

**METHODOLOGY BOOK FOR:**

- **MSCI WORLD CUSTOM ESG INDEX\***
- **MSCI EMERGING MARKETS  
CUSTOM ESG INDEX\***
- **MSCI EUROPE CUSTOM ESG INDEX\***
- **MSCI NORTH AMERICA CUSTOM  
ESG INDEX\***
- **MSCI AC ASIA EX JAPAN CUSTOM  
ESG INDEX\***

\* a custom index calculated by MSCI based on ESG criteria selected by Northern Trust

**November 2017**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The MSCI World Custom ESG Index, MSCI Emerging Markets (EM) Custom ESG Index, MSCI Europe Custom ESG Index, MSCI North America Custom ESG Index and the MSCI AC Asia ex Japan Custom ESG Index are custom indexes based on customized ESG screening criteria selected by Northern Trust. These indexes aim to exclude companies that do not comply with UN Global Compact Principles, are involved in the production or sale of tobacco products, or are involved in the production of controversial weapons. Additionally, companies that are part of the Emerging Markets region of the MSCI AC Asia ex Japan Index and the MSCI EM Index are also screened to exclude majority held companies with a controversial board composition. The Indexes are free float-adjusted market capitalization weighted.

Index	Parent Index	ESG Criteria Applied	Governance Screen Applied
MSCI World Custom ESG Index	MSCI World Index	Yes	No
MSCI Emerging Markets Custom ESG Index	MSCI Emerging Markets Index	Yes	Yes
MSCI Europe Custom ESG Index	MSCI Europe Index	Yes	No
MSCI North America Custom ESG Index	MSCI North America Index	Yes	No
MSCI AC Asia ex Japan Custom ESG Index	MSCI AC Asia ex Japan Index	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Only applicable to companies in the EM region within the MSCI AC Asia ex Japan Index

## 2 SCREENING CRITERIA

MSCI ESG Research evaluates companies for exclusion from the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes based on three sets of ratings criteria: Compliance with UN Global Compact Principles, Tobacco, and Controversial Weapons.

Companies are also evaluated on customized governance criteria for the MSCI EM Custom ESG Index and the Emerging Markets region within the MSCI AC Asia ex Japan Custom ESG Index.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) for more details on the implementation of these criteria.

### **3 CONSTRUCTING THE MSCI CUSTOM ESG INDEXES**

#### **3.1 UNDERLYING UNIVERSE**

The selection universe for the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes is the respective MSCI Parent Index, as shown in the table in section 1.

#### **3.2 EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

Companies that are involved in activities that violate the customized ESG screening criteria described in Section 2 are excluded from the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes.

## 4 MAINTAINING THE MSCI CUSTOM ESG INDEXES

### 4.1 INDEX REVIEWS

The MSCI Custom ESG Indexes are reviewed on a quarterly basis to coincide with the regular Semi-Annual and Quarterly Index Reviews of the MSCI Global Investable Market Indexes. The changes are implemented as of the close of the last business day of February, May, August and November. The list of companies to be excluded based on the selected ESG criteria is produced based on MSCI ESG Research data as of the end of January, April, July and October, respectively. For some securities, such data may not be published by MSCI ESG Research by the end of the month preceding the Index Review. For such securities, MSCI will use ESG data published after the end of month, when available, for the rebalancing of the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes.

At the index reviews, all companies in the underlying universe are reviewed and eligible companies are added to the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes. Existing constituents are deleted from the MSCI Custom ESG Index if they have been added to the exclusion list. In addition, any constituent that is deleted from the underlying index as a result of an index review is also deleted from the MSCI Custom ESG Index.

### 4.2 ONGOING EVENT-RELATED MAINTENANCE

The MSCI Corporate Events Methodology is applied for the maintenance of the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes between index reviews.

Companies deleted from the underlying index between index reviews are simultaneously deleted from the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes.

There will be no additions to the Index in between Index Reviews, except the two cases noted below:

- Any security created as a result of the spin-off of an existing Index constituent will be added to the Index at the time of event implementation. Reevaluation for continued inclusion in the Index will occur at the subsequent Index Review.
- A security will continue to be an Index constituent if there are changes in characteristics (country, sector, size segment, etc.) Reevaluation for continued inclusion in the Index will occur at the subsequent Index Review.

Further details relating to the handling of specific corporate event types can be found in the MSCI Corporate Events Methodology book available at:

<https://www.msci.com/index-methodology>

## **APPENDIX 1: SCREENING CRITERIA**

MSCI ESG Research creates the list of excluded securities for the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes by identifying companies within its coverage universe based on the following sets of ratings criteria: Compliance with UN Global Compact Principles, Tobacco, and Controversial Weapons; and Governance in case of MSCI EM Custom ESG Index and the Emerging Markets region within the MSCI AC Asia ex Japan Custom ESG Index.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH UN GLOBAL COMPACT PRINCIPLES**

Definition: Companies that are involved in controversies classified as “very severe” in the areas of Environment, Human Rights & Community, Labor Rights & Supply Chain, or Governance will be excluded. The following areas are evaluated as part of this screen:

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

Controversies related to a firm’s impact on the environment. Factors affecting this evaluation include whether a company is involved in controversies related to land use and biodiversity, toxic spills and releases, energy and climate change, water management, operational non-hazardous waste, environmental impact of products and services, and management of supply chain environmental impact.

