0.0003 (-1.17)	0.0004 (1.17)	-0.0019*** (-4.56)	-0.0010** (-2.02)	-0.0003 (-1.19)	-0.0001 (-0.33)
Log(Var Daily Returns)	0.0051*** (2.60)	-0.0051*** (-2.85)	0.0134*** (3.75)	-0.0048* (-1.69)	0.0062** (2.47)	-0.0025 (-1.04)
St. Dev. All Pulse News	-0.0001 (-0.54)	-0.0003** (-2.16)	0.0007** (2.16)	-0.0001 (-0.58)	0.0002 (0.73)	-0.0001 (-0.41)
St. Dev. Ind-adj. ROE	-0.0025 (-0.82)	0.0000 (0.01)	-0.0037 (-0.63)	0.0018 (0.26)	0.0014 (0.28)	0.0008 (0.17)
Below Avg ESG Rank	-0.0041 (-0.97)	-0.0049 (-1.32)	-0.0063 (-0.94)	-0.0036 (-0.70)	0.0042 (0.84)	0.0045 (1.07)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0109*** (7.77)	-0.0093*** (-2.61)	0.0244*** (10.93)	-0.0018 (-0.39)	0.0073*** (4.01)	0.0048 (1.29)
Inst Block Own	-0.0362*** (-3.37)	-0.0111 (-0.98)	0.0278 (1.36)	0.0052 (0.29)	-0.0101 (-0.68)	-0.0121 (-0.85)
Large Non-Inst Block	-0.0220*** (-4.21)	-0.0020 (-0.28)	-0.0439*** (-5.39)	-0.0179* (-1.79)	-0.0086 (-1.51)	-0.0025 (-0.33)
Observations	26,731	26,298	27,063	26,623	27,063	26,623
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Country FE	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Firm FE	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
Adjusted R2	0.243	0.560	0.295	0.633	0.0820	0.471

Table 4. ESG compensation metrics – metric-level analysis

This table reports regressions of the first introduction of individual ESG metrics in the CEO’s contract. Columns 1-3 investigate the introduction of any ESG metric, column 4 specifically studies the introduction of material ESG metrics, and columns 5-7 consider separately the introduction of new environmental, social or governance metric. ESG news measures are standardized. All regressions include firm and year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the firm level. The t-statistics are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	First ESG Metric			First Material ESG Metric	First Env Metric	First Social Metric	First Gov Metric
Metric-Specific News	0.0039*** (19.64)	0.0038*** (18.74)	0.0043*** (17.51)	0.0024*** (13.58)	0.0040*** (11.24)	0.0083*** (18.54)	0.0009*** (4.39)
Bad Metric-Specific News			-0.0007*** (-3.08)	-0.0010*** (-5.85)			
Below Avg ESG Rank	0.0003 (0.41)	-0.0000 (-0.02)	0.0002 (0.33)	0.0003 (0.71)	-0.0002 (-0.20)	0.0005 (0.43)	0.0002 (0.38)
Material Metric		0.0031*** (6.51)					
Material Metric X Below Avg ESG Rank		0.0009 (0.95)					
All Categories Pulse News	-0.0008*** (-2.73)	-0.0008*** (-2.60)	-0.0008*** (-2.67)	-0.0002 (-0.93)	-0.0001 (-0.10)	-0.0018*** (-3.47)	-0.0006** (-2.35)
Bad All Categories Pulse News			0.0000 (0.05)	0.0001 (0.49)			
Inst Block Own	-0.0012 (-0.55)	-0.0012 (-0.54)	-0.0012 (-0.54)	-0.0012 (-0.89)	0.0022 (0.57)	-0.0018 (-0.48)	-0.0023 (-1.07)
Large Non-Inst Block	0.0016 (1.29)	0.0016 (1.22)	0.0016 (1.28)	0.0004 (0.45)	0.0016 (0.69)	0.0023 (1.11)	0.0006 (0.51)
Observations	341,621	339,605	341,621	339,605	83,157	125,939	131,772
Firm FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.0247	0.0250	0.0247	0.0174	0.0489	0.0342	0.0180

Table 5. Operating, earnings, and market metrics

This table presents firm-level analysis of operating (columns 1-2), earnings (columns 3-4), and market (columns 5-6) compensation metrics as a function of CEO tenure and other firm characteristics. Odd-numbered columns include year, industry, and country fixed effects, while even-numbered columns include firm and year fixed effects. All firm-level controls (except *CEO Tenure*) are lagged and described in Appendix A. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the firm level, are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Operating Metric		Earnings Metric		Market Metric	
CEO Tenure	-0.0027*** (-3.37)	-0.0013* (-1.85)	-0.0025*** (-4.18)	-0.0003 (-0.57)	-0.0055*** (-7.74)	-0.0016** (-2.15)
Log(Var Daily Returns)	-0.0028 (-0.53)	-0.0137*** (-3.69)	-0.0547*** (-12.34)	-0.0141*** (-4.47)	-0.0002 (-0.03)	-0.0060* (-1.70)
St. Dev. All Pulse News	0.0018*** (3.65)	0.0007** (2.26)	0.0018*** (4.94)	0.0005** (2.02)	0.0006 (1.18)	0.0003 (1.04)
St. Dev. Ind-adj. ROE	-0.0036 (-0.39)	-0.0029 (-0.33)	-0.0562*** (-7.43)	-0.0083 (-1.20)	0.0005 (0.05)	-0.0133 (-1.39)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0383*** (9.90)	0.0052 (0.81)	0.0299*** (10.11)	0.0246*** (5.15)	0.0586*** (16.17)	0.0045 (0.73)
Inst Block Own	0.0932*** (2.68)	0.0452 (1.60)	0.1164*** (4.39)	-0.0079 (-0.41)	0.1465*** (4.49)	0.0589** (2.18)
Large Non-Inst Block	-0.0886*** (-6.56)	-0.0437*** (-3.10)	-0.0603*** (-5.85)	-0.0311*** (-3.06)	-0.1089*** (-8.91)	-0.0249* (-1.94)
Below Avg ESG Rank	-0.0164 (-1.63)	-0.0076 (-1.18)	-0.0058 (-0.85)	-0.0075* (-1.83)	-0.0025 (-0.24)	0.0042 (0.61)
Observations	26,731	26,298	26,731	26,298	26,731	26,298
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Country FE	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Firm FE	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
Adjusted R2	0.0811	0.626	0.229	0.710	0.173	0.651

Table 6. Total and variable compensation

This table presents a firm-year-level analysis of total and variable CEO compensation as a function of ESG-related (material) news. *All Categories Pulse News* (*Material Pulse News*) represents the maximum over a firm's fiscal year of the daily TruValue Pulse Score across all (material) SASB categories of ESG news. *Metric News* is the sum of (the maximum over a firm's fiscal year of) the news associated with the specific metrics incorporated in the CEO compensation contract. All other variables are defined in Appendix A. All models include year, industry, and country fixed effects. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the firm level, are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

