



The University of Cambridge and DLA Piper launch global collaboration

The Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) and global law firm DLA Piper today announced the launch of a two-year, global research collaboration to study the Future of Boards.

The Future of Boards study aims to understand the shifts in governance and leadership which enable organizations to align business success with sustainability. This will combine existing academic and practitioner research with insights from board directors and key stakeholders across a range of jurisdictions. The aim is to produce practical, evidence-based, internationally relevant recommendations to prepare businesses and their leadership for the future.

Boards across the world are facing growing pressure and scrutiny by investors as the businesses they lead face new disclosure requirements and performance expectations about how they serve society and manage climate and nature-related risks and opportunities. These changes, alongside evolving debates about the purpose of business and stakeholder capitalism, appear to create an opportunity for a reappraisal of the role, structure, composition, and behavior of boards. However, the speed and nature of these changes, and how they might unfold is little understood. This leaves boards in a difficult position regarding how to prepare for the emerging future. This study aims to address this challenge.

Gillian Secrett, Director of Leadership Programs at the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership comments: "The Future of Boards research seeks to understand the trends in obstacles and solutions to boards helping organizations drive sustainability. It aims to identify the most promising enablers of progress for boards to deliver business success and thriving societies while, protecting our environment for future generations".

Jean Pierre Douglas-Henry, Managing Director, Sustainability and Resilience at DLA Piper comments: "*The growing need to align purpose and profit has brought about a seismic shift in how we think about organizations and the structure of their leadership. Although corporate governance codes and interpretations of fiduciary responsibility are evolving, there is a need for informed discourse around the individual, organizational and systemic barriers to progress and a set of practical recommendations to address them.*"

Both CISL and DLA Piper are actively leveraging their extensive international networks of senior business leaders to invite participants into this global study. We particularly welcome contributions from executive and non-executive board members as well as stakeholders who have an interest in boards, such as advisors, recruiters, and other experts from all jurisdictions.

Initiating this study, we invite participation in a short survey here which seeks to identify emerging trends in board practice. The survey also provides an opportunity to register your interest in the research. The survey is accessible through the CISL and DLA Piper websites where progress will be reported.