

S&P Global Media & Stakeholder Analysis

Methodology

March 2024



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Introduction and Context

Objective

The S&P Global Media and Stakeholder Analysis ('MSA') forms an integral part of the S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment ('CSA') and enables S&P Global to monitor companies' sustainability performance on an ongoing basis by assessing current controversies with potentially negative reputational or financial impacts. The main objective of the MSA process is to gain insight into a company's ability to mitigate financially material and reputational risks, as well as negative impacts on stakeholders and the environment, whilst protecting their shareholder value.

An MSA "case" is created by expert research analysts if, according to the MSA methodology, a company is considered responsible for a material negative event or wrongdoing, revealing that the company's actions are inconsistent with its stated policies and commitments, accepted best practices or regulations (see section 'Analytical methods: Company Responsibility). An MSA case typically exposes a failure at a company's management level, gaps in systems and processes, such as risk management systems and operational controls. As a consequence of an MSA case, a company's S&P Global ESG Score ('ESG Score') will be adjusted.

Interpretation

MSA case reports are produced by analysts with sector-specific expertise. The reports include a description of the incident, the company's link to such incident, the date when the event occurred, and the assessment of the company's response to the incident. The numerical impact on the company's total ESG Score and on the underlying CSA Criteria-level scores, is also included in the MSA reports.

Supporting Documents

This methodology document gives an overview of the MSA approach and is intended to be read in conjunction with the <u>S&P Global ESG Scores Methodology</u>, which provides additional detail on the policies, procedures and calculations described herein.



Methodology overview

Research Process

Media and stakeholder stories on corporate controversies are monitored on an ongoing basis, compiled, and prescreened by S&P Global's partner RepRisk¹ and also identified by S&P Global Sustainable1 ('S1') sustainability research analysts (research analyst) through different sources, including newspapers, governmental and nongovernmental reports.

Once an incident is identified by a research analyst, an MSA case may be opened by the research analyst and evaluated during the S&P Global MSA Review, which is performed on an ongoing basis. The opening of an MSA case occurs if there is a media and/or stakeholder story of a company being involved in a specific negative event where its actions are inconsistent with its stated policies and goals, and/or if they expose a failure of management or company systems and processes.

The MSA considers a range of news stories that potentially have negative impacts across a company's governance, environmental, and social (ESG) dimensions including subject matter of the ten United Nations Global Compact principles. MSA cases can cover issues such as crime, corruption, fraud, illegal commercial practices, labor disputes, workplace accidents, data breaches, marketing practices, raw material sourcing, human rights violations, catastrophic accidents, and environmental violations, among others.

Public dissatisfaction or accusations regarding legitimate business activities are not considered justification for MSA cases. This includes activities that may be perceived as controversial among certain groups (e.g., investments in tar sands or palm oil), or when a company is mentioned alongside peers as part of broad general criticism of an industry (where multiple companies are named, but no single company's responsibility is clear).

After an MSA case is opened, the respective companies are contacted and given the opportunity to respond with relevant information and plans to address the issue, minimize negative impacts, and prevent reoccurrence. Each MSA case is then assessed to determine its impact on a company's ESG Score. ESG Scores are generally updated monthly to reflect any such changes from MSA Reviews between annual (CSA) assessments.

After the creation and the consequential adjustment of a company's ESG Score, cases continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis to identify material updates which indicate whether the controversy is still active and might still pose a negative impact on the company, its stakeholders, or the environment (e.g., in the form of new lawsuits, operational disruptions, dismissals, greater impact on stakeholders or the environment than initially assessed, among others). A company's ESG score typically continues to be impacted by the Impact Rating of the initial MSA case if material updates are confirmed. If the material updates are of a higher severity than those considered for the evaluation of the initial case, the Impact Rating might potentially increase (e.g., from medium to major).

¹ RepRisk, an ESG data science company, leverages the combination of AI and machine learning with human intelligence to systematically analyze public information in 23 languages and identify material ESG risks. With daily data updates across 100+ ESG risk factors, RepRisk provides consistent, timely, and actionable data for risk management and ESG integration across a company's operations, business relationships, and investments. www.reprisk.com.