Panel A. Compensation and metric types						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Total Comp	Stock+ Options+ Bonus	Stock+ Options	Total Comp	Stock+ Options+ Bonus	Stock+ Options
ESG Metric	0.0432** (2.09)	0.0436 (1.57)	0.0635** (2.22)	0.0423** (2.03)	0.0372 (1.32)	0.0622** (2.18)
Operating Metric	0.0811*** (3.41)	0.0911*** (3.47)	0.1333*** (5.24)	0.0835*** (3.39)	0.1032*** (3.88)	0.1344*** (5.24)
Earnings Metric	0.1444*** (2.79)	-0.0799** (-2.06)	-0.0584 (-1.43)	0.1395** (2.55)	-0.0931** (-2.36)	-0.0633 (-1.52)
Market Metric	0.2429*** (11.82)	0.3239*** (15.48)	0.3391*** (15.52)	0.2364*** (11.28)	0.3141*** (15.01)	0.3306*** (14.97)
All Categories Pulse News	0.0029*** (6.01)	0.0038*** (7.88)	0.0044*** (8.49)	0.0017*** (3.16)	0.0026*** (4.16)	0.0030*** (4.48)
Material Pulse News				0.0016*** (2.99)	0.0018*** (2.99)	0.0020*** (3.16)
Metric News	0.0003** (2.09)	-0.0001 (-0.51)	-0.0000 (-0.22)	0.0002** (2.04)	-0.0001 (-0.39)	-0.0000 (-0.25)
CEO Tenure	0.0000 (0.03)	-0.0033* (-1.66)	-0.0044** (-2.14)	0.0005 (0.26)	-0.0025 (-1.25)	-0.0035* (-1.69)
3-yr Return	0.0007*** (3.22)	0.0012*** (4.39)	0.0011*** (3.87)	0.0006*** (2.78)	0.0010*** (3.80)	0.0010*** (3.43)
Log Mkt Cap	0.3696*** (29.57)	0.4874*** (65.69)	0.4989*** (66.75)	0.3659*** (27.94)	0.4812*** (64.50)	0.4933*** (65.01)
Observations	27,545	25,544	23,553	26,011	24,192	22,342
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.463	0.537	0.584	0.458	0.536	0.583

Panel B. ESG metrics and news

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Total Comp	Stock+ Options+ Bonus	Stock+ Options	Total Comp	Stock+ Options+ Bonus	Stock+ Options
ESG Metric	0.0415* (1.95)	0.0436 (1.54)	0.0620** (2.13)	0.0399* (1.86)	0.0359 (1.25)	0.0599** (2.06)
3-yr Return	0.0006** (2.53)	0.0012*** (3.55)	0.0011*** (2.97)	0.0005** (2.07)	0.0010*** (2.92)	0.0009** (2.51)
ESG Metric X 3-yr Return	0.0002 (0.52)	0.0000 (0.00)	0.0002 (0.30)	0.0003 (0.71)	0.0001 (0.28)	0.0003 (0.47)
Operating Metric	0.0812*** (3.41)	0.0911*** (3.47)	0.1334*** (5.24)	0.0836*** (3.39)	0.1033*** (3.88)	0.1345*** (5.24)
Earnings Metric	0.1446*** (2.79)	-0.0799** (-2.06)	-0.0582 (-1.43)	0.1398** (2.55)	-0.0930** (-2.36)	-0.0630 (-1.52)
Market Metric	0.2430*** (11.82)	0.3239*** (15.48)	0.3391*** (15.52)	0.2365*** (11.28)	0.3141*** (15.01)	0.3306*** (14.97)
All Categories Pulse News	0.0029*** (6.01)	0.0038*** (7.88)	0.0044*** (8.49)	0.0017*** (3.16)	0.0026*** (4.16)	0.0030*** (4.48)
Material Pulse News				0.0016*** (2.99)	0.0018*** (2.99)	0.0020*** (3.16)
Metric News	0.0003** (2.08)	-0.0001 (-0.51)	-0.0000 (-0.23)	0.0002** (2.03)	-0.0001 (-0.39)	-0.0000 (-0.26)
CEO Tenure	0.0000 (0.03)	-0.0033* (-1.66)	-0.0044** (-2.13)	0.0005 (0.26)	-0.0025 (-1.25)	-0.0035* (-1.68)
Log Mkt Cap	0.3696*** (29.59)	0.4874*** (65.65)	0.4989*** (66.69)	0.3659*** (27.96)	0.4812*** (64.45)	0.4934*** (64.94)
Observations	27,545	25,544	23,553	26,011	24,192	22,342
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.463	0.537	0.584	0.458	0.536	0.583

Table 7. ISS Peer influence on ESG and non-ESG metric adoption

This table presents regression estimates of the influence of ISS-designated marginal peers on compensation metric adoption. The analysis compares the influence of marginally included ISS peers versus marginally excluded non-peers on a firm's first-time adoption of compensation metrics. The dependent variables are first-time adoption indicators of a specific metric, and the unit of observation is the metric-firm-year. The key independent variables are *Marginal Peers – Same Metric*, representing the fraction of firms just included in the ISS peer group using the same metric, and *Marginal Non-peers - Same Metric*, representing the fraction of firms just excluded from the ISS peer group using the same metric. Columns 1-2 examine the full sample of firms with at least 14 total peers (ISS minimum requirement), while columns 3-4 focus on the restricted sample of firms with exactly 24 peers (ISS's target peer group size). All specifications include lagged values of firm controls and firm and year fixed effects. The p-value of the difference between the coefficients on marginal peers versus marginal non-peers (Diff p-value) is reported in the bottom row. Standard errors are clustered at the firm level, with t-statistics reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<i>Num Peers 14-24</i>		<i>Num Peers = 24</i>	
	ESG Metrics	All Metrics	ESG Metrics	All Metrics
Marginal Peers - Same Metric	0.1365*** (16.71)	0.1229*** (38.79)	0.1437*** (12.53)	0.1184*** (28.33)
Marginal Non-peers - Same Metric	0.1103*** (13.44)	0.0995*** (33.01)	0.1084*** (9.91)	0.1063*** (25.87)
Material Metric	0.0023*** (5.30)		0.0020*** (3.52)	
Metric-Specific News	0.0001*** (11.23)		0.0001*** (9.56)	
All Categories Pulse News	-0.0000 (-1.50)	0.0000 (0.11)	0.0000 (0.33)	0.0000 (1.17)
Below Avg ESG Rank	0.0005 (0.67)	-0.0001 (-0.19)	0.0011 (1.05)	-0.0006 (-0.74)
Inst Block Own	-0.0001 (-0.05)	0.0013 (0.64)	0.0001 (0.03)	0.0019 (0.67)
Large Non-Inst Block	0.0016 (1.10)	0.0008 (0.85)	0.0003 (0.16)	-0.0003 (-0.25)
Observations	283,403	904,051	152,785	515,918
Firm FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.0472	0.0620	0.0498	0.0650
Diff p-value	0.0386	0.0000	0.0396	0.0833

Table 8. ESG metric adoption and ESG performance – metric-level analysis

This table presents instrumental variable analysis of ESG metric presence on ESG performance, measured by metric-specific ESG news in year t+1. The main independent variable is *Specific ESG Metric*, which equals one if the firm’s CEO compensation features a given metric during a year. The instrument is the lagged fraction of marginal ISS peers with the same metric. Columns 1-3 use firms with at least 14 peers (ISS minimum threshold), whereas columns 4-6 restrict the sample to firms with exactly 24 peers. Columns 2 and 5 present first-stage results with first-stage F-statistics reported at the bottom of the table, and columns 3 and 6 present second-stage IV estimates. All ESG performance measures are standardized. All regressions include firm and year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the firm level. The t-statistics are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Metric-specific News (t+1)					
	OLS	<i>Num Peers 14-24</i> First Stage	IV	OLS	<i>Num Peers = 24</i> First Stage	IV
Specific ESG Metric	0.1120*** (7.34)		0.9505*** (10.35)	0.0976*** (4.24)		0.9612*** (6.91)
Marginal Peers - Same Metric	0.3562*** (10.52)	0.4403*** (25.29)		0.3517*** (6.78)	0.4344*** (20.06)	
Marginal Non-peers - Same Metric	0.3129*** (8.52)	0.3562*** (21.86)	0.0174 (0.29)	0.3896*** (7.27)	0.3752*** (17.09)	0.0639 (0.70)
Metric-Specific News (t-1)	0.4722*** (117.98)	0.0030*** (6.65)	0.4703*** (116.78)	0.4837*** (81.52)	0.0029*** (4.23)	0.4820*** (80.50)
Metric-Specific News (t-2)	0.1672*** (46.67)	0.0033*** (6.75)	0.1648*** (45.52)	0.1687*** (31.04)	0.0049*** (6.30)	0.1649*** (29.67)
All Categories Pulse News	-0.0184*** (-5.61)	-0.0009* (-1.91)	-0.0184*** (-5.58)	-0.0181*** (-3.87)	-0.0005 (-0.69)	-0.0186*** (-3.97)
Below Avg ESG Rank	0.0026 (0.38)	0.0001 (0.09)	0.0022 (0.32)	0.0091 (0.89)	-0.0001 (-0.09)	0.0098 (0.94)
Inst Block Own	-0.0509* (-1.68)	0.0005 (0.13)	-0.0524* (-1.73)	-0.0096 (-0.22)	0.0109* (1.83)	-0.0197 (-0.45)
Large Non-Inst Block	0.0471*** (3.23)	-0.0007 (-0.30)	0.0485*** (3.29)	0.0381 (1.24)	-0.0020 (-0.51)	0.0419 (1.33)
Observations	198,511	240,573	198,511	85,709	114,668	85,709
Firm FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.412	0.201	0.339	0.423	0.215	0.348
F-stat (First Stage)		639.6			402.4	