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS & COMMUNITY**

Controversies related to a firm’s impact on the communities in which it does business. Factors affecting this evaluation include whether a company is involved in controversies related to support for controversial regimes, freedom of expression and censorship, and other human rights abuses and adverse impact on a community.

#### **LABOR RIGHTS & SUPPLY CHAIN**

Controversies related to a firm’s employee relations and supply chain. Factors affecting this evaluation include whether a company is involved in controversies related to labor-management relations, employee health & safety, collective bargaining & unions, discrimination and workforce diversity, and management of supply chain employee relations standards.

#### **GOVERNANCE**

Controversies related to a firm’s governance practices. Factors affecting this evaluation include whether a company is involved in controversies related to bribery, fraud and governance structures.

**TOBACCO**

Definition: Companies that derive any revenue from the production of tobacco, or 5% or more revenue from the distribution of, supply of key products for, or retail of tobacco, as further defined below, will be excluded.

**TOBACCO PRODUCERS**

Companies that manufacture tobacco products, such as cigars, blunts, cigarettes, beedis, kreteks, smokeless tobacco, snuff, snus, and chewing tobacco. This also includes companies that grow or process raw tobacco leaves.

**TOBACCO DISTRIBUTORS**

Companies that derive 5% or more of total annual revenues from the independent wholesale of tobacco products to retailers and other distributors.

**TOBACCO RETAILERS**

Companies that derive 5% or more of total annual revenues from the retail of tobacco products.

**TOBACCO SUPPLIERS**

Companies that derive 5% or more of total annual revenues from the manufacture and supply of key products necessary for the production of tobacco products, such as tobacco flavoring, cigarette filters (acetate tow), tobacco roll paper, cigarette manufacturing machines, and tobacco packaging - specifically cigarette cartons, films, and aluminum foil.

**CONTROVERSIAL WEAPONS**

Definition: Companies that manufacture cluster bombs, landmines, nuclear weapons, depleted uranium weapons, biological/chemical weapons, or their related components, as further defined below, will be excluded.

**CLUSTER BOMB MANUFACTURERS**

Companies that manufacture cluster munitions whole systems or components.

**LANDMINE MANUFACTURERS**

Companies that manufacture landmines whole systems or components.



### **NUCLEAR WEAPONS SYSTEMS MANUFACTURERS**

Companies that manufacture nuclear weapons, including nuclear warheads, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and ballistic missile submarines, which are capable of the delivery of nuclear warheads.

### **NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPONENTS MANUFACTURERS**

Companies that manufacture critical components for nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons delivery systems.

### **BIOLOGICAL/CHEMICAL WEAPONS SYSTEMS MANUFACTURERS**

Companies that manufacture biological or chemical weapons, which are defined as weapons that use pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, and disease-causing biological agents, toxins, or chemical substances that have toxic properties that kill, injure, or incapacitate.

### **BIOLOGICAL/CHEMICAL WEAPONS COMPONENTS MANUFACTURERS**

Companies that manufacture critical components for chemical or biological weapons systems.

### **DEPLETED URANIUM WEAPONS MANUFACTURERS**

Companies involved in the production of depleted uranium (DU) weapons, ammunition, and armor. Depleted uranium is a by-product of the uranium-enrichment process used to make nuclear weapons and nuclear-reactor fuel.

### **GOVERNANCE**

Companies will be excluded from the index if they meet all of the following four criteria:

- Companies with individual holdings of 30% or more of the voting rights
- Companies with less than half of independence on the board
- Companies which do not have an audit committee or have less than half of independence on their audit committee
- Companies which do not have a remuneration committee or have less than half of independence on their remuneration committee

Additionally, companies will be excluded from the index if they meet the following criteria:

- Companies without an Unqualified auditors opinion will be excluded from the index

**The following sections have been modified since July 2014:**

## 1. Introduction and 2. Screening Criteria

Update to include the index construction parameters for MSCI World Custom ESG Index and MSCI Europe Custom ESG Index

## Appendix 1

Governance section – update to the description

**The following sections have been modified since September 2015:**

Update to include the index construction parameters for MSCI North America Custom ESG Index

**The following sections have been modified since December 2015:**

## Appendix 1

Governance section – clarification for the exclusions description

**The following sections have been modified since May 2017:**

## Section 4: Maintaining the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes

- Clarification on use of ESG data for securities whose data would be available after the end of the month preceding Index Review.

**The following sections have been modified since May 2017:**

Update to include the index construction parameters for MSCI AC Asia ex Japan Custom ESG Index

**The following sections have been modified since June 2017**

## Section 4: Maintaining the MSCI Custom ESG Indexes

Update to the frequency of application of the Governance Screening Criteria from annual to quarterly. Update to the corporate events treatment rules for the custom indexes.

## Appendix 1

Governance section – update of existing screens as well as inclusion of a new screen based on auditor reports.

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