

“As the planetary crisis worsens, it is clear that voluntary corporate social and environmental responsibility is completely inadequate. Many businesses are either unaware of their human rights responsibilities or ignore them.”

David R. Boyd, UN Special Rapporteur
on human rights and the environment
The Right to a Healthy Environment,
A User's Guide (2024)

RELX

and the **FOSSIL FUEL**
ENERGY ORDER

*The Growing Global Health and Human Rights Implications of
Business Practices at the World's Largest Science Publisher*

SCIENTIST REBELLION & ALLIED STAKEHOLDERS /2026



KEY POINTS

- ▶ RELX products and services support global efforts to develop new fossil fuel projects, actions inconsistent with climate goals.
- ▶ RELX asserts consistency with its sustainability and human rights pledges, while claiming its primary negative impacts are associated with paper, energy, waste, and travel.
- ▶ RELX promotes that its key positive impact is informing evidence-based public policies, but remains unwilling to cease generating misinformation that can justify fossil fuel expansion.

2021 *Employees at its premium journals asked RELX to address misalignment with its environmental and ethical pledges; RELX subsequently imposed communications restrictions and suppressed ethics complaints.*

2022 *The editor-in-chief of The Lancet reported he was pressured to remove his name from an employee group report that included The Lancet's call for ending "the expansion of any new fossil fuel infrastructure and production."*

2023 *Scientist organizations announced a UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights grievance mechanism; it was initially spearheaded by an organization founded by a former employee.*

2024 *After RELX issued legal threats, the former employee filed a lawsuit that asserts RELX's "greenwashing practices are materially misleading to consumers, investors, and impose severe public harm."*

2026 *With no pledge from RELX to end its promotion of fossil fuel expansion and misinformation, Scientist Rebellion and allied stakeholders are continuing this human rights grievance mechanism process.*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scientist Rebellion and allied stakeholders have opted to continue a UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights grievance mechanism addressing RELX's climate-related human rights harms. This process evolved out of employee actions, was announced by the Union of Concerned Scientists and Scientists for Global Responsibility, and was initiated by the Climate Rights Coalition (CRC), a global group of science, climate, human rights, religious, and other organizations.

In 2021, a group of RELX employees—including editors at Elsevier's premier health and sustainability journals—reported to RELX that, by “promoting, informing, and profiting from new fossil fuel production,” RELX is practicing “climate denial” and appears “unfazed by the prospect of the world pushing well beyond the 1.5°C target.” These and other employee reports, as disclosed in recent legal filings, document RELX's insufficient regard for international human rights standards. They also describe how the science reveals RELX's misalignment with its own pledges and statements, and cover perception management techniques that are being used to mask this reality. These communication strategies have resulted in RELX misleading the public both about the business and about the dangers of hydrocarbon expansion in this global health and climate crisis.

RELX's greenwashing efforts include re-branding its library of journals as aligned with a net zero future in scope and mission, despite it generating content that informs global fossil fuel expansion. RELX has promoted the fossil fuel industry's false solutions, framing technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) and A.I. as tools being used by the industry for its “transition.” Such tools are in truth being used to perpetuate reliance on carbon-intensive energy. RELX has praised its fossil fuel industry customers as credibly transitioning, creating the false impression that there's room in the carbon budget for their hydrocarbon expansion efforts. RELX further denies scientific consensus with messaging that pushes for investments in new fossil fuel projects and power plants, and that frames fossil fuel expansion as being consistent with decarbonization efforts.

A 2025 United Nations report has emphasized that human rights law should be “interpreted in the light of the best available science.” The science it references includes the need for an immediate decline in emissions and fossil fuel supplies, as well as no new fossil fuel projects or infrastructure. Company actions supporting the “worldwide rush to explore for and produce as much oil and natural gas as possible” downplay the urgency of these science-based requirements. In response to criticism, management has asserted that “there isn't scientific consensus that new fossil fuel exploration and development projects are objectionable.” Employees, scientists, and advocacy groups have thus far failed to sway RELX to acknowledge or act on the fact that this perspective contradicts the research published in its own journals: the fossil fuel expansion RELX serves inhibits realistic pathways to global net zero and warming targets. It also generates RELX's increasing complicity in climate-related human rights harms.

