



## ABN AMRO Strengthen its Position as Sustainability Front Runners

“The integration of Morningstar Sustainalytics data has helped ABN AMRO lead the sustainability race across Europe at a time when niche has become mainstream.”

—*Vincent Triesschijn, Global Head ESG and Sustainable Investing, ABN AMRO*

Vincent Triesschijn is building a global team responsible for its ESG (environmental, social and governance) investment strategy, including sustainability policies and investee engagement for investment funds and mandates to maintain global growth in ESG related products and services within the bank.

As one of the largest Dutch banks and top wealth managers in continental Europe, ABN AMRO has a long history of providing its clients with high standard financial products and services. When it comes to sustainable investing, things are no different.

The company was one of the first in Europe to start reporting on environmental, social and governance factors and was even one of the first clients and founding partners of Sustainalytics, cementing a long-standing relationship that has kept the group firmly at the forefront of sustainability within the industry.

Today, ABN AMRO is a client of Morningstar Sustainalytics, benefitting from sustainability data that’s incorporated into investment analysis and reporting across the bank.

### Early adopters keeping pole position

“We have been front runners in the sustainability space for some time. Largely because the Netherlands was really

pushing ahead in terms of ESG developments at a time when it was considered nothing more than a niche interest, explained by the large numbers of institutional investors and pension funds in the country. Our early partnership with Sustainalytics also allowed us to hear about major sustainability developments before they became mainstream.

But of course, the challenge now lies in maintaining our position at the top in an environment where every firm has to comply with ESG standards—either from a regulatory angle or from an internal point of view and the changing expectations of clients.

That’s where we’ve seen the benefit of incorporating Morningstar Sustainalytics data into our investment reporting and analysis. By implementing new sustainability data sets quickly and efficiently, we’re giving ourselves a chance to stay ahead. It also forces us to innovate at speed and add our own qualitative view from a sustainability perspective as we know we’re not the only firm using this data anymore. This way we keep offering a unique identity and proposition to our clients.”

### One solution offering the best of both

The firm now has access to ESG data through both Morningstar platforms and through the company’s own portfolio management systems which have been able to seamlessly integrate the new data feeds.

“It’s incredibly efficient—the systems we were previously using now incorporate Morningstar Sustainalytics data, and without a lot of backend implications our portfolio managers and analysts are able to use the data easily and update it frequently. This has been enhanced even further now that the two companies come under one roof with both data sets feeding into our own systems.

Sustainalytics is purpose-driven—encouraging us all to invest in a more sustainable way. It's this clear objective that we are so fond of. Morningstar, on the other hand, is a powerful, global company with a lot of resources and good infrastructure. The acquisition, therefore, translates as a very reliable partnership for us, bringing the best in both. And with a strong foothold in Europe, it's been impressively straightforward for us to implement one data solution across our own European investment hubs."

### Starting the sustainability conversation

As well as using Morningstar Sustainalytics ESG data for investment analysis, the firm ensure consistency in their approach by using the same data for client reporting. This has helped to open up the topic of sustainable investing and invite investors to engage in meaningful conversations about their preferences.

"We have conducted a lot of testing and have found that a very efficient way to bring sustainability to the attention of our clients is to integrate the data into their periodic investment reporting. Additional ESG data has prompted questions, particularly if a client receives red flags for certain sustainability factors, for example. On the one hand it allows our investment advisers to engage with clients to explain the real-world implications of the data, and on the other hand it encourages clients to explore the topic of sustainability more broadly by initiating these conversations themselves."

Informing clients through data starts by educating employees. Over 1500 ABN AMRO portfolio managers, investment advisers and analysts have participated

in a specialised program with the University of Oxford, accrediting them with a deeper understanding of ESG and sustainable investing.

"This is imperative from a policy point of view, but more importantly, it allows our team to truly engage with clients and explain why as a company we are doing this and what sustainability means to ABN AMRO. The partnership with Morningstar Sustainalytics allows us to have these conversations with investors by providing ESG data to tell our own sustainability story, and shape that of our clients." ■■

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### About ABN AMRO

ABN AMRO is a Dutch bank for retail, corporate and private banking clients, offering a full range of financial products and solutions. Headquartered in Amsterdam, the bank serves around 6 million clients and employs more than 19,000 people. ABN AMRO's purpose is *Banking for better, for generations to come.*

### Wealth Management

ABN AMRO operates under strong local brands with a long heritage of over 350 years. They include ABN AMRO MeesPierson in the Netherlands, Neufilize OBC in France, Bethmann Bank in Germany and ABN AMRO Private Banking in Belgium. ABN AMRO leverages its expertise and digital capabilities to manage EUR 213 billion client assets, of which EUR 43 billion are ESG client assets. For more information visit [www.abnamro.com](http://www.abnamro.com).