Methodology overview



Duration of an MSA Case

Unless material updates are identified, MSA cases typically follow a standard depreciation plan in which the initial Impact Rating of the case² (i.e. Severe, Major, Medium, or Minor) drops in severity in the subsequent CSA assessment year³ (e.g., major MSA case in year X, goes down to medium in year X + 1, to minor in year X + 2), until it no longer impacts the company's ESG score (i.e. inactive case) (see Exhibit 1).

Nevertheless, an inactive MSA case can be reactivated if material updates are once again identified. For cases identified during the transition period from one CSA assessment cycle to the next or close to the end of the ongoing assessment cycle, the initial Impact Rating will typically be kept for the subsequent assessment year before the depreciation plan is triggered (i.e., the depreciation plan will not start in the subsequent assessment year given the relative newness of the identified MSA case).

Exhibit 1: Fictional example of MSA cases depreciation with and without material updates

Depreciation of a major MSA Case published in August 2023 with no material updates:



Depreciation of a major MSA Case published in March 2024 with no material updates:



Depreciation of a **medium** MSA Case published in August 2024 **with material updates** in February 2024 and March 2025:



Research Universe

The complete S&P Global ESG Research Universe of 13,000+ companies, covering 99% of global market capitalization, is monitored on an ongoing basis and assessed for controversies that might negatively impact companies' ESG Scores.

³ The CSA assessment year refers to one CSA Assessment Cycle which starts with the publication of first ESG Scores each August.



² See section 'Assessing Impact Rating' for more information.



Analytical methods

Opening an MSA Case

When a controversial incident is flagged, the decision to open an MSA case is based on (1) company responsibility and (2) incident materiality. At least one of the following conditions must be fulfilled in each category to open an MSA case:

(1) Company Responsibility:

- a. The incident suggests a breach of company policies, internationally accepted policies or national or international legislation.
- b. The incident highlights a failure in management or company monitoring systems and processes.
- c. A court decision holds the company responsible for the incident, or the company has settled outside of a court ruling.
- d. A fine on the company has been confirmed by a relevant authority.
- e. Judicial and extra-judicial claims with no ruling will be considered for opening a case when at the time of the initial filing:
 - the company's involvement in the wrongdoing is clear,
 - there is either a material impact on the company or on stakeholders which has materialized.
- f. Non-judicial substantiated investigations expose the company's association with a severe or very severe wrongdoing that has a material impact on stakeholders and/or the environment.

In the context of the MSA methodology, company responsibility is also considered through its business relationships:

- g. The company is considered responsible for subsidiaries involved in controversial incidents in which it has a stake of 50% or higher.
- h. The company is considered responsible for its joint ventures, regardless of its role as the operating or nonoperating entity.
- i. The company is considered "responsible" for wrongdoings of its critical suppliers and Tier 1 suppliers⁴, when the wrongdoing qualifies as an MSA case according to our methodology, and the company assessed has been explicitly associated with such supplier.
- j. The incident suggests a link to human rights abuses in the context of a conflict-affected or high-risk area⁵.

⁵ Defined as "Areas identified by the presence of armed conflict, widespread violence, including violence generated by criminal networks, or other risks of serious and widespread harm to people", according to the OECD Due diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas.



⁴ Critical suppliers are defined as suppliers whose goods, materials, services (including intellectual property (IP) / patents) have a significant impact on the competitive advantage, market success or survival of the company. Critical suppliers include high-volume suppliers, suppliers of critical components and non-substitutable suppliers. Tier 1 suppliers: refers to suppliers that directly supply goods, materials or services (including intellectual property (IP) / patents) to the company.



(2) Materiality:

- a. The incident may have a financial impact, e.g., through fines, penalties, or settlements.
- b. The incident may have a reputational impact, e.g., if a specific company faces backlash beyond general industry-wide criticisms with the threat of repercussions from customers or business partners.
- c. The incident may have a business impact, e.g., if the company is likely to be excluded from doing business in certain regions or if its license to operate is threatened.
- d. The incident may have an operational impact, e.g., if the incident causes production stoppages or operational disruption.
- e. The incident associated with the company's actions may impact non-complicit stakeholders and/or the environment⁶

Generally, negative events which took place over a decade ago are considered too old to open a case. However, an MSA case can still be considered if material updates are identified in the current assessment cycle. A company can be reimpacted with a case update if the identified developments suggest ongoing incidents or if the recent developments result in a renewed negative impact on the company (e.g., negative reputational, operational, financial impact), its stakeholders or the environment.

