

Global corporate governance & engagement principles

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BLACKROCK

GLOBAL CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

1. INTRODUCTION TO BLACKROCK

BlackRock is the world's preeminent asset management firm and a premier provider of global investment management, risk management and advisory services to institutional and individual clients around the world. With more than \$3.3 trillion¹ in assets under management, BlackRock offers a wide range of investment strategies and product structures to meet clients' needs, including individual and institutional separate accounts, mutual funds, and other pooled investment vehicles and the industry-leading iShares exchange traded funds. Through BlackRock Solutions®, we offer risk management, strategic advisory and enterprise investment system services to a broad base of clients with portfolios totaling approximately US\$7.25 trillion.¹

2. PHILOSOPHY ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

BlackRock's corporate governance program is focused on protecting and enhancing the economic value of the companies in which it invests on behalf of clients. We do this through engagement with boards and management of investee companies and, for those clients who have given us authority, through voting at shareholder meetings.

We believe that there are certain fundamental rights attached to share ownership: companies should be accountable to shareholders for the use of their money, companies and their boards should be structured with appropriate checks and balances to ensure that they operate in shareholders' interests, effective voting rights are central to the rights of ownership and there should be one vote for one share. Key elements of shareholder protection include protection against excessive dilution, the election of directors and the appointment of auditors. Specifically, shareholders should have the right to elect, remove and nominate directors and to amend the corporate charter or by-laws. Shareholders should also be able to vote on matters that are material to the protection of their investment including but not limited to changes to the purpose of the business, the distribution of income and the capital structure. In order to exercise these rights in their own best interests, we

¹ Data is as of September 30, 2009, is subject to change, and is based on a pro forma estimate of assets under management at BlackRock, Inc. and Barclays Global Investors, N.A.

believe shareholders have the right to sufficient and timely information to be able to take an informed view of the performance of the company and management.

Our focus is on the board of directors, as the agents of shareholders, who should set the company's strategic aims within a framework of prudent and effective controls which enables risk to be assessed and managed. The board should provide direction and leadership to the management and oversee their performance. Our starting position is to be supportive of boards in their oversight efforts on our behalf and the items of business they put to a shareholder vote at shareholder meetings. Votes against or withheld from resolutions proposed by the board are a signal that we are concerned that the directors or management have either not acted in the interests of shareholders or have not responded adequately to shareholder concerns communicated to it regarding the strategy or management of a company.

These principles set out our approach to engaging with companies, provide guidance on our position on the key aspects of corporate governance and outline how these might be reflected in our voting decisions. Corporate governance practices vary internationally and our expectations in relation to individual companies are based on the legal and regulatory framework of each market. However, we do believe that there are some overarching principles of corporate governance that apply globally. We assess voting matters on a case-by-case basis and in light of a company's unique circumstances. We are interested to understand from the company's reporting the approach taken, particularly where it is different from the usual market practice and to understand how it benefits shareholders.

BlackRock also believes that shareholders are responsible for exercising oversight of, and promoting due care in, the stewardship of their investment in a company. These ownership responsibilities include, in our view, engaging in certain circumstances with management or board members on corporate governance matters, voting proxies in the best long-term economic interests of shareholders and engaging with regulatory bodies to ensure a sound policy framework consistent with promoting long-term shareholder value creation. Institutional shareholders also have responsibilities to their clients to have appropriate resources and oversight structures. BlackRock's approach to oversight in relation to its corporate governance activities is set out in section 4.

3. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, ENGAGEMENT AND VOTING

We recognize that accepted standards of corporate governance differ between markets but we believe that there are sufficient common threads globally to identify an overarching set of principles. The primary objective of our corporate governance activities is the protection and enhancement of our clients' investments in public corporations. Thus, these principles focus on practices and structures that we consider to be supportive of long-term value creation. We discuss below the principles under six key themes. In our regional and market-specific voting guidelines we explain how these principles inform our voting decisions in relation to specific resolutions that may appear on the agenda of a shareholder meeting in the relevant market.

The six key themes are:

- Boards and directors
- Accounting and audit-related issues
- Capital structure, mergers, asset sales and other special transactions
- Remuneration and benefits
- Social, ethical and environmental issues
- General corporate governance matters

At a minimum we would expect companies to observe the accepted corporate governance standard in their domestic market or to explain why doing so is not in the interests of shareholders. Where company reporting and disclosure is inadequate or the approach taken is inconsistent with our view of what is in the best interests of shareholders we will engage with the company and/or use our vote to encourage better practice. In making voting decisions, we take into account research from external proxy advisors, other internal and external research and academic articles, information published by the company or provided through engagement and the views of our equity portfolio managers.