Table 9. Effect of ESG metrics on ESG performance

This table presents instrumental variable estimates of the effect of ESG metrics on firm ESG performance. Panel A uses firms with at least 14 peers (ISS minimum threshold). Panel B restricts the sample to firms with exactly 24 peers. Panel C includes additional controls for other compensation metrics. The dependent variables are standardized ESG performance measures in t+1. Columns 1 and 5 present OLS estimates with industry, year, and country fixed effects. Columns 2 and 6 present OLS estimates with firm and year fixed effects. Columns 3-4 and 7-8 present IV estimates with firm and year fixed effects, where the instrument is the number of ESG metrics used by marginal ISS peers (firms just above the ISS peer selection threshold). Standard errors are clustered by firm. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Panel A. OLS and IV analysis (Min 14 Peers)								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	All Categories Pulse News (t+1)				Material Pulse News (t+1)			
	<i>OLS</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>First Stage</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>First Stage</i>	<i>IV</i>
Number of ESG Metrics	-0.0114 (-1.37)	-0.0330*** (-2.89)		-0.0754 (-0.34)	0.0128 (1.34)	-0.0097 (-0.86)		0.0639 (0.28)
Marginal ISS Peers' Num ESG Metrics			0.1291*** (6.49)				0.1291*** (6.49)	
Marginal Non-Peers' Num ESG Metrics	-0.0461*** (-2.92)	-0.0273 (-1.48)	0.0910*** (4.63)	-0.0232 (-0.84)	-0.0385** (-2.15)	-0.0134 (-0.75)	0.0910*** (4.63)	-0.0205 (-0.74)
Log Total Compensation	0.0356*** (4.15)	0.0280** (2.46)	-0.0104 (-1.29)	0.0278** (2.42)	0.0489*** (4.57)	0.0303*** (2.91)	-0.0104 (-1.29)	0.0303*** (2.93)
3-Year Return (t-1)	-0.0000 (-0.03)	-0.0001 (-0.36)	0.0004* (1.85)	-0.0001 (-0.26)	-0.0004 (-1.12)	-0.0004 (-1.57)	0.0004* (1.85)	-0.0005 (-1.56)
ROA (t-1)	-0.1143** (-2.09)	-0.0786 (-0.71)	0.0957** (2.31)	-0.0732 (-0.63)	-0.2348*** (-2.79)	-0.0483 (-0.51)	0.0957** (2.31)	-0.0578 (-0.58)
Log Market Cap (t-1)	0.0367*** (5.54)	0.0378** (1.99)	-0.0410*** (-2.76)	0.0362* (1.76)	0.0680*** (8.30)	0.0742*** (4.02)	-0.0410*** (-2.76)	0.0769*** (3.80)
All Categories ESG Performance (t-1)	0.3276*** (33.90)	-0.0657*** (-7.30)	-0.0108** (-2.28)	-0.0657*** (-7.30)	0.2813*** (28.19)	0.0005 (0.06)	-0.0108** (-2.28)	0.0006 (0.07)
Below Avg ESG Rank (t-1)	-0.0205 (-1.17)	0.0583*** (3.05)	-0.0037 (-0.25)	0.0587*** (3.05)	-0.0706*** (-3.67)	0.0295* (1.67)	-0.0037 (-0.25)	0.0288 (1.62)
Inst Block Own (t-1)	0.2016*** (3.70)	0.0337 (0.44)	-0.0589 (-1.31)	0.0314 (0.40)	-0.0024 (-0.04)	0.0423 (0.58)	-0.0589 (-1.31)	0.0463 (0.63)
Large Non-Inst Block (t-1)	-0.0005 (-0.03)	-0.0540 (-1.42)	0.0278 (1.08)	-0.0533 (-1.39)	-0.0057 (-0.24)	-0.0152 (-0.41)	0.0278 (1.08)	-0.0164 (-0.43)
Observations	22,774	22,646	26,451	22,646	21,723	21,568	26,451	21,568
Country FE	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Industry FE	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Firm FE	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.183	0.383	0.574	0.00647	0.203	0.487	0.574	7.08e-05
F-stat (First Stage)			42.10				42.10	

Panel B. OLS and IV analysis (Exactly 24 peers)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	All Categories Pulse News (t+1)				Material Pulse News (t+1)			
	<i>OLS</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>First Stage</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>First Stage</i>	<i>IV</i>
Number of ESG Metrics	-0.0106 (-1.02)	-0.0420*** (-2.76)		0.2739 (0.70)	0.0198* (1.66)	-0.0164 (-1.13)		0.4446 (1.09)
Marginal ISS Peers' Num ESG Metrics			0.1130*** (4.53)				0.1130*** (4.53)	
Marginal Non-Peers' Num ESG Metrics	-0.0302 (-1.52)	-0.0170 (-0.72)	0.0996*** (4.27)	-0.0471 (-1.11)	-0.0248 (-1.13)	-0.0082 (-0.36)	0.0996*** (4.27)	-0.0519 (-1.18)
Log Total Compensation	0.0293** (2.45)	0.0147 (0.89)	-0.0176* (-1.85)	0.0175 (1.05)	0.0383** (2.56)	0.0144 (0.96)	-0.0176* (-1.85)	0.0185 (1.21)
3-Year Return (t-1)	-0.0003 (-1.48)	-0.0006 (-1.44)	0.0004* (1.76)	-0.0007 (-1.60)	-0.0006 (-1.53)	-0.0006** (-2.23)	0.0004* (1.76)	-0.0009** (-2.45)
ROA (t-1)	-0.1826*** (-2.83)	-0.1707 (-1.17)	0.1301** (2.40)	-0.2184 (-1.34)	-0.2332** (-2.11)	-0.0603 (-0.45)	0.1301** (2.40)	-0.1287 (-0.86)
Log Market Cap (t-1)	0.0525*** (5.96)	0.0744*** (3.01)	-0.0562*** (-3.05)	0.0901*** (2.80)	0.0836*** (7.82)	0.1076*** (4.71)	-0.0562*** (-3.05)	0.1317*** (4.14)
All Categories ESG Performance (t-1)	0.3225*** (28.32)	-0.0694*** (-6.17)	-0.0108* (-1.81)	-0.0688*** (-6.01)	0.2847*** (24.87)	0.0073 (0.67)	-0.0108* (-1.81)	0.0086 (0.77)
Below Avg ESG Rank (t-1)	-0.0171 (-0.79)	0.0709*** (2.83)	-0.0087 (-0.52)	0.0696*** (2.69)	-0.0771*** (-3.19)	0.0246 (1.07)	-0.0087 (-0.52)	0.0229 (0.94)
Inst Block Own (t-1)	0.2571*** (3.92)	0.0153 (0.15)	-0.0452 (-0.80)	0.0301 (0.29)	0.0544 (0.68)	0.0907 (0.95)	-0.0452 (-0.80)	0.1119 (1.13)
Large Non-Inst Block (t-1)	0.0047 (0.21)	-0.0688 (-1.44)	0.0012 (0.04)	-0.0719 (-1.47)	0.0010 (0.03)	-0.0238 (-0.48)	0.0012 (0.04)	-0.0272 (-0.53)
Observations	15,044	14,555	17,232	14,555	14,309	13,805	17,232	13,805
Country FE	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Industry FE	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Firm FE	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.192	0.395	0.568	-0.0287	0.214	0.500	0.568	-0.0918
F-stat (First Stage)			20.53				20.53	

