

# ***Advancing the SDGs: Understanding and Improving the Role of Corporate Transparency through Big Data***

*High-Level Roundtable Discussion,  
July 16-17, 2018, São Paulo, SP*

*At B3:Rua XV de Novembro Street, 275 – 10th floor – room 3*

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## **Agenda**

This meeting – the second roundtable under a partnership between the EMGP<sup>1</sup> project (CCSI), B3 and FGVces – aims to take stock of and advance efforts to overcome the data gaps on economic, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) indicators regarding corporate activities and contributions to the sustainable development goals (SDGs). In particular, this roundtable will focus on the use of groundbreaking Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (BDAI) technologies, and how they might be used to better understand firms' impacts on the SDGs and 2030 Agenda.

One major source of information on ESG and SDG issues is corporate reporting and disclosure. While such corporate-provided information has expanded and improved dramatically in recent decades, there remain important concerns regarding the quality, comparability, and utility of such information.

As discussed in the first round-table (New York City, April, 2018), there is a significant need to improve both the quantity and quality of ESG data from all companies and, in particular, emerging economy companies. Without such improvements, managers will continue to lack the information they need to align their operations with the SDGs, investors will lack information necessary for sustainable development-oriented investment decisions, and other stakeholders, such as consumers and civil society organizations, will lack the information necessary to press for change. The ESG information gap thus hampers private sector motives and abilities to positively transform its activities and impacts.

One way of potentially improving data collection and analysis is to supplement corporate reports with information that can be gleaned from BDAI technologies.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Emerging Market Global Players project, please visit <http://ccsi.columbia.edu/publications/emgp/>

BDAI technologies have the potential to not only increase the amount of ESG data but also serve as alternative validation tools for the information disclosed by companies. But how can companies, investors, and other stakeholders leverage the power of BDAI technologies to overcome their need for better data and make sound decisions according to the sustainability performance of firms?

## **Day 1, July 16, 2018**

### **Welcome coffee**

8:30 am – 9:00 am

### **Welcome remarks and main takeaways from the New York meeting**

9:00 am – 9:30 am

The first roundtable discussed the opportunities and challenges of SDG-based reporting and assessment, and how to ensure that using current ESG reporting and assessment tools are meaningful and commensurate with the scope of SDGs and Agenda 2030. This session recaps highlights from that discussion and sets the scene by linking it to the discussion of new information technologies, especially Big Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence (BDAI), as key resources for understanding corporate contributions to the SDGs.

Welcome greetings from B3, followed by speakers from CCSI and FGVces.

### **Session 1: Data, integrated reporting and the SDGs**

9:30 am – 11:00 am

This session focuses on two core themes – the breadth of data relevant for assessing ESG performance, and new developments regarding how it is analyzed and presented. With respect to the latter, it is increasingly argued that traditional financial reports are insufficient to provide the comprehensive and forward-looking information needed in a context of rapid changes in business and policy environments, and a growing awareness of the importance of considering non-financial information when assessing the actual and future performance of a company. Consequently, integrated reporting is emerging as a more comprehensive alternative to organize and share information about firms' performance and forecast, taking into account the broader context.

This panel focuses on how firms adopting integrated reporting strategies are documenting and communicating their performance on ESG issues generally, and the SDGs more specifically.

## **Session 2: Demystifying Big Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence - what they are and how they can potentially be linked to the assessment of corporate ESG performance**

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

BDAI are hot topics; but despite their popularity, many are unsure what those terms actually mean, or how, for what purposes, and by whom, those tools might be used. This session provides fundamental BDAI concepts, as well as the more specific question of how BDAI can be employed in the assessment of corporate ESG performance.

### Kick-off speakers:

- Ms. Natália Mazotte, Open Knowledge Brasil
- Mr. Eduardo Francisco, EAESP/FGV

### **Lunch**

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

## **Session 3: *Transparency and assessment of business sustainability in times of SDGs and Big Data* - Open session at B3 Auditorium (Praça Antônio Prado, 48 – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor)**

2:00 pm – 6:00 pm

In this session, we will discuss how the initiatives represented (respectively, Integrated Reporting, ISE and the Brazilian SDG Award) can help advance the SDG agenda, and how they are addressing the opportunities and challenges arising from the current (r)evolution in the availability, processing and use of information. A dynamic organization of the debates should provide for active dialogue and audience engagement.

### Key-notes:

- Mr. Márcio Pontual, CNODS - the Brazilian Nat. Commission for the SDGs)
- Mr. Richard Howitt/ Ms. Lisa French, IIRC
- Ms. Sonia Favaretto/ Mr. Aron Belinky, B3 and FGVces

Dynamic collection of questions from the audience and break Commenters:

- Ms. Ana Lucia Custódio, Instituto Ethos
- Ms. Regina Magalhães, Schneider Electric
- Mr. Renato Eid, Itaú Bank (ISE ETF manager)
- Mr. Roger Oey, Bloomberg

Closing remarks by the key-notes

### **Networking dinner (for roundtable participants only)**

6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

## Day 2 – July 17, 2018

### **Welcome coffee**

8:30 am – 9:00 am

### **Session 4: How BDAI technologies are being used for ESG/SDG analysis: Insights from the innovators**

9:00 am – 11:00 am

Data scarcity poses a significant challenge for ESG investing (especially in emerging economies). Even large third-party research firms have limited data on ESG performance on Brazilian and other emerging market companies; and when data is available, it is often outdated or inaccurate. But how could BDAI be used to expand and improve the collection and analysis of ESG information? This session provides an opportunity to learn and discuss the approaches leading research firms that are using BDAI to inform ESG investing are adopting, and to open dialogues with Brazilian and other emerging market-based experts and users interested in developing national applications for such knowledge.

#### Kick-off speakers

- Mr. Gabriel Cecchini, Reprisk
- Mr. Stephen Malinak, TruValue labs
- Mr. Ciaran McCale, Arabesque
- Ms. Jocelyne Ozdoba, Datamaran

### **Session 5: Using BDAI in Brazil: Conceptual, technological, and operational challenges and opportunities**

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Based on the discussions and insights from the previous sessions, Brazilian users and potential national partners will discuss opportunities and challenges for the local use of BDAI to improve understanding of Brazilian firms' policies, operations, and impacts. The objective is to focus and sharpen the debate, in order to clearly identify the critical challenges that should be tackled and opportunities seized in order to develop effective use of DBAI in Brazil, especially in ongoing initiatives, such as the ISE's portfolio selection process.

#### Kick-off speakers

- Mr. Flavio Guarino, Bigdata Corporation
- Mr. José Carlos Castro, EDS/IBM Watson
- Ms. Vanessa Ramalho, Imagem Corporativa

### **Lunch**

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

## **Session 6: A roadmap for using BDAI to improve understanding of emerging market firms and their ESG performance**

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

This last session aims to identify short-term strategies that could be used to accelerate the use of BDAI in Brazil and in other emerging markets. The objective is to brainstorm regarding what types of information on firms' operations and contributions to the SDGs could relatively easily be culled through use of BDAI tools and techniques in order to test this approach and potentially lay a foundation for the expanded use of these tools.

Dynamic debate, facilitated by FGVces team.

### **Closing remarks**

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm

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