Assessment of an Open MSA Case

Once an MSA case is opened, it is assessed to determine the CSA Criteria affected by the incident ('Affected Criteria'), the incident's severity ('Impact Rating') and the company's response to the incident ('Company Response').

Assessing the Impact Rating:

The overall Impact Rating of an MSA Case can be **Minor**, **Medium**, **Major** or **Severe**, reflecting the nature of the incident as well as the scale and severity of the incident's impact on the company, its stakeholders or the environment. The evaluation of the incident's impact on the company, its stakeholders, and/or the environment is determined by assessing the parameters in Exhibit 2 across the relevant Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) dimensions. Each one of these parameters are also individually assessed on a minor, medium, major and severe scale, which aggregate up to the final Impact Rating of the case.

While the final Impact Rating of a case is determined by the combination of the assessment of each individual parameter under each Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) dimension (when applicable), broadly speaking, the Impact Rating categories can be defined as:

• **Minor:** Controversies which typically have short-lived, limited, or minor repercussions on the environment, society or a company's value drivers or bottom line.

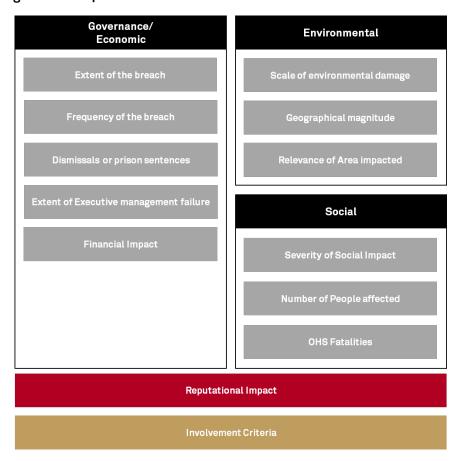
⁶ S&P Global Sustainable1 defines a sustainability issue as material if it presents a significant impact on society or the environment and a significant impact on the company's value drivers, competitive positioning, and long-term shareholder value creation. Material sustainability issues can significantly affect an entity's business operations, cash flows, legal or regulatory liability, and access to capital. They can also significantly improve or undermine an entity's reputation and relationships with key stakeholders, society and the environment. As such, S&P Global Sustainable1 considers double materiality as an integral part of the analysis of corporate sustainability performance and the resulting S&P Global ESG Scores.





- **Medium**: Controversies which typically have moderate and medium-term impacts on the environment, society or a company's value drivers or bottom line. While having a moderate impact, such incidents generally do not portray widespread or severe corporate misconduct.
- **Major**: Controversies with long-lasting, widespread, and major negative impacts on the environment, society or a company's value drivers or bottom line. Major controversies usually indicate significant levels of corporate governance misconduct. However, while severe in nature, they typically do not meet the thresholds of the most serious level of harm. Major cases might also reflect violations of the UNGC principles.
- Severe: Controversies with long lasting, extensive, and often irreversible or catastrophic negative impacts on the environment or society, typically resulting in major financial impact on a company's bottom line and value drivers. Generally includes incidents of a systemic nature involving the most serious levels of harm and crime and / or corporate governance failure. Severe cases may also reflect material violations of the UNGC principles.

Exhibit 2: Impact Rating evaluation parameters



Parameters under the Governance & Economic dimension as well as the reputational impact of the case are always assessed, while parameters under the Environmental and Social dimensions are only evaluated if the nature of the incident involves social or environmental impacts. Exhibit 3 lists a sample of the guiding questions used for the analytical assessment of each dimension, and thus, the final Impact Rating of a case.



Exhibit 3: Sample of guiding questions used for the analytical assessment Impact Rating evaluation parameters

	Governance/Economic
Extent of the Breach	Is the controversy affecting few or multiple units / divisions, or is it a company-wide issue?
Frequency of the Breach	Is it a one-off incident, or have few similar incidents occurred within the last three years? Is it a recurring or systemic issue?
Dismissals/ Prison sentences	As a result of the incident, are there any dismissals, criminal convictions, or prison sentences of employees?
Extent of Management failure	Is the incident a result of poor management oversight? Was the company's management aware of gaps or risks and failed to take preventive action? Was executive management directly involved in the incident?
Financial Impact	Has the case resulted in significant operational costs? How does the total cost (fines, settlements, operational costs, etc.) relate to the company's operating income or similar penalties imposed upon industry peers within the last three years?

