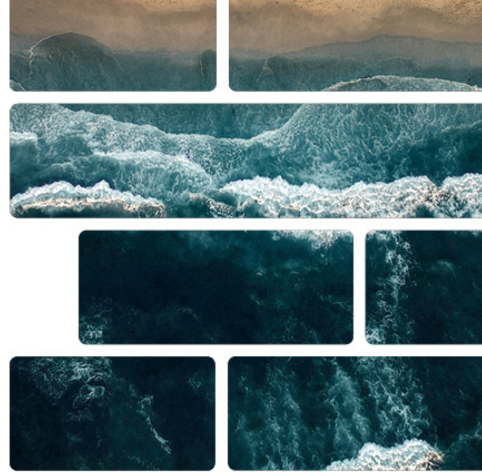
Calvert



New Framework for ESG Disclosure and Responsible Investing Underway

CALVERT OUTLOOK | March 2023

AUTHOR

JOHN STREUR
Chairman
Calvert Research and Management

"The need for depth and granularity in responsible investment research and corporate engagement will dominate the ESG and responsible investing business in 2023 and beyond."

1. Major events in 2022 have caused a shakeout in the responsible investment industry that will bring meaningful change into 2023 and beyond.
2. Globally, the industry is moving toward more intensive ESG research that establishes clear connections between corporate behavior and financial outcomes.
3. Government ESG disclosure standards established in 2022 will help create a more transparent, consistent framework for security selection and corporate engagement.

Washington- The ESG and Responsible Investing markets have grown rapidly over the past decade because investors recognize that the world faces substantial environmental and social challenges, and that companies successfully addressing these challenges stand to benefit. Major events of 2022 have caused a shakeout in the industry and imply meaningful change today and into 2023.

To stay relevant as capital market participants in 2023 and beyond, we believe responsible investors must intensify research into how well companies are managing their specific exposures to financially material environmental and social factors, analyzing their near- and long-term financial impacts. Multidimensional research with clear connections between corporate behavior and corporate financial outcomes must inform both security selection and corporate engagement efforts, including ESG activism.

Greater Disclosure Required of ESG Asset Managers

For years, responsible investors have propelled companies to increase transparency and disclosure of their ESG performance across factors ranging from carbon emissions to workplace diversity. Now it is critical that responsible investment asset managers provide transparency into their own research methodology. Investors need clarity around the linkages between corporate ESG performance, financial outcomes, security selection and the results of corporate engagement and activism.

Understanding corporate governance will continue to be relevant for all types of investors, but the need for depth and granularity in responsible investment research and corporate engagement will dominate the ESG and responsible investing business in 2023 and beyond.

The responsible investing teams and firms that can succeed in doing this will continue to thrive and gain investor market share, becoming increasingly relevant participants in global capital markets.

New Responsible Investing Framework

We believe the events of 2022 will prove to have been seminal for responsible investing and ESG research, helping shape the framework for a rapidly changing investment landscape. The combination of powerful geopolitical events, along with ambitious government regulations aimed directly at responsible investing, are together creating a new reality for market participants.

The sum of geopolitics largely shows that individual entities—people, companies, countries —predominantly act in their own self-interests, as opposed to the long-term needs of global society. This makes solving issues that impact the global commons, such as climate change or COVID, very difficult for society to solve. Multiple situations today serve as proof points: the war in Ukraine, numerous conflicts between China and the West, divergent outcomes between rich and poor countries in the response to COVID, and inadequate progress among the world's large and rich countries to effectively deal with climate change.

Understanding this reality is critical to grasping the need for voluntary, market-led solutions to these massive challenges, and the need for stronger, deeper ESG research and engagement. We need corporations that can advance viable solutions do so while producing competitive financial returns for investors. Finding those winners and differentiating the rest requires exhaustive ESG research.

Government actions in 2022—in terms of setting standards for ESG and responsible investing, as well as intervention in trade and industrial policy—underscore how a shift to deeper research and voluntary, market-led solutions are under way and will likely dominate in 2023. The United States Department of Labor new ESG rule, "Prudence and Loyalty in Selecting Plan Investments and Exercising Shareholder Rights," makes clear the need for in-depth ESG research focused on financially material factors. This rule will set the entry-level standard for responsible investing going forward. In the EU, the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) rules make clear the need for investment firms to define their approach to responsible investing. These rules, combined with ongoing enforcement actions in the UK, EU and U.S., make crystal clear that responsible investment firms and products must provide realistic expectations and real transparency into research and investment processes.