2021

“
A goal
without
a plan is
just a
wish
”
Andrew
Lund Gregory

**RESPONSIBLE
GROWTH
REPORT**
/FALL 2021



2022

**FUELING
THE CRISIS:**

Defensive Stigma Management
Techniques at Elsevier and RELX

RGR
COMMITTEE

2022



RESPONSIBLE
GROWTH REPORT
COMMITTEE

**WITH THE
COMMUNITIES
WE SERVE**

RESPONSIBLE GROWTH REPORT
/FALL 2022

2023

REPORTS & MULTIMEDIA / ACTIVIST RESOURCE

**Elsevier and RELX's
Climate Problem**

Published Sep 19, 2023

2024

CLIMATE-RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS
**GRIEVANCE
MECHANISM**



ABOVE: A series of employee reports from 2021-2022 observed RELX complicity in greenwashing and climate-related human rights harms. Scientist groups that attempted a dialogue subsequently announced a grievance mechanism to be coordinated by the Climate Rights Coalition.

RELX has further undermined climate advocacy with messaging that mocks climate advocates and criticized the influence of "the climate agenda." It's asserted there aren't alternatives to oil and gas and pointed to the supposed dangers of moving away from fossil fuels. The Company has repeatedly promoted the "helpful" idea that the industry push back on "the 'no more fossil fuels' movement" by using fear-based tactics inspired by U.S. President Trump—a candidate who's received the financial backing of RELX's Political Action Committee. It's been alleged that such fear-based strategies have also been adopted by RELX. It's claimed it has targeted employee advocates with intimidation tactics; suppressed ethics complaints; demonstrated an unwillingness to define what its sustainability and ethics pledges prohibit; and placed communications restrictions on editors at prominent journals who collectively raised retaliation concerns about revealing RELX's misrepresentations.

A 2024 lawsuit filed in U.S. Federal court alleged RELX violations of the Securities Exchange Act and the Fair Employment Practices Act. It states the company has made "numerous business decisions that contradict their climate pledges in materials filed to the SEC and disclosed to investors, marketing materials, and commitments to international organizations." The lawsuit has observed that **RELX's "greenwashing practices are materially misleading to consumers, investors, and impose severe public harm."** In response, RELX submitted a legal filing that obfuscates science-based requirements for global net zero pathways. RELX continued its practice of conflating societal dependence on fossil fuel *use* with the false idea that fossil fuel expansion is safe and necessary. RELX also argued that its actions are fully consistent with longstanding commitments it considers to be "aspirational" and what it defines as "sustainability"—perspectives described in one filing as **"morally and legally troubling."**

With the Company having rejected persistent pleas from stakeholders for it to discontinue claims that deceive the public, financial products weighted heavily with RELX stock are being marketed by investment firms as "Paris-aligned" and as adhering to the UN Global Compact environmental and human rights Principles. Despite the reputational risk brought to leadership's attention in 2021, RELX has been defining its commitments to sustainability and human rights as allowing for what one internal report suggested is complicity in "ecocide."

RELX's response to the initial communication for this human rights grievance mechanism was delivered in May 2024. This document serves as the reply to that message, one which contains demonstrably false claims and that critically does not address RELX's failure to act on credible human rights due diligence processes. RELX's reply also fails to indicate any intention to cease activities risking broad human rights harms. This document covers 1) RELX's insufficient regard for human rights risks and impacts, 2) the Company's past and ongoing promotion of fossil fuel expansion, and 3) its use of dishonest perception management techniques. Responses are provided to RELX's claims and additional questions are posed to the RELX Board, as well as to other stakeholders. Finally, we make urgent demands of the RELX Board, including that it takes immediate steps to make policymakers aware of the fossil fuel industry misinformation found in some of its messaging and research journals.

“Science has itself become an obstacle for the transformations that are needed to ensure human-ecological well-being...The proposed ways of saving the world are those that fit the policy agendas and priorities of the dominant elites of the West; they are first and foremost proposals aimed at saving their world...continuing to rationalize ongoing exploitation, extraction, and the destruction of people and nature. This is what sustainability has become.” —Dr. Esther Turnhout, Environmental Science and Policy, Elsevier (2024)

“RELX's environmental and human rights pledges don't prohibit the Company from committing ecocide.” —Fueling the Crisis, a RELX employee group report (2022)



A RELX video featuring an AI-generated spokeswoman promoting legal documents that facilitate fossil fuel expansion efforts. (2025).