BlackRock views engagement as an important activity; engagement provides BlackRock with the opportunity to improve our understanding of investee companies and their governance structures, so that our voting decisions may be better informed. Engagement also allows us to share our philosophy and approach to investment and corporate governance with issuers to enhance their understanding of our objectives. There are a range of approaches we may take in engaging companies depending on the nature of the issue under consideration, the company and the market.

Boards and directors

The performance of the board is critical to the economic success of the company and to the protection of shareholders' interests. Board members serve as agents of shareholders in overseeing the operation and strategic direction of the company. For this reason, BlackRock focuses on directors in many of its engagements and sees the election of directors as one of its most important responsibilities in the proxy voting context.

We expect the board of directors to promote and protect shareholder interests by:

- establishing an appropriate corporate governance structure;
- overseeing and supporting management in setting strategy;
- ensuring the integrity of financial statements;
- making decisions regarding mergers, acquisitions and disposals;
- establishing appropriate executive compensation structures; and
- addressing business issues including social, ethical and environmental issues when they have the potential to materially impact company reputation and performance.

There should be clear definitions of the role of the board, the sub-committees of the board and the senior management such that the responsibilities of each are well understood and accepted. Companies should report publicly the approach taken to governance (including in relation to board structure) and why this approach is in the interest of shareholders. We will engage with the appropriate directors where we have concerns about the performance of the board or the company, the broad strategy of the company or the performance of individual board members. Concerns about individual board directors may include their membership on the board of a different company where that board has performed poorly and failed to protect shareholder interests.

BlackRock believes that directors should stand for re-election on a regular basis. We assess directors nominated for election or re-election in the context of the composition of the board as a whole. There should be detailed disclosure of the relevant credentials of the individual directors in order that shareholders can assess the caliber of an individual nominee. We expect there to be a sufficient number of independent directors on the board to ensure the protection of the interests of all shareholders. Common impediments to independence include but are not limited to:

- current employment at the company or a subsidiary;
- former employment within the past several years as an executive of the company;

- providing substantial professional services to the company and/or members of the company's management;
- having had a substantial business relationship in the past three years;
- having, or representing a shareholder with, a substantial shareholding in the company;
- being an immediate family member of any of the aforementioned; and
- interlocking directorships.

BlackRock believes that the operation of the board is enhanced when there is a clearly independent, senior non-executive director to lead it. Where the chairman is also the CEO or is otherwise not independent the company should have an independent lead director. The role of this director is to enhance the effectiveness of the independent members of the board through shaping the agenda, ensuring adequate information is provided to the board and encouraging independent participation in board deliberations. The lead independent board director should be available to shareholders where they have concerns that they wish to discuss.

To ensure that the board remains effective, regular reviews of board performance should be carried out and assessments made of gaps in skills or experience amongst the members. BlackRock believes it is beneficial for new directors to be brought onto the board periodically to refresh the group's thinking and to ensure both continuity and adequate succession planning. We believe that directors are in the best position to assess the optimal size for the board but we would be concerned if a board seemed too small to have an appropriate balance of directors or too large to be effective.

There are matters for which the board has responsibility that may involve a conflict of interest for executives or for affiliated directors. BlackRock believes that shareholders' interests are best served when the independent members of the board form a sub-committee to deal with such matters. In many markets, these sub-committees of the board specialize in audit, director nominations and compensation matters. An ad hoc committee might also be formed to decide on a special transaction, particularly one with a related party.

Accounting and audit-related issues

BlackRock recognizes the critical importance of financial statements which provide a complete and accurate picture of a company's financial condition. We will hold the members of the audit committee or equivalent responsible for overseeing the management of the audit function. We take

particular note of cases involving significant financial restatements or ad hoc notifications of material financial weakness.

The integrity of financial statements depends on the auditor being free of any impediments to being an effective check on management. To that end, we believe it is important that auditors are, and are seen to be, independent. Where the audit firm provides services to the company in addition to the audit the fees earned should be disclosed and explained. Audit committees should also have in place a procedure for assuring annually the independence of the auditor.

Capital structure, merger, asset sales and other special transactions

The capital structure of a company is critical to its owners, the shareholders, as it impacts the value of their investment and the priority of their interest in the company relative to that of other equity or debt investors. Pre-emption rights are a key protection for shareholders against the dilution of their interests.

