

## Research Tender

Subject: ESG and investment performance: evidence review

### Introduction:

In May 2021 First Sentier Group (FSG) and Mitsubishi UFJ Trust and Banking Corporation (MUTB) (a subsidiary of Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc (MUFG)), jointly launched the First Sentier MUFG Sustainable Investment Institute (the Institute).

The aim of the Institute is to provide research on topics that can advance sustainable investing, including examining market trends and practices that the investment industry must address if it is to make an active and positive contribution. These topics may address behavioural, societal, cultural, macro and systemic changes, impacts of regulation and how such trends impact the performance of companies, sectors, and economies, and influence the allocation of capital by investors.

### Purpose and scope of project

Based on the resources shared by SII, its own research base and discussions with SII/FSG, the consultant is expected to conduct a review of existing evidence on the links between ESG applications and investment performance from a neutral perspective and produce a report for publication.

### *Project - ESG and investment performance: evidence review (report)*

The purpose of the project is to evaluate the wealth of empirical studies on the relationship between ESG and investment performance and present an analysis of existing perspectives from a neutral standpoint. This analysis should aim to cover positive and negative viewpoints, identifying the reasoning and methodologies used to arrive at conflicting conclusions, and clearly outline the mechanisms of ESG influence on investment performance that are being discussed. Variations depending on time period, region, country, sector/industry should also be reflected. The analysis should focus on the broader market mechanisms rather than case studies focusing on a small number of companies. Key asset classes to be considered are listed equities and sovereign/corporate bonds.

Both positive and negative research perspectives should be approached and evaluated equally; the report should aim to provide a summary of arguments from each perspective.

Ideally, a comment on the causal relationship between ESG and investment performance would be one of the outcomes of this research.

Other elements to be considered are as follows:

- Investment return can be defined as active return relative to a well-known benchmark (preferably also show risk-adjusted active return)
- If focusing only on studies investigating investment return will prove too restrictive, other approaches can be considered (for example, looking at the relationship between stewardship activities, ESG investments and corporate value through metrics such as Tobin's Q and market capitalization)
- ESG as a long-term risk management tool
- Japanese context: differences in implementation and approach to ESG in the Japanese market
- Overview of ESG-related investment approaches of pension funds

### Research Approach

- Establish the exact scope of the report, along with literature and data to be used in discussion with SII
- Provide an outline and plan and timescale for the work in the beginning

- Conduct in-depth research of the existing literature on the relationship between ESG and investment performance in accordance with the agreed methodology and the goals of the project and complete a final report for publication

### **Proposal guidelines:**

In your proposal, please include the following information:

- Proposed research methodology
- The proposed scope of the research
- Proposed relevant publications to be used as literature review
- Proposed structure of the report
- Proposed timetable for execution of the project, including intended interaction with the Institute and report reviews. Please indicate the earliest project completion.
- Proposed fees and costs
- Short biographies or skills profile of the proposed team members

### **Proposed timelines:**

- This RFP is issued on 07.01.2026
- Any questions or feedback regarding the brief should be submitted by 15.01.2026
- Answers to any questions will be provided by 19.01.2026
- Proposal should be submitted to the Institute by 23.01.2026 together with availability for a 1 hour call to discuss the proposals in the week of 26.01.2026
- Target for notifying the successful tenderer by 03.02.2026

### **Legal:**

- The Institute's standard Legal Contract for commissioned research will be used
- The reports Intellectual property will belong to the Institute
- The Institute will have the right to publish the research under its own brand
- Attribution to the author(s) and their organisation will be given in the final report
- The Institute will retain editorial control over the reports content
- The authors should ensure the report contains no personal information, that any images included are licensed for their intended use and they have distribution rights for any third party references and data.

### **Institute's use of the report and its content**

The Institute would publish the report on its websites (English and Japanese). In addition to that, the Institute may want to use parts of the content or produce new content based on all or parts of the work presented in the report. That could be shared with other 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and could include, but would not be limited to:

- using charts and/or quotes in presentation prepared by the Institute
- using charts and/or quotes in presentation prepared by her FSG and MUTB/MUFG staff
- webinars to present and promote the findings of the report
- presenting and promoting the findings of the report at conferences
- publicizing the publication of the report with a press release
- preparing e-mail notifications to promote the paper
- writing blogs for our websites and/or articles for other media
- using charts/ quotes from the report for posts on our linkedin account or using other text/material that introduces and promotes the paper on linkedin

### **Investment advice and financial promotions**

- The report must not include, or be capable of being construed as investment advice.
- Ideally the report should not reference individual identifiable listed securities; explicitly or implicitly. Where this is unavoidable, any reference must be restricted to information in the public domain with appropriate citation.

- The report must not constitute a financial promotion. Consequently any reference to FSG or MUFG products is prohibited

#### **Other**

- The report could follow a similar style to previous reports commissioned by the Institute, but other formats are also acceptable as our priority is to use the most suitable style that achieves clear, simple and easy to follow messaging and maximize the use of visuals, tables, lists.
- The report is intended for publication in the public domain
- Please specify in your proposal if you are able to provide us with a finished formatted report, following the Institute's style and branding
- If the Institute retains responsibility for report design, the Institute will expect all visuals to be prepared and provided in a format that can be easily replicated by an external design/ typeset agency. This includes all necessary source data
- The Institute will expect collaboration on developing infographics/visuals, if such are deemed effective and in support of the report messaging
- The Institute will arrange for the report to be translated into Japanese for publication on the Japanese language version of the Institute's website

#### **Instructions:**

Please submit a proposal by email to [Institute@firstsentier.com](mailto:Institute@firstsentier.com) with a cc [Sudip.Hazra@firstsentier.com](mailto:Sudip.Hazra@firstsentier.com) [Yuichi.Nakao@firstsentier.com](mailto:Yuichi.Nakao@firstsentier.com) and [Elena.Zharikova@firstsentier.com](mailto:Elena.Zharikova@firstsentier.com)