Panel C. OLS and IV analysis (controls for other metrics)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	All Categories Pulse News (t+1)				Material Pulse News (t+1)			
	<i>OLS</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>First Stage</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>First Stage</i>	<i>IV</i>
Number of ESG Metrics	-0.0171** (-2.01)	-0.0352*** (-3.11)		-0.0843 (-0.36)	0.0061 (0.63)	-0.0113 (-1.01)		0.0673 (0.28)
Marginal ISS Peers' Num ESG Metrics			0.1270*** (6.47)				0.1270*** (6.47)	
Marginal Non-Peers' Num ESG Metrics	-0.0462*** (-2.93)	-0.0287 (-1.55)	0.0867*** (4.51)	-0.0242 (-0.88)	-0.0395** (-2.21)	-0.0138 (-0.77)	0.0867*** (4.51)	-0.0211 (-0.75)
Number of Operating Metrics	0.0137* (1.68)	0.0105 (0.94)	0.1435*** (13.32)	0.0167 (0.53)	0.0164* (1.66)	0.0132 (1.25)	0.1435*** (13.32)	0.0034 (0.11)
Number of Earnings Metrics	0.0372*** (2.75)	0.0058 (0.29)	0.1008*** (5.69)	0.0104 (0.36)	0.0160 (0.98)	-0.0142 (-0.71)	0.1008*** (5.69)	-0.0219 (-0.72)
Market Metric	-0.0082 (-0.52)	-0.0733*** (-3.30)	0.0013 (0.07)	-0.0736*** (-3.30)	0.0313 (1.55)	-0.0316 (-1.42)	0.0013 (0.07)	-0.0312 (-1.39)
Log Total Compensation	0.0332*** (3.87)	0.0310*** (2.70)	-0.0124 (-1.46)	0.0308*** (2.65)	0.0452*** (4.23)	0.0317*** (3.02)	-0.0124 (-1.46)	0.0318*** (3.05)
3-Year Return (t-1)	0.0000 (0.08)	-0.0001 (-0.40)	0.0004* (1.92)	-0.0001 (-0.29)	-0.0003 (-0.96)	-0.0004 (-1.59)	0.0004* (1.92)	-0.0005 (-1.58)
ROA (t-1)	-0.1224** (-2.23)	-0.0833 (-0.75)	0.0915** (2.35)	-0.0770 (-0.66)	-0.2356*** (-2.80)	-0.0487 (-0.52)	0.0915** (2.35)	-0.0591 (-0.59)
Log Market Cap (t-1)	0.0347*** (5.22)	0.0373** (1.97)	-0.0371*** (-2.62)	0.0356* (1.73)	0.0658*** (8.01)	0.0741*** (4.02)	-0.0371*** (-2.62)	0.0769*** (3.80)
All Categories ESG Performance (t-1)	0.3267*** (33.86)	-0.0654*** (-7.27)	-0.0121*** (-2.61)	-0.0654*** (-7.27)	0.2802*** (28.09)	0.0007 (0.08)	-0.0121*** (-2.61)	0.0007 (0.08)
Below Avg ESG Rank (t-1)	-0.0202 (-1.15)	0.0596*** (3.11)	-0.0023 (-0.16)	0.0602*** (3.11)	-0.0710*** (-3.70)	0.0299* (1.70)	-0.0023 (-0.16)	0.0290 (1.62)
Inst Block Own (t-1)	0.1976*** (3.64)	0.0374 (0.49)	-0.0529 (-1.21)	0.0350 (0.45)	-0.0089 (-0.14)	0.0444 (0.61)	-0.0529 (-1.21)	0.0485 (0.66)
Large Non-Inst Block (t-1)	0.0042 (0.23)	-0.0541 (-1.42)	0.0303 (1.22)	-0.0531 (-1.38)	0.0007 (0.03)	-0.0151 (-0.40)	0.0303 (1.22)	-0.0166 (-0.44)
Observations	22,774	22,646	26,451	22,646	21,723	21,568	26,451	21,568
Country FE	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Industry FE	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Firm FE	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.184	0.384	0.586	0.00703	0.203	0.487	0.586	7.42e-05
F-stat (First Stage)			41.89				41.89	

Table 10. Say-on-pay votes

This table presents an analysis of the relationship between say-on-pay votes and the number of compensation metrics used in CEO contracts. Panel A presents OLS regressions of the number of metrics on say-on-pay shareholder dissent, using both one-year and three-year rolling averages of votes against say-on-pay. All specifications include firm and year fixed effects. Panel B reports OLS regressions of the effects of different metric types (ESG, operating, earnings, and market-related metrics) on say-on-pay approval rates. Panel C presents instrumental variable estimates where we instrument a firm's number of individual metrics using the corresponding metrics of its marginal ISS peers (those just above the ISS peer selection threshold), controlling for the number of metrics used by marginal non-peers (those just below the ISS threshold). Columns 1-3 restrict the sample to firms with at least 14 peers (minimum ISS threshold), while columns 4-6 use firms with exactly 24 peers. All regressions include lagged firm controls and contemporaneous total CEO compensation. All models in Panels B and C include year, industry, and country fixed effects. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the firm level, are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

Panel A. Say-on-pay against vote

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Num Metric Types		Num Indiv. Metrics	
Mean Say-on-Pay Against Vote	0.1402*** (2.96)		0.2485*** (2.94)	
3-yr Mean Say-on-Pay Against Vote		0.3358*** (3.92)		0.5279*** (3.41)
All Categories Pulse News	0.0003 (0.81)	0.0003 (0.96)	0.0000 (0.02)	-0.0000 (-0.03)
3-yr Return	-0.0003 (-0.91)	-0.0004 (-1.28)	-0.0006 (-1.07)	-0.0006 (-1.38)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0631*** (3.41)	0.0728*** (4.24)	0.0356 (1.09)	0.0500* (1.68)
Inst Block Own	0.1992*** (3.28)	0.1936*** (3.28)	0.2501** (2.35)	0.2155** (2.12)
Large Non-Inst Block	-0.0367 (-1.00)	-0.0369 (-1.09)	0.0563 (0.85)	0.0429 (0.71)
Below Avg ESG Rank	0.0029 (0.21)	0.0004 (0.03)	-0.0037 (-0.14)	-0.0030 (-0.12)
Observations	23,869	26,201	23,869	26,201
Firm FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.705	0.717	0.690	0.697