	Environmental
Scale of environmental damage	 Has the incident resulted in minimal or no significant disturbance of natural habitats, or has it resulted in persistent and large-scale environmental destruction? Will the remediation take days, months, or rather various years?
Geographical Magnitude	Is the negative impact restricted to the vicinity of the operations or does it extend to large terrestrial or marine areas?
Relevance of Area impacted	Is the area protected for its recognized ecological value? Are there endangered species affected?

Area Impacted	7 no thoro orithing or ou openioo throated.
	Social
Severity of Social Impact	Has the socioeconomic or physical wellbeing of stakeholders been negatively affected by the company's actions or products? Is there an indication of a violation of human rights? Have vulnerable groups been affected by the negative events?
Number of People affected	How many people have been affected by the incident? Is it a reduced group or on the contrary has the event impacted a large number of people?
OHS Fatalities	Has the event claimed the life of workers? How is the number of fatalities compared to the industry average?
Reputational Impact	Has the company's reputation been negatively impacted? Are reputational impacts observed across all regions where the company operates or only in some jurisdictions? Has the case affected the company's relationship with its key stakeholders, such as customers and business partners?
Involvement Criteria	Has the company been associated with a wrongdoing committed by one of its suppliers? How critical is the supplier for the competitiveness and operational stability of the company under assessment? Is the supplier a Tier 1 or non-Tier 1 supplier? Is the company directly causing or contributing to human rights abuses in a conflict-affected or high-risk area? Or is the company indirectly linked to those human rights violations (e.g., through the supply chain)?



Assessing Company Response:

Evaluation of remedial actions taken by the company includes determining if the company has taken appropriate measures to mitigate adverse effects and prevent reoccurrence of similar incidents, as well as how transparently it has communicated such measures to its stakeholders. The Company Response will be evaluated and categorized as follows:

- 1) No communication and no measures taken
- 2) Some communication and no or partial measures taken
- 3) Adequate communication and appropriate measures taken
- 4) Adequate communication and appropriate measures taken and publicly disclosed

This evaluation is determined through the parameters described in Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 4: Rating of Company Response⁷

No communication and no measures taken

There is no public information released by the company on the identified case and there is no indication that measures have been taken to avoid similar cases in the future.

2 Some communication and no or partial measures taken The company has communicated about the issue, and partial measures might have been taken. However, the measures are not considered sufficient, appropriate, or timely. The measures taken by the company are limited to the specific case and its short-term consequences. However, such measures are not considered sufficient to minimize the likelihood that similar issues will reoccur in the future and to address systemic issues within the company.

3 Adequate communication and appropriate measures taken The company has communicated about the issue and about the measures taken to address both the specific case and its short-term consequences as well as the future reoccurrence. The measures are proactive, timely, forward-looking and address the issue from a long-term, company-wide perspective to minimize the likelihood of the issue reoccurring in the future. However, such measures are not publicly disclosed.

4 Adequate communication and appropriate measures taken publicly disclosed

The company has taken appropriate measures as described below, and these have been publicly disclosed.

Note that in August 2024, a new Company Response Rating methodology will be launched. To that end, this section will be duly updated to reflect such changes.





The appropriateness of measures depends on the severity of the case, as severe issues necessarily require particularly robust and more comprehensive sets of actions. Those with the following characteristics are generally considered insufficient:

- 1) Only minimum actions or payments mandated by the courts or authorities.
- 2) Dismissal of individuals held accountable or the termination of business relationships without establishing mechanisms to prevent reoccurrence.
- 3) Include ambiguous statements, e.g., "improvements to internal policies or codes of conduct", or other non-specific language regarding improvements to control mechanisms.
- 4) Payment of voluntary settlements and compensation of victims/damaged parties without also establishing mechanisms to prevent reoccurrence.

Instead, measures exhibiting the following characteristics are generally deemed appropriate:

- 1) Proactive, timely and forward-looking actions that seek to address the issue over the long-term, and which include company-wide controls to minimize the likelihood of reoccurrence beyond just the individuals held accountable.
- 2) Comprehensive plans that strengthen specific procedures, policies, or systems. These may include training, restructuring, enhanced control mechanisms, leadership changes and tools to monitor the effectiveness of the measures taken. In some instances, they may result in the discontinuation of a controversial or problematic product line or unit.

