

Earth on Board is dedicated to Earth Competent Boards: Boards with members proficient in sustainability, with the right governance, asking management the right questions.

Earth on Board is an ecosystem of leading organisations and individuals working at the highest levels of corporate governance to place sustainability at the centre of business strategy. We support Boards to move beyond short-term financial primacy to refocus on the fundamental purpose of business and on long-term value creation. We do this through raising the awareness and insight of Directors and through the development of innovative tools to support Boards in aligning governance, expertise and focus around the principles of Earth Competent Boards, equipping them to effectively discharge their fiduciary responsibility.

Recognising that peer exchange is key to lead transformation, we work to develop a global network of Earth Competent Board members.

We also work with institutions, regulators and thought leaders on the development of regulatory frameworks consistent with these principles.

Cambridge insight, policy influence, business impact

The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) brings together business, government and academia to find solutions to critical sustainability challenges.

Capitalising on the world-class, multidisciplinary strengths of the University of Cambridge, CISL deepens leaders' insight and understanding through its executive programmes; builds deep, strategic engagement with leadership companies; and creates opportunities for collaborative enquiry and action through its business platforms.

Over 25 years, we have developed a leadership network with more than 7,000 alumni from leading global organisations and an expert team of Fellows, Senior Associates and staff.

HRH The Prince of Wales is the Patron of CISL and has inspired and supported many of our initiatives.

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Cambridge – Earth on Board Programme

The end of business as usual: Boards must take the lead

The need to realign purpose, strategy and governance

The end of business as usual

2015 – A tipping point

At COP21 in Paris, 196 countries acknowledged the need to limit the global temperature increase to well below 2°C and aim for a net zero carbon emission world in the second half of the century. With the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations countries have committed to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice and fix climate change – within 15 years. Alongside these two landmark events, political leaders and society at large have been calling for companies to play a major role for a better world.

Business is the key to change

Businesses have to adapt to an ever more complex set of interconnected challenges – from the scarcity and price of raw materials to the growth of new markets such as renewable power, as well as the evolution of business models and technologies that tap into emerging customer preferences. Business has a unique capacity for innovation and impact at scale, making it the natural leader in the profound transformation ahead.

Boards must take the lead

These trends increase the risk of stranded assets and the costs of operations in many sectors. They also heighten supply chain risks, threaten corporate reputation with a variety of stakeholders, and challenge the company's licence to operate.

This has significant implications for the fiduciary responsibility of Boards, as key stakeholders set new expectations for business performance and transparency in relation to social and environmental risk and impact, for example through the Financial Stability Board and stock exchange recommendations on climate risk disclosure.

With their unique position and responsibilities, Boards will have to show the way towards a sustainable and prosperous future for the company.

Critical issues for your Board:

- Does your business have a clear, transparent purpose?
- Do you have a zero net carbon emissions strategy?
- Are your operations and supply chains resilient to extreme weather events and resource scarcity?
- Are you aware of the implications of these challenges for your customers – and are you equipped to meet future market needs?

Are you, as a Board:

- Spending sufficient time on social and environmental issues to identify material risks and opportunities?
- Engaging regularly with your stakeholders, understanding their expectations?
- Prepared for new carbon disclosure requirements?
- Challenging management and asking tough questions on the right issues?

“Boards play an important role in catalysing activity on sustainability, yet in many instances, individuals lack adequate knowledge of the new operating context in order to effectively steer the organisation.”

CISL (2017). Building leaders for long-term business performance: Research findings

A fully customisable programme for corporate Boards

Equipping Boards with the knowledge and tools to respond effectively

The Cambridge – Earth on Board Programme is flexible and customisable to respond to your challenges and priorities. Depending on your need, the programme offers the following elements:

A 1–2 hour Board briefing to highlight critical issues and to explore the implications for the fiduciary responsibility of Boards.

A **half- or full-day customised workshop** for a company's Board Members (or for its representatives on external Boards) informed by:

- analysis of systemic challenges in the social and environmental context, relevant to the business's operations and stakeholders, highlighting material issues for the business and sector
- examples of best-in-class approaches to Board leadership on sustainability
- interviews with the Chair and Board Directors to identify the Board's current approach to sustainability and untapped opportunities.