CONTENTS

1. PREAMBLE	/6
2. RELX and Human Rights	/7
3. RELX and the Fossil Fuel Energy Order	/9
4. RELX Impression Management Strategies	/16
i) Misinformation About Fossil Fuel and Petrochemical Customers	/16
ii) Petrostate Propaganda	/20
iii) Misinformation About Fossil Fuels	/22
iv) The 'Energy Crisis' Myth	/24
v) Fossil Fuel Industry False Solutions	/25
vi) Greenwashing and Social Washing	/29
Co-opting the Language of Climate Justice	/30
Corporate Pledges and Voluntary Initiatives	/33
Investor-oriented Narratives	/39
vii) Undermining and Attacking Climate Advocacy and Science	/44
Fear-based Tactics	/47
5. Responses to RELX's Claims	/49
6. Conclusion	/51
7. Questions and Actions	/52
Appendix	/58

Businesses must “seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts.”

U.N. Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights

“New fossil fuel projects, anywhere in the world, are a dangerous threat to human rights.”

—Dr. Yung En Chee

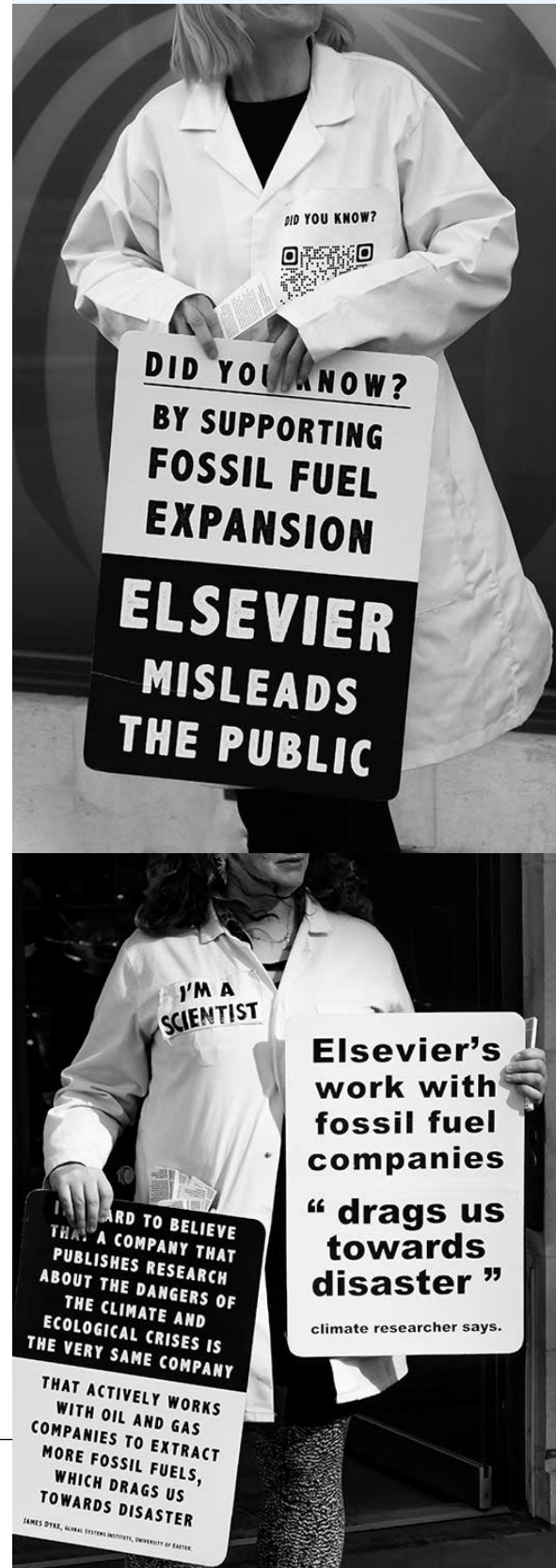
*Senior Research Fellow,
The University of Melbourne
Climate Rights Coalition
Advisory Board Member*