Selecting Affected Criteria:

The Affected Criteria that are identified will be any of the **CSA Criteria**. Major cases usually involve several criteria, while minor cases typically impact just one or two. In most cases, the more criteria affected, the greater the impact on the company's ESG Score. Incidents can affect any of the 15-30 industry-specific criteria assessed per company on average, though the following criteria are more commonly impacted in conjunction, increasing the likelihood of an ESG Score adjustment:

- 1) **Business Ethics**: Impacted when a case involves unethical behavior, i.e., against the company's code of conduct or best-practice in business ethics.
- 2) **Corporate Governance**: Impacted when the company's executive management or board of directors is involved in a case.
- 3) **Risk & Crisis Management**: Impacted when a company's wrongdoing indicates its risk control management processes and mechanisms are not effective.

A full list of all criteria may be found in the <u>S&P Global ESG Scores Methodology</u>.



Applying MSA Cases to the S&P Global ESG Scores

In August 2023 an updated MSA scoring approach was introduced including: a simplification of the MSA formula, an update on how the accumulation of multiple MSA cases affect the ESG Scores, and the introduction of the severe Impact Rating.

Once an MSA case has been assessed to determine the CSA Criteria affected by the incident ('Affected Criteria'), the incident's severity ('Impact Rating') and the company's response to the incident ('Company Response'), S&P Global will adjust the company's ESG Scores in two steps:

- 1) Translate the assigned Impact Rating and Company Response Rating to the corresponding 'MSA Multiplier' using the pre-defined MSA Multiplier Matrix (Exhibit 5).
- 2) Apply the MSA Multiplier in a fixed formula (Exhibit 6) to calculate the numerical impact on the Affected Criteria score.

Determining the MSA Multiplier

First, the applicable MSA Multiplier is determined following the MSA Multiplier Matrix below (Exhibit 5). The Matrix defines the applicable MSA Multiplier depending on the Impact Rating and Company Response rating of an MSA case.

Exhibit 5: MSA Multiplier Matrix

		Impact Rating			
		Severe	Major	Medium	Minor
	No communication and no measures taken	0	0.20	0.65	
Company Response Rating	Some communication and no or partial measures taken	0.05	0.35	0.70	0.80
	Adequate communication and appropriate measures taken	0.10	0.45	0.75	0.90
	Adequate communication and appropriate measures taken publicly disclosed	0.15	0.55	0.75	0.30

Severe cases are allocated a lower MSA Multiplier with the objective of increasing the impact on the total score. Severe cases where no communication or measures from the company to stakeholders have been identified have the highest impact on the affected CSA Criteria scores, reflecting both the severity of the case and the mismanagement by the company.

If a company has no MSA cases identified, the criteria score will remain unchanged. As previously discussed, the MSA multiplier is used to adjust criterion scores downward in proportion to the severity of the MSA case/incident.



Determining Score Adjustment

As a second step, the relevant MSA Multiplier is applied to the score of the affected CSA Criteria.

To calculate the numerical impact on a given Criterion-level score, the MSA Multiplier is applied in a fixed and rules-based formula, as defined below:

Exhibit 6: Formula to calculate the Criterion-Score impact

 $C_A = C_0 * MSA_M$

Where:

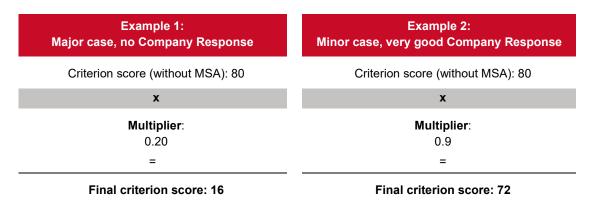
C_A = Final Criterion Score

C₀ = Original Criterion Score

 $MSA_M = Multiplier$

Exhibit 7 illustrates how the MSA Multiplier is aggregated into the final criterion score.

Exhibit 7: MSA Multiplier impact on final criterion score



In general, if multiple cases impact the same criterion, the relevant MSA Multiplier is applied individually to each case, with second and ulterior cases taking the already previously reduced criterion score as an input for the formula.

An example of this can be seen in Exhibit 8 below for a company with two MSA cases impacting the Human Rights criterion.

- 1) Case 1: Impact on indigenous communities MSA Multiplier of 0.35
- 2) Case 2: Sexual harassment of female employees MSA Score of 0.75

In this case, the final Criterion Score is 23.62, as the two negative score impacts are accumulated.