Stronger Capital Markets

The impact of deeper ESG investment research, clarity on ESG linkages to financial outcomes, and greater transparency into responsible investment processes has already created a narrower and more competitive field. Firms are adjusting their marketing claims and investors are conducting intensified due diligence. At the same time, corporations that are the subject of this research are adjusting their public-facing statements and strengthening the financial discipline of their sustainability-related capital investments.

We believe the outcome will be to strengthen capital deployment, create measurable differentials between corporations that can manage well and those that cannot, and enhance how capital markets function. Greater transparency, greater disclosure, greater focus on financial outcomes—these are the required underpinnings of successful, market-led solutions, consistent with the realities of the world we experienced in 2022. We have seen how individual entities behave in promoting their own self-interest, with minimal ability of governments to exert control, despite their efforts. Strong capital market function can counter this, advancing the needs of society while providing competitive returns to investors.

In January 2023, John Streur took on the role of Chairman, Calvert Research and Management, focusing on investment innovation, client engagement and thought leadership.

Risk Considerations

There is no assurance strategies that incorporate ESG factors will result in more favorable investment performance. ESG Strategies that incorporate impact investing and/or Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors could result in relative investment performance deviating from other strategies or broad market benchmarks, depending on whether such sectors or investments are in or out of favor in the market. As a result, there is no assurance ESG strategies could result in more favorable investment performance.

The views and opinions and/or analysis expressed are those of the author or the investment team as of the date of preparation of this material and are subject to change at any time without notice due to market or economic conditions and may not necessarily come to pass. Furthermore, the views will not be updated or otherwise revised to reflect information that subsequently becomes available or circumstances existing, or changes occurring, after the date of publication. The views expressed do not reflect the opinions of all investment personnel at Morgan Stanley Investment Management (MSIM) and its subsidiaries and affiliates (collectively "the Firm"), and may not be reflected in all the strategies and products that the Firm offers.

Forecasts and/or estimates provided herein are subject to change and may not actually come to pass. Information regarding expected market returns and market outlooks is based on the research, analysis and opinions of the authors or the investment team. These conclusions are speculative in nature, may not come to pass and are not intended to predict the future performance of any specific strategy or product the Firm offers. Future results may differ significantly depending on factors such as changes in securities or financial markets or general economic conditions.

This material has been prepared on the basis of publicly available information, internally developed data and other third-party sources believed to be reliable. However, no assurances are provided regarding the reliability of such information and the Firm has not sought to independently verify information taken from public and third-party sources.

This material is a general communication, which is not impartial and all information provided has been prepared solely for informational and educational purposes and does not constitute an offer or a recommendation to buy or sell any particular security or to adopt any specific investment strategy. The information herein has not been based on a consideration of any individual investor circumstances and is not investment advice, nor should it be construed in any way as tax, accounting, legal or regulatory advice. To that end, investors should seek independent legal and financial advice, including advice as to tax consequences, before making any investment decision.

The Firm has not authorised financial intermediaries to use and to distribute this material, unless such use and distribution is made in accordance with applicable law and regulation. Additionally, financial intermediaries are required to satisfy themselves that the information in this material is appropriate for any person to whom they provide this material in view of that person's circumstances and purpose. The Firm shall not be liable for, and accepts no liability for, the use or misuse of this material by any such financial intermediary.

This material may be translated into other languages. Where such a translation is made this English version remains definitive. If there are any discrepancies between the English version and any version of this material in another language, the English version shall prevail.

The whole or any part of this material may not be directly or indirectly reproduced, copied, modified, used to create a derivative work, performed, displayed, published, posted, licensed, framed, distributed or transmitted or any of its contents disclosed to third parties without the Firm's express written consent. This material may not be linked to unless such hyperlink is for personal and non-commercial use. All information contained herein is proprietary and is protected under copyright and other applicable law.

Calvert is part of Morgan Stanley Investment Management. Morgan Stanley Investment Management is the asset management division of Morgan Stanley.

DISTRIBUTION

This material is only intended for and will only be distributed to persons resident in jurisdictions where such distribution or availability would not be contrary to local laws or regulations.

MSIM, the asset management division of Morgan Stanley (NYSE: MS), and its affiliates have arrangements in place to market each other's products and services. Each MSIM affiliate is regulated as appropriate in the jurisdiction it operates. MSIM's affiliates are: Eaton Vance Management (International) Limited, Eaton Vance Advisers International Ltd, Calvert Research and Management, Eaton Vance Management, Parametric Portfolio Associates LLC, and Atlanta Capital Management LLC.

This material has been issued by any one or more of the following entities:

U.S.

NOT FDIC INSURED | OFFER NO GUARANTEE | MAY LOSE VALUE | NOT INSURED BY ANY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY | NOT A BANK DEPOSIT