Targeted ongoing support for the Board to challenge and guide the company's executive team, as well as review progress on the Board's own priority actions.

Duration and location of programmes is flexible.



The challenge for Boards

Boards need dedicated time, tools and the right expertise and structure in order to effectively carry out their fiduciary responsibility in relation to sustainability trends, and to challenge and advise their executive teams.

The Cambridge – Earth on Board Programme offers a credible, independent and effective approach to address these needs, providing customised briefing, challenge and guidance on Board engagement with sustainability.



Our approach

1. Strategic review

Analysis and insight on critical social and environmental trends facing your business and its markets.

- What is critical now and what is rising up the agenda?
- What are the expectations of your stakeholders?
- What are the implications for your business strategy?

What do these issues mean for fiduciary responsibility and for evolving reporting and disclosure requirements?

2. Board effectiveness

A structured way to review the Board's approach to sustainability issues and its capacity to respond effectively.

- **Governance:** how the Board's governance equips it to guide, monitor and report on the organisation's sustainability performance.
- **Expertise:** how the Board's composition and the skill-set of its members equips it to understand the materiality of sustainability issues and to provide effective oversight.
- **Time:** how the Board devotes attention to addressing material sustainability issues and engaging with key stakeholders.

3. Engaging with management

A simple framework to support regular Board engagement with the Executive Committee around priority issues.

- 11 Questions for the CEO: customised questions for the Executive Committee on three priority dimensions of the company's strategic approach to sustainability:
- Understanding the business context and material risks and opportunities.
 - Defining the business model and strategic offer.
 - Developing and utilising corporate resources.

Programme delivery

Our engagement with your Board is led by an expert Faculty, hand selected from across our international network of influential leaders. Examples of CISL's Fellows and Associates with experience of Board-level engagement:

Corporate leadership

Expertise in driving value creation through a sustainability perspective



Philippe Joubert

Philippe is Founder and CEO of Earth on Board. He is Chair of the Advisory Board of CISL and Chair of Corporate Leaders Group. He is also Special Envoy Climate and Energy for the WBCSD. He advises several CEOs, sits on various Boards of global companies and is a trustee of Client Earth.



Dame Polly Courtice LVO

Polly is Director of the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL). She is a Director of Jupiter Green Investment Trust, a Non-Executive Director of Anglian Water Services Ltd, and is on the environmental/sustainability advisory boards for AstraZeneca, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP, Lloyds Banking Group and Nespresso.

Civil society champions

Deep understanding of social context in regions



Tony Juniper

Tony is a Fellow of CISL. He is a leading environmental author and campaigner. He is a former head of Friends of the Earth and currently serves as a Special Advisor to HRH The Prince of Wales and to a number of leading businesses. He is President of the Society for the Environment.



Paul Gilding

Paul is a CISL Fellow, and is recognised as an authority on sustainability and business. He has worked with the CEOs and executives of leading companies globally including Dupont, Diageo, BHP Billiton and Ford. He was CEO of Greenpeace International, Ecos Corporation and Easy Being Green.

Finance and regulation

Innovative approaches to impact measurement and critical levers of change



Paul Fisher

Paul is a Senior Associate of CISL. He was a senior figure at the Bank of England for 26 years and served as a member of the Monetary Policy Committee. He was also responsible for co-ordinating the Bank's work on climate change.



Russell Picot

Russell is a Senior Associate of CISL and Chair of the Trustee board of the HSBC Bank (UK) Pension Fund. He was a co-chair of the FSB's Enhanced Disclosure Task Force and is a Special Advisor to the Financial Stability Board's Climate-related Financial Disclosures Task Force.



Sarah Barker

Sarah is Special Counsel at Minter Ellison Lawyers and Non-Executive Director at Emergency Services & State Super. Sarah's work on fiduciary duties and climate change has won numerous awards.

World-class science

Cutting-edge data and the implications for business



Prof Will Steffen

Will is a Senior Associate of CISL. He is an Adjunct Professor at the Australian National University, Canberra, and a Senior Fellow at the Resilience Centre, Sweden. He is one of the leading Earth system scientists and is known for his work on the Anthropocene and Planetary Boundaries.