Panel B. Shareholder votes and individual metrics

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Mean Say-on-Pay Approval				
Num Indiv. Metrics	0.0020*** (2.92)	0.0024*** (2.66)	0.0025** (2.57)	0.0017** (2.24)	0.0017** (2.37)
Num ESG Metrics		-0.0015 (-0.90)			
Num Operating Metrics			-0.0011 (-0.66)		
Num Earnings Metrics				0.0020 (0.88)	
Market Metric					0.0026 (1.06)
All Categories Pulse News	0.0001** (2.23)	0.0001** (2.21)	0.0001** (2.23)	0.0001** (2.21)	0.0001** (2.22)
Total Comp	-0.0215*** (-8.85)	-0.0215*** (-8.87)	-0.0215*** (-8.85)	-0.0215*** (-8.88)	-0.0215*** (-8.85)
3-yr Return	0.0005*** (5.88)	0.0005*** (5.88)	0.0005*** (5.88)	0.0005*** (5.88)	0.0005*** (5.88)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0083*** (6.37)	0.0083*** (6.36)	0.0083*** (6.33)	0.0083*** (6.30)	0.0083*** (6.32)
Inst Block Own	0.0468*** (6.21)	0.0466*** (6.19)	0.0467*** (6.18)	0.0465*** (6.17)	0.0466*** (6.18)
Large Non-Inst Block	0.0031 (0.91)	0.0032 (0.93)	0.0032 (0.93)	0.0032 (0.93)	0.0033 (0.95)
Below Avg ESG Rank	-0.0075*** (-3.32)	-0.0075*** (-3.32)	-0.0075*** (-3.33)	-0.0075*** (-3.31)	-0.0075*** (-3.33)
Observations	24,817	24,817	24,817	24,817	24,817
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.0495	0.0495	0.0495	0.0495	0.0495

Panel C. Say-on-pay votes - Marginal Peers IV Analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	SOP Approval Rate					
	OLS	<i>Num Peers 14-24</i> First Stage	IV	OLS	<i>Num Peers = 24</i> First Stage	IV
Number of Indiv. Metrics	0.0018*** (2.91)		0.0150** (2.16)	0.0017** (2.07)		0.0344** (2.45)
Marginal ISS Peers' Number Indiv. Metrics		0.1600*** (9.34)			0.1327*** (6.10)	
Marginal Non-Peers' Number Indiv. Metrics		0.1151*** (6.73)	-0.0002 (-0.17)		0.1168*** (5.43)	-0.0027 (-1.27)
3-yr Return	0.0003*** (4.82)	-0.0038*** (-5.15)	0.0004*** (4.47)	0.0002*** (2.63)	-0.0032*** (-3.64)	0.0004*** (2.85)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0090*** (7.40)	0.1027*** (5.56)	0.0072*** (4.44)	0.0099*** (6.02)	0.0653*** (2.66)	0.0065*** (2.82)
Total Comp	-0.0189*** (-8.74)	0.1729*** (6.91)	-0.0211*** (-8.18)	-0.0208*** (-7.28)	0.2293*** (7.42)	-0.0281*** (-6.40)
All Categories Pulse News	0.0001* (1.96)	0.0030*** (3.83)	0.0001 (1.06)	0.0001 (0.98)	0.0035*** (3.45)	-0.0001 (-0.73)
Below Avg ESG Rank	-0.0060*** (-3.00)	0.0223 (0.63)	-0.0053** (-2.44)	-0.0036 (-1.39)	0.0247 (0.55)	-0.0043 (-1.34)
Inst Block Own	0.0468*** (6.79)	0.0943 (0.80)	0.0453*** (6.22)	0.0386*** (4.40)	0.2250 (1.48)	0.0321*** (3.01)
Large Non-Inst Block	0.0045 (1.54)	-0.4146*** (-9.23)	0.0091** (2.31)	0.0009 (0.26)	-0.4082*** (-7.51)	0.0120* (1.84)
Observations	22,409	26,386	21,377	12,231	15,010	12,176
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
R-squared	0.051	0.244	0.015	0.048	0.235	-0.195
Adjusted R2	0.0482			0.0433		
First-stage F		87.17			37.17	

Table 11. ESG and other shareholder proposals

This table presents an analysis of ESG proposals (Panels A and B) and shareholder-sponsored proposals (Panel C) as a function of various compensation metrics included in the CEO contract. Panel A presents OLS estimates relating ESG proposals to different metric types, where ESG Proposal is an indicator equal to one if a firm receives at least one shareholder-sponsored *ESG Proposal* in a given year. Panel B presents instrumental variable estimates where we instrument a firm's use of ESG metrics using the corresponding metrics of its marginal ISS peers (those just above the ISS peer selection threshold), controlling for broader industry trends by including the number of metrics used by marginal non-peers (those just below the ISS threshold). Panel C examines shareholder proposal receipt more broadly, where *Shareholder Proposal* is an indicator equal to one if a firm receives at least one shareholder-sponsored proposal in a given year, instrumented using the same marginal peer approach. For Panels B and C, columns 1-3 restrict the sample to firms with at least 14 peers (minimum ISS threshold), while columns 4-6 use firms with exactly 24 ISS peers. Each set includes OLS estimates, first-stage regressions, and second-stage IV estimates. All regressions include lagged firm controls and contemporaneous total CEO compensation. All models include year, industry, and country fixed effects. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the firm level, are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

Panel A. ESG proposals				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	ESG Proposal			
ESG Metric	-0.0227*** (-3.78)	-0.0160*** (-2.68)		
Material ESG Metric			-0.0258*** (-3.40)	-0.0195*** (-2.59)
Operating Metric		-0.0180*** (-3.71)		-0.0188*** (-3.83)
Earnings Metric		-0.0202*** (-2.97)		-0.0194*** (-2.83)
Market Metric		-0.0095* (-1.90)		-0.0096* (-1.91)
All Categories Pulse News	-0.0007*** (-6.43)	-0.0006*** (-6.20)	-0.0007*** (-6.51)	-0.0007*** (-6.26)
Total Comp	-0.0033 (-0.73)	-0.0016 (-0.36)	-0.0033 (-0.73)	-0.0016 (-0.35)
3-Year Return	-0.0004*** (-4.60)	-0.0004*** (-4.59)	-0.0004*** (-4.51)	-0.0004*** (-4.51)
Below Avg ESG Rank	0.0017 (0.33)	0.0017 (0.33)	0.0019 (0.36)	0.0018 (0.34)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0372*** (11.80)	0.0387*** (12.10)	0.0372*** (11.75)	0.0387*** (12.05)
Inst Block Own	-0.1355*** (-9.79)	-0.1288*** (-9.45)	-0.1364*** (-9.68)	-0.1300*** (-9.35)
Large Non-Inst Block	0.0072 (1.32)	0.0037 (0.68)	0.0071 (1.29)	0.0036 (0.66)
Observations	30,333	30,333	30,002	30,002
R-squared	0.304	0.306	0.303	0.305
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.303	0.304	0.302	0.303

Panel B. ESG proposals - Marginal Peers IV Analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	ESG Proposal					
	OLS	<i>Num Peers 14-24</i> First Stage	IV	OLS	<i>Num Peers = 24</i> First Stage	IV
ESG Metric	-0.0211*** (-3.57)		-0.2399** (-1.97)	-0.0176*** (-2.67)		-0.1663 (-0.99)
Marginal ISS Peers' Number Indiv. Metrics		0.0201*** (5.31)			0.0151*** (3.43)	
Marginal Non-Peers' Number Indiv. Metrics		0.0183*** (5.08)	-0.0019 (-0.54)		0.0171*** (4.01)	-0.0040 (-1.05)
3-Year Return	-0.0003*** (-3.13)	-0.0006*** (-3.75)	-0.0004*** (-2.72)	0.0001 (0.77)	-0.0005** (-2.34)	-0.0000 (-0.07)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0262*** (10.43)	0.0063* (1.85)	0.0271*** (8.75)	0.0145*** (5.62)	0.0056 (1.16)	0.0177*** (5.32)
Total Comp	0.0006 (0.21)	0.0099*** (2.83)	0.0027 (0.74)	0.0017 (0.58)	0.0068 (1.29)	0.0028 (0.90)
All Categories Pulse News	-0.0003*** (-3.69)	0.0005*** (3.31)	-0.0001 (-1.28)	-0.0002** (-1.96)	0.0004** (2.34)	-0.0001 (-1.10)
Below Avg ESG Rank	0.0067 (1.30)	0.0128* (1.76)	0.0100* (1.81)	0.0080 (1.42)	0.0130 (1.45)	0.0098 (1.57)
Inst Block Own	-0.0948*** (-7.05)	-0.0457* (-1.92)	-0.0818*** (-5.58)	-0.0541*** (-3.72)	-0.0452 (-1.46)	-0.0579*** (-3.46)
Large Non-Inst Block	0.0055 (1.01)	-0.0456*** (-5.01)	-0.0033 (-0.42)	-0.0014 (-0.23)	-0.0472*** (-4.32)	-0.0081 (-0.79)
Observations	27,796	26,386	26,387	15,080	15,010	15,011
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
R-squared	0.275	0.246	0.184	0.304	0.268	0.262
Adjusted R2	0.273			0.301		
First-stage F		28.19			11.80	