Exhibit 8: Multiple MSA cases' cumulative impact at the criterion level

Case 1 MSA Multiplier: 0.35		
Criterion score (without MSA)	90	
MSA Multiplier	0.35	
Final Criterion Score: 31.5 90* 0.35		

Case 2 MSA Multiplier:0. 75		
Criterion score (already including Case 1)	31.5	
MSA Multiplier	0.75	
Final Criterion Score: 23.62 31.5* 0.75		

For an example of an MSA case impact on the S&P Global ESG Score, see <u>Appendix I - Example S&P Global ESG Score</u> <u>Adjustment from an MSA Case Assessment</u>.

While an MSA case impact is computed at the level of the affected CSA Criteria, the total ESG Score will typically also be adjusted as a result of such impact at the criteria level.



ESG Score Maintenance and Communication

Monthly Updates

If a company's ESG Score is adjusted following an MSA case, the updated ESG Score and corresponding MSA report will be published on the company-facing CSA portal and on the client-facing S&P Capital IQ Pro Platform.

Company Communication

Upon concluding an MSA case, the affected company will receive an MSA report on the day the ESG Score is published. The report contains the details of the case(s), including the case(s) description, the Impact Rating, the Company Response Rating, the affected criteria, and the numerical impact on the CSA Criteria scores and total ESG Score. S&P Capital IQ Pro users can also access MSA case data, including the case(s) description, the Company Response Rating, the Impact Rating, and the affected CSA Criteria. Any information provided by companies in the client portal in the context of an MSA case is confidential and not publicly disclosed.

05 Appendix I



Example S&P Global ESG Score Adjustment from an MSA Case Assessment

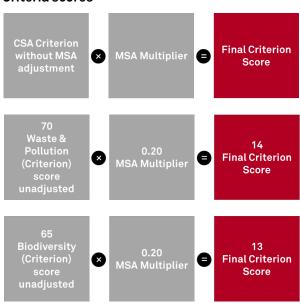
The following fictional example demonstrates how the MSA process works in a real-world situation and how it impacts an S&P Global ESG Score.

In 2030, a major digital publication reports that Company A in the Oil and Gas sector has been fined for improperly disposing of wastewater from petroleum production into a nearby marine environment. NGOs are heavily criticizing the company and are preparing to take legal action. This incident is captured by S1 which opens an MSA case following the

guidance – noting company responsibility (Company A has a waste disposal policy that it violated) and materiality (oil industry regulation imposes a fine for improper waste disposal; reputational impact as the incident is covered by major media; and material impact on the environment). S1 contacts Company A but it does not respond privately or publicly nor take any actions to avoid repeating the incident.

The case is assessed by S1 which determined a 'Major' Impact Rating given the quantity of wastewater dumped into the marine area, the fine being imposed by the regulator, and impending lawsuits from multiple NGOs. Given the lack of any public communication or action, the MSA case is assigned the 'No communication and no measures taken' Company Response Rating. Owing to the nature of the case, it will impact multiple CSA Criteria, including, but not limited to, the Waste & Pollutants criterion which contains a question regarding waste disposal, and the Biodiversity criterion, as the incident has negatively affected a marine environment.

Exhibit 9: Calculation of Company A's adjusted Criteria scores



With the assessment of this MSA case complete, S&P Global then adjusts the scores of the Affected Criteria using the inputs from the Impact Rating and Company Response Rating.

Per the pre-defined methodology, a 'Major' Impact Rating and a 'No communication and no measures taken' Company Response Rating produces an MSA Multiplier of '0.20'. Before the incident came to light, Company A had a fictional score of 70 for the 'Waste & Pollutants' Criterion and a score of 65 for the 'Biodiversity' criterion. Combining these numerical inputs through the pre-defined formula, Company A's 'Waste & Pollutants' and 'Biodiversity' fictional Criteria scores are adjusted from 70 and 65 respectively to 14 and 13 respectively. This is calculated in Exhibit 9.

After adjusting the scores of all Affected Criteria, the S&P Global ESG Score for Company A is updated to reflect the input of these new Criteria scores. S&P Global informs Company A of the details of the assessment, including the score adjustments. These details are posted on the company-facing CSA portal and the client-facing S&P Capital IQ Pro Platform.



S&P Global



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