PREAMBLE

This human rights grievance mechanism was [announced](#) in 2023 by the Union of Concerned Scientists and Scientists for Global Responsibility, after an attempted dialogue with RELX. It was initially coordinated by the Climate Rights Coalition. CRC has opted to [discontinue](#) its spearheading of this process following to a series of “letters containing legal threats.” These were issued to the CRC’s Director prior to and following this process’s launch. These threats were referenced in a 2024 [lawsuit](#) filed in U.S. Federal Court. This legal action has recently been deemed [not timely](#) enough to proceed in court, but it is not too late for knowledgeable stakeholders to address the severe public health consequences of RELX’s business decisions.

In light of this, Scientist Rebellion and other participants have opted to continue this UNGP Human Rights Grievance Mechanism process. Reasons include RELX’s failures to comply with the UNGP’s [guidelines](#) to: 1) Discontinue “activities with potentially adverse climate change-related human rights impacts.” 2) Conduct “appropriate and adequate consultation on their own decisions and actions likely to have climate-related human rights impacts.” 3) [Seek](#) to “prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts.” The Principles consider a business enterprise’s “activities” to be “both actions and omissions,” with companies [guided](#) “by the severity of the potential or actual impact identified, including whether a delayed response may make the impact irremediable.” 4) [Participate](#) “in effective operational-level grievance mechanisms that can remediate climate and environmental concerns raised by affected persons,” with “all those seeking to access or interact with grievance mechanisms...able to do so without fear of reprisal.”

Scientists protest the Company misleading the public at RELX's headquarters in London (2023)



“Is the company adequately providing information to investors and the general public that is sufficient to accurately evaluate our involvement in climate change-related human rights harms?”

—2021 question raised by employees at RELX; they were later confronted with communications restrictions and pressured to disassociate from their advocacy group.

RELX AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In RELX's response to the Climate Rights Coalition's initial UNGP Grievance Mechanism communication (see: Appendix), the company [asserts](#) that it considers “corporate responsibility for human rights and the environment to be a duty and not a voluntary matter.” This claim has been reinforced by RELX's decades-long UN Global Compact (UNGC) membership. This [indicates](#) members are taking “proactive, ongoing steps to understand how existing and proposed activities may cause or contribute to human rights impacts” and to “avoid potential negative human rights impacts.” However, RELX has repeatedly been accused of complicity in increasingly broad human rights harms.



Weapons

After joining the UNGC in 2003, RELX was [accused](#) in the pages of its journal *The Lancet* of violating UNGC guidelines, which aim to prevent “human rights abuse.” Scientists for Global Responsibility also noted the Company's [failure](#) to operate consistently with UNGC principles. In addition, the editors and International Advisory Board of *The Lancet* [called for](#) the company “to divest itself of all business interests” that threaten human “health and wellbeing.” These statements were made in response to RELX operating trade shows for weapons manufacturers, some of which produced cluster bombs and “[torture equipment](#)” that's illegal to sell in the European Union. Disturbingly, RELX defended the shows by claiming they serve “reputable companies.” RELX [disclosed](#) that it considers such business activity as “adher[ing] to the

highest standards of scrutiny.” It claimed to be meeting the “highest ethical standards” and complying with UNGC human rights principles. While the Company later [divested](#) itself of the arms trade shows, concerns have remained about RELX's willingness to continue [serving](#) the business aims of arms manufacturers such as Raytheon and BAE Systems, businesses accused of [ignoring](#) human rights standards.

“We decided to invest in Reed Elsevier based on ethical research. It has since become apparent that the company not only has interests in the arms trade, which is deeply unethical and irredeemably corrupt, but that these are rapidly expanding.”