In assessing mergers, asset sales or other special transactions, BlackRock's primary consideration is the long-term economic interests of shareholders. Boards proposing a transaction need to clearly explain the economic and strategic rationale behind it. We will review the transaction to determine the degree to which the proposed transaction enhances long term shareholder value. We would prefer that such transactions have the unanimous support of the board and have been negotiated at arm's length. We may seek reassurance from the board that executive and/or board members' financial interests in a given transaction have not affected their ability to place shareholders' interests before their own. Where the transaction does involve related parties we would expect the recommendation to support it to come from the independent directors and would prefer only non-conflicted shareholders to vote on the proposal.

BlackRock believes that shareholders have a right to dispose of company shares in the open market without unnecessary restriction. In our view, corporate mechanisms designed to limit shareholders' ability to sell their shares are contrary to basic property rights. Such mechanisms can serve to protect and entrench interests other than those of the shareholders. We believe that shareholders are broadly capable of making decisions in their own best interests. We would expect any so-called 'shareholder rights plans' being proposed by a board to be subject to shareholder approval on introduction and periodically thereafter for continuation.

Remuneration and benefits

BlackRock expects a company's board of directors to put in place a compensation structure that incentivizes and rewards executives appropriately and is aligned with shareholder interests. We would expect the compensation committee to take into account the specific circumstances of the company and the key individuals the board is trying to incentivize. We encourage companies to ensure that their compensation packages incorporate appropriate and challenging performance conditions consistent with corporate strategy and market practice. We use third party research, in addition to our own analysis, to evaluate existing and proposed compensation structures. We hold members of the compensation committee or equivalent accountable for poor compensation practices or structures.

BlackRock believes that there should be a clear link between variable pay and company performance as reflected in returns to shareholders. We are not supportive of one-off or special bonuses unrelated to company or individual performance. We support incentive plans that payout rewards earned over multiple and extended time periods. We believe consideration should be given to building claw back provisions into incentive plans such that executives would be required to repay rewards where they were not justified by actual performance. Compensation committees should guard against contractual arrangements that would entitle executives to material compensation for early termination of their contract. Finally, pension contributions should be reasonable in light of market practice.

Outside directors should be compensated in a manner that does not risk compromising their independence or aligning their interests too closely with those of the management, whom they are charged with overseeing.

Social, ethical, and environmental issues

Our fiduciary duty to clients is to protect and enhance their economic interest in the companies in which we invest on their behalf. It is within this context that we undertake our corporate governance activities. We believe that well-managed companies will deal effectively with the social, ethical and environmental (SEE) aspects of their businesses.

BlackRock expects companies to identify and report on the key, business-specific SEE risks and opportunities and to explain how these are managed. This explanation should make clear how the approach taken by the company best serves the interests of shareholders and protects and enhances

the long-term economic value of the company. The key performance indicators in relation to SEE matters should also be disclosed and performance against them discussed, along with any peer group benchmarking and verification processes in place. This helps shareholders assess how well management are dealing with the SEE aspects of the business. Any global standards adopted should also be disclosed and discussed in this context.

We may vote against the election of directors where we have concerns that a company might not be dealing with SEE issues appropriately. Sometimes we may reflect such concerns by supporting a shareholder proposal on the issue, where there seems to be either a significant potential threat or realized harm to shareholders' interests caused by poor management of SEE matters. In deciding our course of action, we will assess whether the company has already taken sufficient steps to address the concern and whether there is a clear and substantial economic disadvantage to the company if the issue is not addressed.

More commonly, given that these are often not voting issues, we will engage directly with the board or management. The trigger for engagement on a particular SEE concern is our assessment that there is potential for material economic ramifications for shareholders.

We do not see it as our role to make social, ethical or political judgments on behalf of clients. We expect investee companies to comply, as a minimum, with the laws and regulations of the jurisdictions in which they operate. They should explain how they manage situations where such laws or regulations are contradictory or ambiguous.

General corporate governance matters

BlackRock believes that shareholders have a right to timely and detailed information on the financial performance and situation of the companies in which they invest. In addition, companies should also publish information on the governance structures in place and the rights of shareholders to influence these. The reporting and disclosure provided by companies forms the basis on which shareholders can assess the extent to which the economic interests of shareholders have been protected and enhanced and the quality of the board's oversight of management. BlackRock considers as fundamental, shareholders' rights to vote, including on changes to governance mechanisms, to submit proposals to the shareholders' meeting and to call special meetings of shareholders.