Emily Shuckburgh

Emily is a Fellow of CISL. She is a climate scientist and leads the Open Oceans research group at the British Antarctic Survey. She is a member of the Natural Environment Research Council's Strategic Programme Advisory Group and has acted as a scientific advisor to the UK Government.



Our experience

The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership and Earth on Board work with more than 250 major organisations each year to build leadership capacity to respond to global sustainability challenges.

Examples of previous Board-level engagements:



Two 24-hour programmes for groups of Non-Executive Directors from energy, finance and property sectors across Australia and New Zealand, exploring system pressures and trends, evolving regulatory requirements and stakeholder expectations, as well as tools and methodologies for NEDs to put sustainability on the Board agenda.



A two-day programme for Board-level representatives from across a major Indian conglomerate, to build organisational resilience to climate change and a growth strategy for a low carbon economy.

A session with the Board of a global materials company exploring sustainability challenges and the links to directors' core duties.



A one-day programme for the Board of a major, privately owned property company, exploring its strategic response to the challenges of urban resilience, portfolio risk, and issues of growing economic inequality.

A session for the Board of a large multinational venture capitalist conglomerate to build an understanding of sustainability and its implications for Board-level responsibilities.



Non-executive programmes conducted with the Boards of a major energy company, National Electricity Utility and a leading Development Bank.



A series of consultations and workshops to equip a major financial services group to build Board alignment around a new sustainability strategy.



A one-day programme for the board of a New Zealand electricity generation and retailing company.



A session with the Board of a leading bank in Asia exploring sustainability challenges and the links to directors' core duties.



Sessions with the Boards of several large multinational companies in the industries of water management, waste management, energy services, construction materials and high-performance materials.



Sessions with the boards of a large Swiss insurance company and a large flavour and fragrance company.



Session with the staff of an European Army.

The companies we work with include:

3M – AON – Anglian Water – Asda – Asian Development Bank – Aviva – Barclays – Beijing Municipal Government
BNP Paribas – BNY Mellon – BT – Deutsche Bank – DSM – Goldman Sachs – GSK – Interserve – Kering – Kingfisher
Lloyds Banking Group – Mars – Mondi – Nestlé – Network Rail – Nordea – Novo Nordisk – Olam – Old Mutual Group
Philips – Sainsbury's – Skanska – BNP Paribas – Sky – Standard Chartered – Unilever – Volac – The World Bank – Zurich

Benefits for Boards

Increase awareness and insight

Examine the scale and urgency of the sustainability challenge and the links to the Board's responsibilities, focusing on trends of greatest relevance to the company's strategic contexts.

Understand implications for the business model and for the fiduciary responsibility of Board Directors

Understand critical risks, reporting and disclosure requirements and potential business opportunities, and identify priority implications for your agendas.

Align governance and focus

Informed by examples of leadership from companies worldwide, review your Board's current approach and capacity for action, including the time you spend on this agenda. We help you to identify and assess progress on priority actions for the Board.

Structure engagement with the management

Become better equipped to challenge and guide your executive team, helping it to integrate sustainability into business strategy.

“A good mix of insights and discussions to push the limits. ‘Lead in sustainability’ to create a sustainable future.”

“This course helped reinforce the need to drive it as a leader and with urgency.”

Board Directors, materials company

“The most amazing, uplifting seminar I have been to in terms of its relevance to business and society.”

Participant, NED programme Melbourne, 2018

“I fully achieved my objective to accelerate my understanding of the sustainability challenge and to identify tools and frameworks to apply in my roles as a NED.”

Participant, NED programme Melbourne, 2018

“Outstanding and impactful! I am now equipped to drive real change.”

Board Director, utility company

“A powerful and vigorous call to action! Practical, inspiring and challenging. A wonderful opportunity to develop new thinking and approaches to evaluate leadership and contribution to issues of the utmost importance to all of us.”

Board Director,
international institutional investment manager

“Spent the last two days in Melbourne at Earth on Board seminar on sustainability for non-executive directors. There was a real sense of urgency and excitement about the challenges and much very useful material on action and reporting by board. Very valuable.”

Participant, NED programme Melbourne, 2018