Panel C. Shareholder proposals - Marginal Peers IV Analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Shareholder Proposal					
	<i>Num Peers 14-24</i>			<i>Num Peers = 24</i>		
	OLS	First Stage	IV	OLS	First Stage	IV
Number of Indiv. Metrics	-0.0053*** (-2.79)		-0.0532*** (-2.96)	-0.0083*** (-3.93)		-0.0298 (-1.24)
Marginal ISS Peers' Number Indiv. Metrics		0.1600*** (9.34)			0.1327*** (6.10)	
Marginal Non-Peers' Number Indiv. Metrics		0.1151*** (6.73)	0.0024 (0.64)		0.1168*** (5.43)	-0.0032 (-0.73)
3-Year Return	-0.0006*** (-5.59)	-0.0038*** (-5.15)	-0.0008*** (-4.99)	-0.0003** (-2.23)	-0.0032*** (-3.64)	-0.0004** (-2.20)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0512*** (16.31)	0.1027*** (5.56)	0.0563*** (12.36)	0.0406*** (9.93)	0.0653*** (2.66)	0.0443*** (8.95)
Total Comp	0.0040 (1.07)	0.1729*** (6.91)	0.0120** (2.31)	0.0054 (1.22)	0.2293*** (7.42)	0.0106 (1.55)
All Categories Pulse News	-0.0004*** (-3.09)	0.0030*** (3.83)	-0.0001 (-1.01)	-0.0002 (-1.10)	0.0035*** (3.45)	-0.0001 (-0.42)
Below Avg ESG Rank	0.0078 (1.19)	0.0223 (0.63)	0.0103 (1.52)	0.0166** (2.13)	0.0247 (0.55)	0.0163** (2.06)
Inst Block Own	-0.1861*** (-10.08)	0.0943 (0.80)	-0.1567*** (-8.25)	-0.1432*** (-6.53)	0.2250 (1.48)	-0.1352*** (-5.89)
Large Non-Inst Block	-0.0028 (-0.40)	-0.4146*** (-9.23)	-0.0205* (-1.93)	-0.0067 (-0.82)	-0.4082*** (-7.51)	-0.0147 (-1.15)
Observations	27,796	26,386	26,387	15,080	15,010	15,011
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
R-squared	0.238	0.244	0.171	0.235	0.235	0.223
Adjusted R2	0.236			0.232		
First-stage F		87.17			37.17	

Table 12. Opposition against management

This table presents an analysis of shareholder votes against management as a function of the number of compensation metrics in the CEO contract. We present instrumental variable estimates where we instrument a firm's use of ESG metrics using the corresponding metrics of its marginal ISS peers (those just above the ISS peer selection threshold), controlling for broader industry trends by including the number of metrics used by marginal non-peers (those just below the ISS threshold). Columns 1-3 restrict the sample to firms with at least 14 peers (minimum ISS threshold), while columns 4-6 use firms with exactly 24 peers. Each set includes OLS estimates (columns 1 and 4), first-stage regressions (columns 2 and 5), and second-stage IV estimates (columns 3 and 6). The dependent variable *Vote Against Mgmt* measures the mean percentage of votes cast against management recommendations across all proposals in a given firm-year. All regressions include lagged firm controls and contemporaneous total CEO compensation. All models include year, industry, and country fixed effects. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the firm level, are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Vote Against Mgmt					
	Num Peers 14-24			Num Peers = 24		
	OLS	First Stage	IV	OLS	First Stage	IV
Number of Indiv. Metrics	-0.0012*** (-4.25)		-0.0095*** (-3.43)	-0.0013*** (-3.54)		-0.0126*** (-2.98)
Marginal ISS Peers' Number Indiv. Metrics		0.1600*** (9.34)			0.1327*** (6.10)	
Marginal Non-Peers' Number Indiv. Metrics		0.1151*** (6.73)	0.0008 (1.39)		0.1168*** (5.43)	0.0008 (1.16)
3-Year Return	-0.0001*** (-4.51)	-0.0038*** (-5.15)	-0.0001*** (-4.57)	-0.0001*** (-2.71)	-0.0032*** (-3.64)	-0.0001*** (-3.07)
Log Mkt Cap	-0.0064*** (-15.92)	0.1027*** (5.56)	-0.0052*** (-8.28)	-0.0062*** (-10.36)	0.0653*** (2.66)	-0.0048*** (-5.86)
Total Comp	0.0030*** (4.65)	0.1729*** (6.91)	0.0044*** (5.18)	0.0030*** (3.24)	0.2293*** (7.42)	0.0055*** (4.16)
All Categories Pulse News	-0.0000** (-2.15)	0.0030*** (3.83)	-0.0000 (-0.82)	-0.0000 (-0.96)	0.0035*** (3.45)	0.0000 (0.40)
Below Avg ESG Rank	0.0014 (1.61)	0.0223 (0.63)	0.0015 (1.54)	0.0007 (0.63)	0.0247 (0.55)	0.0011 (0.85)
Inst Block Own	-0.0214*** (-6.95)	0.0943 (0.80)	-0.0209*** (-6.34)	-0.0192*** (-4.86)	0.2250 (1.48)	-0.0165*** (-3.74)
Large Non-Inst Block	0.0002 (0.16)	-0.4146*** (-9.23)	-0.0031* (-1.80)	0.0012 (0.77)	-0.4082*** (-7.51)	-0.0034 (-1.41)
Observations	26,146	26,386	24,901	14,252	15,010	14,186
Industry, Year, Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
R-squared	0.098	0.244	0.024	0.085	0.235	-0.066
Adjusted R2	0.0956			0.0803		
First-stage F		87.17			37.17	

Figure IA.1. ESG metric usage by firm size

This figure displays the proportion of firms reporting various types of compensation metrics by region and market capitalization. Compensation data are obtained from Executive Compensation Analytics (ECA) provided by ISS (Institutional Shareholder Services). The international sample includes firms from 34 countries spanning the years 2011 to 2021.