4. BLACKROCK'S OVERSIGHT OF ITS CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES

Oversight

BlackRock holds itself to a very high standard in its corporate governance activities, including in relation to executing proxy votes. The Global Corporate Governance Group reports in to the equity business and is considered an investment function. BlackRock maintains regional oversight committees (“corporate governance committees”) for the Americas, Europe, Asia ex-Japan, Japan, and Australia/New Zealand, consisting of senior BlackRock investment professionals. All the regional committees report up to the Global Corporate Governance Committee which is composed of the Chair and Vice-Chair of each regional committee. The committees review and approve amendments to the BlackRock Guidelines and grant authority to the Global Head of Corporate Governance (“Global Head”), a dedicated BlackRock employee without sales responsibilities, to vote in accordance with the Guidelines. The Global Head leads a team of dedicated BlackRock employees without sales responsibilities (“Corporate Governance Group”) to carry out engagement, voting and vote operations in a manner consistent with the committees’ mandate. The Corporate Governance Group engages companies in conjunction with the portfolio managers in discussions of significant governance issues, conducts research on corporate governance issues and participates in industry discussions to keep abreast of the field of corporate governance. The Corporate Governance Group, or vendors overseen by the Corporate Governance Group, also monitor upcoming proxy votes, execute proxy votes and maintain records of votes cast. The Corporate Governance Group may refer complicated or particularly controversial matters or discussions to the appropriate investors and/or regional Corporate Governance Committees for their review, discussion and guidance prior to making a voting decision. The Committees likewise retain the authority to, among other things, deliberate or otherwise act directly on specific proxies as they deem appropriate. BlackRock’s Equity Investment Portfolio Oversight Committee (EIPOC) oversees certain aspects of the Global Corporate Governance Committee and the corporate governance function’s activities.

Vote execution

BlackRock carefully considers proxies submitted to funds and other fiduciary accounts (“Funds”) for which it has voting authority. BlackRock votes (or refrains from voting) proxies for each Fund for which it has voting authority based on BlackRock’s evaluation of the best long-term economic interests of shareholders, in the exercise of its independent business judgment, and without regard to the relationship of the issuer of the proxy (or any dissident shareholder) to the Fund, the Fund’s affiliates (if any), BlackRock or BlackRock’s affiliates.

When exercising voting rights, BlackRock will normally vote on specific proxy issues in accordance with its proxy voting guidelines (“Guidelines”) for the relevant market. The Guidelines are reviewed regularly and are amended consistent with changes in the local market practice, as developments in corporate governance occur, or as otherwise deemed advisable by BlackRock’s Corporate Governance Committees. The committees may, in the exercise of their business judgment, conclude that the Guidelines do not cover the specific matter upon which a proxy vote is requested or that an exception to the Guidelines would be in the best long-term economic interests of BlackRock’s clients. In certain markets, proxy voting involves logistical issues which can affect BlackRock’s ability to vote such proxies, as well as the desirability of voting such proxies. These issues include but are not limited to: (i) untimely notice of shareholder meetings; (ii) restrictions on a foreigner’s ability to exercise votes; (iii) requirements to vote proxies in person; (iv) “shareblocking” (requirements that investors who exercise their voting rights surrender the right to dispose of their holdings for some specified period in proximity to the shareholder meeting); (v) potential difficulties in translating the proxy; and (vi) requirements to provide local agents with unrestricted powers of attorney to facilitate voting instructions. We are not supportive of impediments to the exercise of voting rights such as shareblocking or overly burdensome administrative requirements.

As a consequence, BlackRock votes proxies in these markets only on a “best-efforts” basis. In addition, the Corporate Governance Committees may determine that it is generally in the best interests of BlackRock clients not to vote proxies of companies in certain countries if the committee determines that the costs (including but not limited to opportunity costs associated with shareblocking constraints) associated with exercising a vote are expected to outweigh the benefit the client will derive by voting on the issuer’s proposal.

While it is expected that BlackRock, as a fiduciary, will generally seek to vote proxies over which BlackRock exercises voting authority in a uniform manner for all BlackRock clients, the relevant Corporate Governance Committee, in conjunction with the portfolio manager of an account, may determine that the specific circumstances of such an account require that such account’s proxies be voted differently due to such account’s investment objective or other factors that differentiate it from other accounts. In addition, BlackRock believes portfolio managers may from time to time legitimately reach differing but equally valid views, as fiduciaries for their funds and the client assets in those funds, on how best to maximize economic value in respect of a particular investment. Accordingly, portfolio managers retain full discretion to vote the shares in the funds they manage based on their analysis of the economic impact of a particular ballot item.