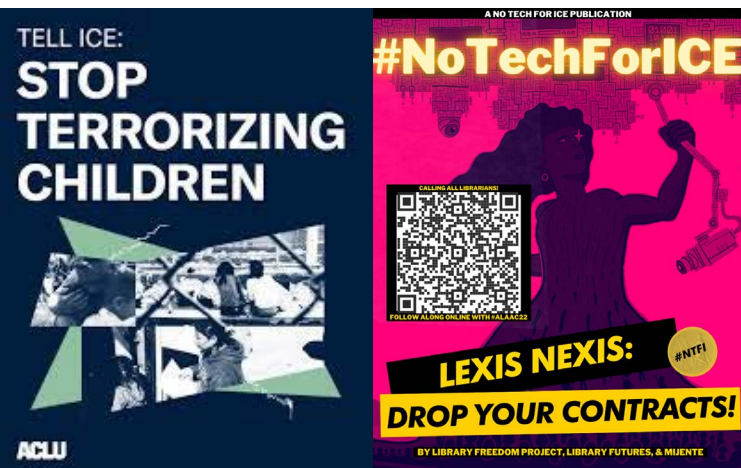
—[Susan Seymour](#), chair of The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust investment committee.



Terror

RELX has been [neglecting](#) its human rights obligations and “skirting laws for profit” through its LexisNexis contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). RELX supports ICE activities that have been [described](#) as “brutal, unconstitutional and inhumane.” The ACLU has [asserted](#) that the surveillance tools sold by RELX “may violate human rights law.” A recent [lawsuit](#) accused RELX of “unjust enrichment,” a legal principle stating that one should not unfairly benefit at another’s expense. A judge’s 2025 ruling from another case regarding ICE’s attempted deportations of legal residents for their protected speech [concludes](#) that ICE agents are acting “to terrorize Americans into quiescence.” RELX, however, [claims](#) that it stands for the “responsible and ethical use of data,” [maintains](#) that it “carefully vets potential customers...before allowing them to access its services,” and that the Company “consider[s] the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in [all \[its\] activities](#).” It is again deeply alarming to consider what RELX finds to be consistent with its human rights obligations.

“The price paid by society has been steep.”
—[Maurizio Guerrero](#)



RELX claims to “carefully vet” customers, but a variety of stakeholders have criticized RELX for neglecting its human rights obligations.



Climate

Climate is arguably more impactful than any other area of human rights due to its growing capacity deplete resources, cause conflict, impact health, generate future pandemics, promote extreme weather events, and create inhospitable environments. Scientific consensus has long been clear that an energy transition away from fossil fuels is required to avoid overshooting warming beyond 1.5°C. RELX’s longstanding and continued promotion of fossil fuel expansion and industry misinformation inhibits this transition. RELX has demonstrated a [willingness](#) to “promote denial of climate change and block action against global warming.” In 2021, RELX employees [reported](#) to the company that “the lack of an immediate transition is projected to lead to the premature deaths of 150 million people from air pollution alone by 2100, a year when heat is anticipated to be the cause of more deaths than all infectious diseases combined.” Despite its [claim](#) that RELX embeds “support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights” in its Code of Ethics, RELX doesn’t consider its actions inhibiting this transition to be misaligned with its many [commitments](#). RELX appears to be unwilling to disclose how large the projected loss of life would need to be for the Company to consider such activities antithetical to its ethics, climate, and human rights obligations. Science-based [observations](#) demonstrate RELX is increasingly diverging “from internationally agreed climate targets and the company will increasingly contribute to climate change impacts.” These impacts are being felt by “billions of people.”

“How large would the cost to lives need to be for RELX to regard the activity as impactful?...It’s unclear what threshold of premature deaths RELX considers to be impactful enough to discontinue a product or service.” —[Question](#) for RELX Corporate Responsibility, stemming from an ethics complaint (2021)

“If this activity contrasted with our statements doesn’t violate the Ethics Code, as the company claims, then what does?” —2022 [internal report](#)

“Elsevier and RELX claimed to be focused on a transition to clean energy. Given the services Elsevier and RELX continue to provide, these claims are demonstrably false.” —Kristina Dahl (Union of Concerned Scientists) and Stuart Parkinson (Scientists for Global Responsibility), [September 2023](#)



RELX AND THE FOSSIL FUEL ENERGY ORDER

By 2011, researchers were [warning](#) that most of the world's known fossil fuel reserves couldn't be burned without causing catastrophic global heating and human rights harms. James Hansen, [recipient](#) of the highest honor bestowed by the American Meteorological Society for his contributions to climate modeling, [observed](#) that the "requirements to halt carbon dioxide growth follow from the size of fossil carbon reservoirs." He noted that "fossil fuel interests" were inhibiting a prompt move to carbon-free energy while aiming "to squeeze every last drop of oil from public lands, off-shore, and wilderness areas." These "fossil fuel interests" have long included RELX in supporting the achievement of their business aims.