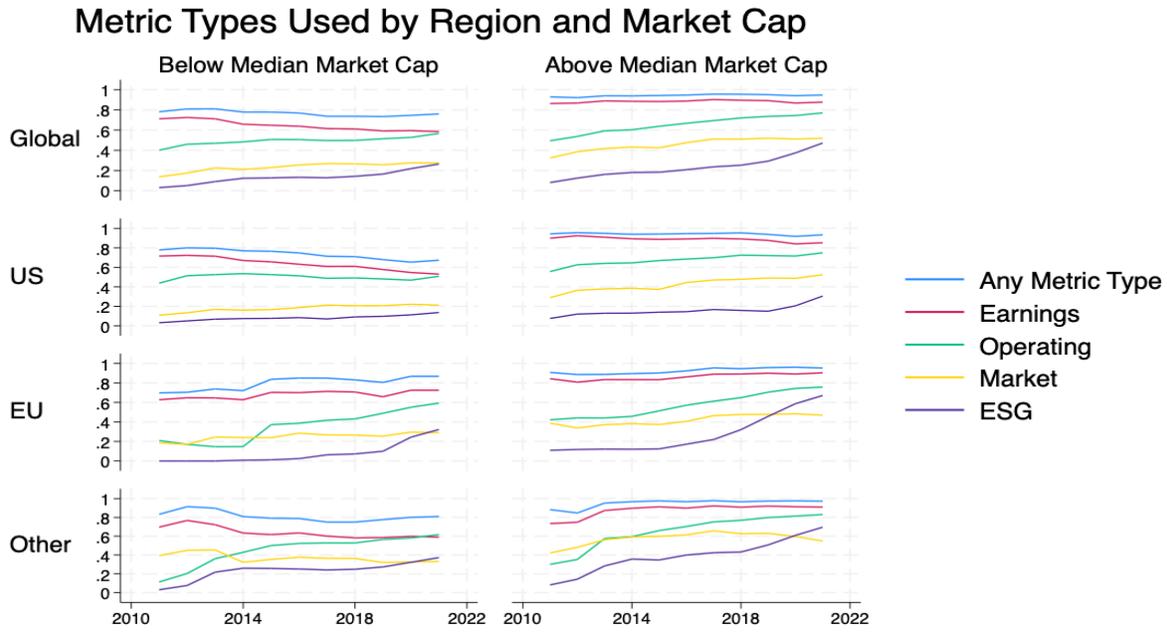


Figure IA.2. Add and drop rates of ESG metrics over time

This figure shows the time trends in ESG metric adoption and removal in executive compensation contracts between 2011 and 2021. The analysis is conducted at the firm-metric-year level, where 'add rate' represents the fraction of firm-metric observations where an ESG metric is introduced for the first time, and 'drop rate' represents the fraction where an ESG metric is removed. The blue line with circles shows the add rates, while the red line with squares shows the drop rates. The diverging trends demonstrate that firms are increasingly adopting ESG metrics in their compensation contracts over time, while the removal of such metrics remains uncommon.

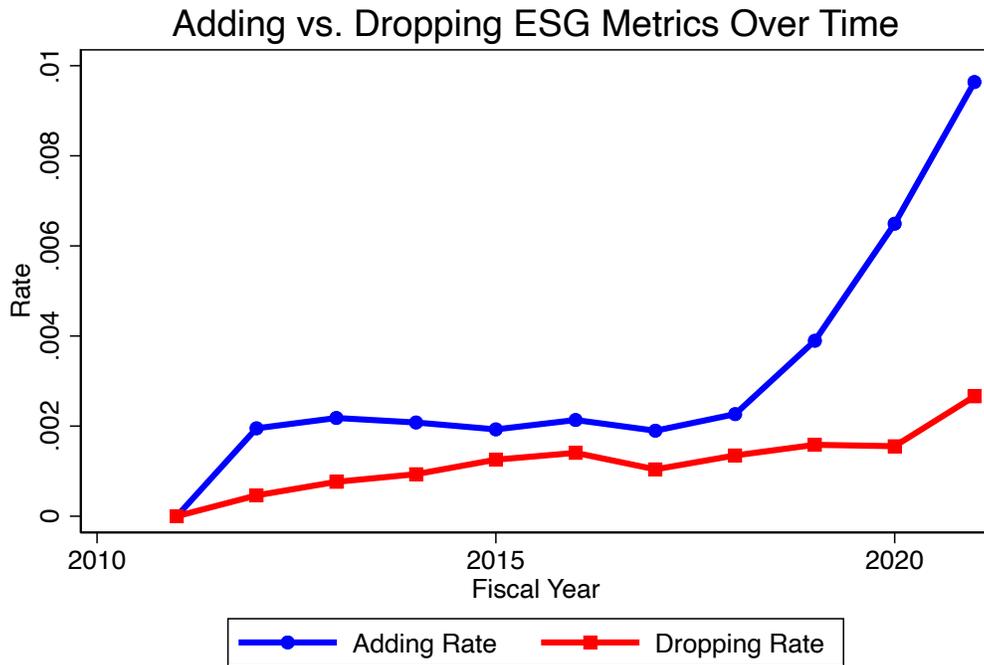


Figure IA.3. Sales similarity between marginal peers and marginal non-peers

This figure compares the similarity in sales between marginal peers (firms just above the ISS peer selection threshold) and marginal non-peers (firms just below the threshold), measured as the average absolute relative distance in sales from the focal firm. Panel A shows the distribution of sales distances for peers of focal firms with 14–24 total peers. Panel B shows the distribution for peers of focal firms with exactly 24 peers. Histograms are displayed only for values less than or equal to 2 to improve readability.