Conflicts management

BlackRock maintains policies and procedures that are designed to prevent undue influence on BlackRock's proxy voting activity that might stem from any relationship between the issuer of a proxy (or any dissident shareholder) and BlackRock, BlackRock's affiliates, a Fund or a Fund's affiliates. Some of the steps BlackRock has taken to prevent conflicts include, but are not limited to:

- i) BlackRock has adopted a proxy voting oversight structure whereby the Corporate Governance Committees oversee the voting decisions and other activities of the Global Corporate Governance Group, and particularly its activities with respect to voting in the relevant region of each committee's jurisdiction.
- ii) The Corporate Governance Committees have adopted Guidelines for each region, which set forth the firm's views with respect to certain corporate governance and other issues that typically arise in the proxy voting context. The Corporate Governance Committee reserves the right to review voting decisions at any time and to make voting decisions as necessary to ensure the independence and integrity of the voting process. In addition, the Committee receives periodic reports regarding the specific votes cast by the Corporate Governance Group and regular updates on material process issues, procedural changes and other matters of concern to the Committee.
- iii) BlackRock's Global Corporate Governance Committee oversees the Global Head, the Corporate Governance Group and the Corporate Governance Committees. The Global Corporate Governance Committee conducts a review, at least annually, of the proxy voting process to ensure compliance with BlackRock's risk policies and procedures.
- iv) BlackRock maintains a reporting structure that separates the Global Head and Corporate Governance Group from employees with sales responsibilities. In addition, BlackRock maintains procedures to ensure that all engagements with corporate issuers or dissident shareholders are managed consistently and without regard to BlackRock's relationship with the issuer of the proxy or dissident shareholder. Within the normal course of business, the Global Head or Corporate Governance Group may engage directly with BlackRock clients, and with employees with sales responsibilities, in discussions regarding general corporate governance policy matters, and to otherwise ensure proxy-related client service levels are met. The Global Head or Corporate Governance Group does not discuss any specific voting matter with a client prior to the disclosure of the vote decision to all applicable clients after the shareholder meeting has taken place, except if the client is acting in the capacity as issuer of the proxy or dissident shareholder and is engaging through the established procedures independent of the client relationship.

- v) In certain instances, BlackRock may determine to engage an independent fiduciary to vote proxies as a further safeguard to avoid potential conflicts of interest or as otherwise required by applicable law. The independent fiduciary may either vote such proxies, or provide BlackRock with instructions as to how to vote such proxies. In the latter case, BlackRock votes the proxy in accordance with the independent fiduciary's determination. Use of an independent fiduciary has been adopted for voting the proxies related to any company that is affiliated with BlackRock, or any company that includes BlackRock employees on its board of directors.

With regard to the relationship between securities lending and proxy voting, BlackRock's approach is driven by our clients' economic interests. The evaluation of the economic desirability of recalling loans involves balancing the revenue producing value of loans against the likely economic value of casting votes. Based on our evaluation of this relationship, we believe that generally the likely economic value of casting most votes is less than the securities lending income, either because the votes will not have significant economic consequences or because the outcome of the vote would not be affected by BlackRock recalling loaned securities in order to ensure they are voted. Periodically, BlackRock analyzes the process and benefits of voting proxies for securities on loan, and will consider whether any modification of its proxy voting policies or procedures is necessary in light of future conditions. In addition, BlackRock may in its discretion determine that the value of voting outweighs the cost of recalling shares, and thus recall shares to vote in that instance.

Voting guidelines

The attached issue-specific voting Guidelines for each region/country in which we vote are intended to summarize BlackRock's general philosophy and approach to issues that may commonly arise in the proxy voting context in each market where we invest. These Guidelines are not intended to be exhaustive. BlackRock applies the Guidelines on a case-by-case basis, in the context of the individual circumstances of each company and the specific issue under review. As such, these Guidelines do not provide a guide to how BlackRock will vote in every instance. Rather, they share our view about corporate governance issues generally, and provide insight into how we typically approach issues that commonly arise on corporate ballots.

Reporting

We report our proxy voting activity directly to clients and publically as required. In addition, we publish for clients a more detailed discussion of our corporate governance activities, including engagement with companies and with other relevant parties.