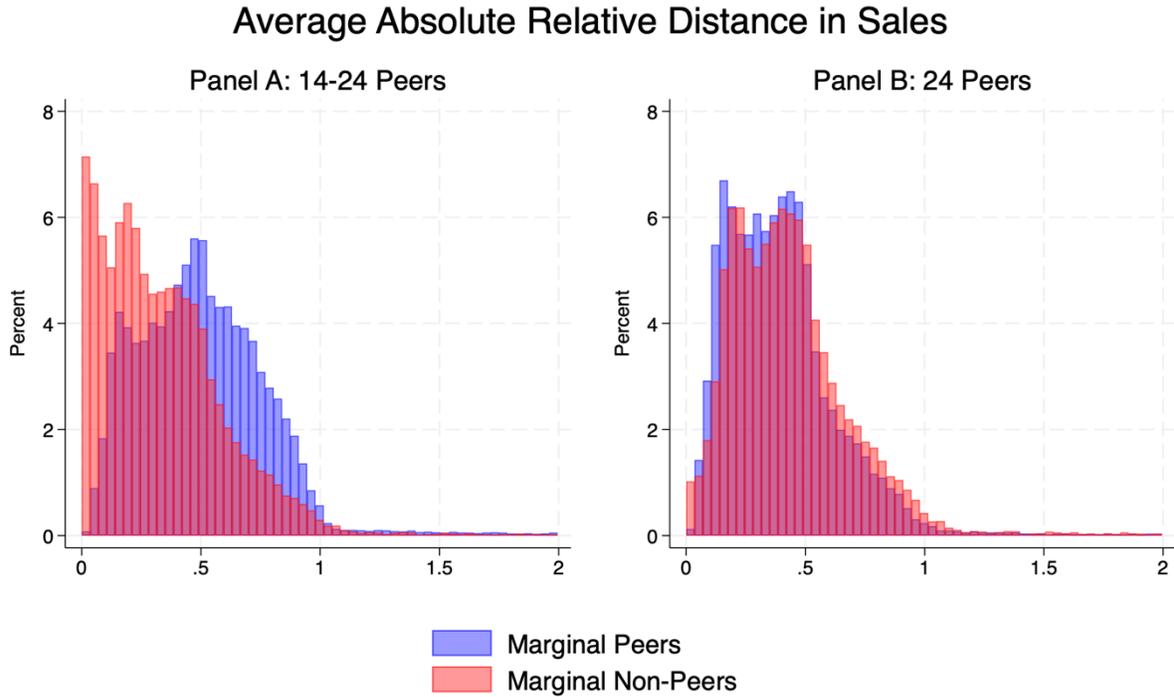


Table IA.1. Operating and earnings metrics

This table presents firm-level analysis of operating (cashflow, profitability, and sales) metrics in columns 1-3 and earnings (efficiency, investment, and capital structure) metrics in columns 4-6. All regressions include lagged firm-level controls as defined in Appendix A, and year, industry, and country fixed effects. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the firm level, are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Cashflow Metric	Profitability Metric	Sales Metric	Efficiency Metric	Investment Metric	Capital Structure Metric
Ind-adj. CF/Assets	-0.0433*					
	(-1.67)					
St. Dev. Ind-adj. CF/Assets	-0.0601***					
	(-2.61)					
Ind-adj Profitability		0.2077***				
		(7.60)				
St. Dev. Ind-adj Profitability		-0.2776***				
		(-10.66)				
Ind-adj Sales/Assets			-0.0210*			
			(-1.77)			
St. Dev. Ind-adj Sales/Assets			0.0479			
			(1.36)			
Ind-adj. COGS/Sales				-0.0000		
				(-0.03)		
St. Dev. Ind-adj. COGS/Sales				0.0000		
				(0.15)		
Ind-adj. PPE/Assets					0.0905***	
					(5.47)	
St. Dev. Ind-adj. PPE/Assets					0.0898	
					(1.38)	
Ind-adj. Book Leverage						0.0007***
						(4.25)
St. Dev. Ind-adj. Book Leverage						-0.0014***
						(-3.63)
CEO Tenure	-0.0038***	-0.0026***	-0.0025***	-0.0011*	0.0010***	0.0009*
	(-6.01)	(-4.00)	(-3.22)	(-1.89)	(2.75)	(1.93)
Log(Var Daily Returns)	-0.0029	-0.0501***	-0.0235***	0.0038	0.0005	0.0099***
	(-0.58)	(-11.10)	(-4.65)	(0.95)	(0.20)	(3.16)
St. Dev. Ind-adj. ROE	0.0385***	-0.0339***	-0.0246**	0.0002	-0.0085**	0.0008
	(4.01)	(-4.55)	(-2.37)	(0.03)	(-2.45)	(0.16)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0484***	0.0212***	0.0313***	0.0082***	0.0037**	-0.0072***
	(13.99)	(6.76)	(8.43)	(2.99)	(2.32)	(-3.05)
Below Avg ESG Rank	-0.0115	-0.0005	-0.0081	-0.0046	-0.0036	-0.0022
	(-1.19)	(-0.06)	(-0.80)	(-0.59)	(-0.78)	(-0.40)
Inst Block Own	0.1273***	0.0307	0.0259	-0.0129	0.0329**	-0.0355
	(3.91)	(1.08)	(0.75)	(-0.49)	(1.97)	(-1.54)
Large Non-Inst Block	-0.0436***	-0.0508***	-0.0348***	-0.0307***	-0.0121**	-0.0318***
	(-4.08)	(-4.63)	(-2.65)	(-3.21)	(-2.06)	(-4.33)
Observations	26,721	26,314	26,731	22,275	26,173	23,590
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.112	0.263	0.179	0.0963	0.0862	0.111

Table IA.2. Excess compensation and ESG metrics

This table presents an analysis of excess CEO compensation in relation to ESG and other compensation metrics. In Panel A, we estimate excess total/variable/equity compensation as the residual of the respective compensation measure on common economic determinants of compensation – logarithm of CEO tenure, logarithm of lagged sales, lagged book-to-market ratio, contemporaneous and lagged returns, and contemporaneous and lagged ROA. In Panel B, we regress excess total/variable/equity compensation on indicators for the use of ESG, operating, earnings, and market metrics in CEO compensation contracts. All models include industry and country-by-year fixed effects. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the industry level, are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

Panel A. Measures of excess compensation			
	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Total Comp	Stock+ Options+ Bonus	Stock+ Options
CEO Tenure	0.0511*** (3.22)	0.0379*** (3.56)	0.0262*** (3.34)
Sales (t-1)	0.3680*** (12.51)	0.4499*** (10.36)	0.4611*** (9.02)
Book-to-Market (t-1)	-0.0014 (-0.93)	-0.0026 (-1.24)	-0.0019 (-0.97)
1-yr Return	-0.0002 (-0.67)	-0.0003 (-0.70)	-0.0003 (-0.74)
1-yr Return (t-1)	0.0005 (0.85)	0.0066* (1.95)	0.0054 (1.56)
ROA	0.0526 (0.54)	-0.0931 (-1.54)	-0.1576*** (-3.34)
ROA (t-1)	-0.4845*** (-4.30)	-0.6569*** (-5.77)	-0.6228*** (-5.57)
Observations	27,976	25,920	23,907
Year X Country FE	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.374	0.413	0.445

Panel B. Excess compensation and ESG metrics

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Excess (Total Comp)	Excess (Stock + Options + Bonus)	Excess (Stock + Options)
ESG Metric	0.0451 (0.71)	0.0133 (0.15)	0.0388 (0.44)
Operating Metric	0.1786*** (3.44)	0.2157*** (3.18)	0.2385*** (3.88)
Earnings Metric	-0.0865 (-0.49)	-0.3609* (-2.02)	-0.3397* (-1.82)
Market Metric	0.2084*** (6.30)	0.2807*** (5.27)	0.2899*** (4.58)
All Categories Pulse News	0.0015*** (3.06)	0.0024*** (4.10)	0.0028*** (4.63)
Material Pulse News	0.0020*** (2.97)	0.0022** (2.59)	0.0025*** (3.36)
3-yr Return	0.0026*** (8.82)	0.0038*** (7.91)	0.0038*** (5.83)
Log Mkt Cap	0.0700*** (4.09)	0.1239*** (7.30)	0.1297*** (6.32)
Observations	25,349	23,585	21,773
Year X Country FE	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.0591	0.0999	0.119

Table IA.3. Operating and earnings metrics

This table presents regressions of CEO compensation on sales, cashflow, and efficiency metrics and their interactions with measures of firm performance. All regressions include lagged firm-level controls defined in Appendix A and year, industry, and country fixed effects. The t-statistics, calculated with standard errors clustered at the firm level, are reported in parentheses. Statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level is denoted by *, **, and ***, respectively.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Total Comp	Stock+ Options+ Bonus	Stock+ Options	Total Comp	Stock+ Options+ Bonus	Stock+ Options	Total Comp	Stock+ Options+ Bonus	Stock+ Options
Sales Metric	0.1024*** (3.70)	0.0939*** (4.13)	0.1212*** (4.99)						
Ind-adj. Sales/Assets	0.0032 (0.15)	-0.0383 (-1.43)	-0.0547** (-2.02)						
Sales Metric X Ind-adj Sales/Assets	-0.0106 (-0.36)	0.0048 (0.14)	0.0203 (0.61)						
Profitability Metric				0.2258*** (5.55)	0.0804* (1.89)	0.0913* (1.93)			
Ind-adj. Profitability				-0.2221*** (-3.37)	-0.3548*** (-5.35)	-0.3020*** (-4.67)			
Profitability Metric X Ind-adj Profitability				0.1124 (1.19)	0.0953 (1.06)	0.1272 (1.31)			
Efficiency Metric							0.0903*** (3.16)	0.1210*** (4.70)	0.1592*** (6.02)
Ind-adj. COGS/Sales							0.0003 (1.26)	0.0002 (0.83)	0.0000 (0.06)
Efficiency Metric X Ind-adj. COGS/Sales							0.0003 (0.82)	-0.0002 (-0.42)	0.0002 (0.40)
3-yr return	0.0011*** (5.14)	0.0022*** (7.68)	0.0022*** (7.26)	0.0012*** (5.32)	0.0024*** (8.18)	0.0024*** (7.56)	0.0012*** (4.79)	0.0022*** (6.99)	0.0024*** (6.92)
Log Mkt Cap = L,	0.3936*** (44.35)	0.4976*** (71.82)	0.5123*** (70.58)	0.3889*** (38.63)	0.5057*** (67.71)	0.5191*** (68.76)	0.3925*** (40.95)	0.4909*** (66.85)	0.5012*** (67.64)
Observations	32,043	29,413	25,778	31,706	29,103	25,489	27,387	25,221	21,995
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Industry FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adjusted R2	0.481	0.546	0.578	0.485	0.548	0.579	0.454	0.526	0.556