***NOTE:** The term "fossil fuel energy order" describes our entrenched, systemic dependence on fossil fuels. The term is associated with the work of Joachim Peter Tilsted and his colleagues, who analyzed how the petrochemical majors maintain this order. Their paper was published by Elsevier.*

RELX's work serving the fossil fuel energy order goes back decades, and by 2011 the Company was [partnering](#) with ExxonMobil, Koch Industries, and others on the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) private enterprise board. ALEC generated draft legislation that targeted U.S. agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and was "regularly passed into law." The Center for Media and Democracy [observed](#) that "the greenhouse gas emissions and catastrophic climate crisis that has already begun could not have a better lobbyist than ALEC members." Researchers expressed [alarm](#) that "profits from [Elsevier] journals [were being] used to **promote denial of climate change and block action against global warming.**"

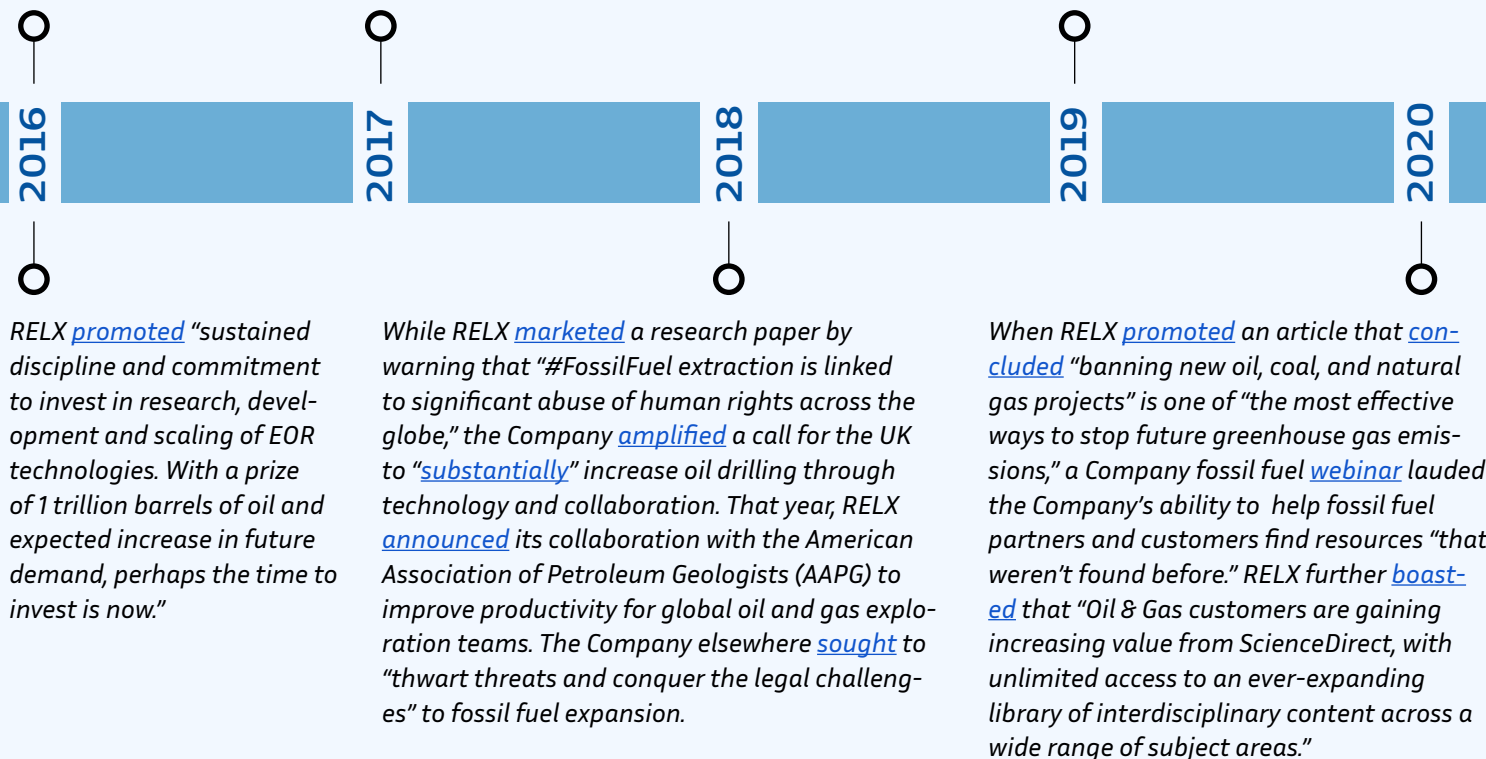
Outside of political activities, RELX has [worked](#) to "deliver significant advantage to companies focused on upstream oil and gas exploration," seeking to make new venture projects "[more successful](#)." The Company [subsequently](#) positioned itself "as the leading book publisher for the oil and gas industry" and sought to [accelerate exploration](#). The year of the Paris Agreement, as [concerns mounted](#) over [methane emissions](#) from fracking, RELX [promoted](#) "the benefits of #shale development" and [offered](#) solutions for oil and gas customers to open operations in emerging markets. Despite the growing human rights implications, RELX continued to promote fossil fuel expansion:

RELX [championed](#) "a sustainable commitment to investing" in fossil fuel exploration activities and promoted the [benefits](#) of an Australian "[coal rush](#)." RELX promoted [new books](#) addressing "the increased need to locate unconventional resources such as heavy oil and shale."

RELX [promoted](#) R&D Solutions portfolio of tools that "integrate data, analytics and technology capabilities to help oil & gas businesses reduce E&P costs and boost operational efficiency." These [services](#) enabled companies "to find new oil and gas discoveries with increasingly greater precision and confidence."



Dedicated to the "prevention of pollution," RELX [promoted](#) its content on ScienceDirect as being able to "help researchers and engineers drill further." RELX [marketed resources](#) to help oil and gas professionals "drive the oil and gas market into deeper drilling depths." RELX [promoted products](#) that facilitate new oil, gas, and coal project financing.



For the Oil & Gas Industry, staying competitive in a challenging economic environment means meeting global demand for natural resources while remaining robust to price volatility, and decreasing or uncertain margins.

Knovel delivers trusted, accessible and relevant engineering answers and insights to address challenges, bottlenecks and inefficiencies in the Oil & Gas Industry, ensuring business continuity through operational excellence.



How ScienceDirect knowledge is vital for success at Repsol



Examples of RELX marketing materials. RELX now promotes Repsol as "leading the energy transition." Repsol is in reality undertaking substantial fossil fuel expansion efforts, activity that can be informed by journals RELX markets as having missions aligned with a net zero future.

In 2021, the IPCC and IEA concluded new fossil fuel developments were [incompatible](#) with global net zero and Paris 1.5°C warming goals. These goals were and remain relevant to various RELX [pledges](#). An internal ethics complaint at RELX allegedly resulted in "a [sham investigation](#) to dismiss and suppress" concerns. An employee group including editors from *The Lancet*, *The Lancet Planetary Health*, and *One Earth* then [requested](#) that the Company address clear discrepancies with its obligations under the UNGP, the UNGC, and various other Company pledges. This was followed by more internal [reports](#) requesting RELX stop its greenwashing. Scientists and scientist organizations made [similar pleas](#). As part of a global coalition of health organizations, *The Lancet* [called for](#) the end of any new fossil fuel expansion and infrastructure. RELX leadership allegedly engaged in [intimidation](#) that undermined "the voluntary participation and collaboration of employees who stood up to advocate." Richard Horton, the editor-in-chief of *The Lancet* [reported](#) being pressured to remove his name from an internal report that concluded RELX may be complicit in "[crimes against humanity](#)." The report, which revealed RELX would soon be in violation of a UN-based pledge to "no longer be involved in facilitating new fossil fuel production," was suppressed by management. *The Lancet* then published a [commentary](#) that describes the Company's business decisions as "morally and materially indefensible." An [author](#) of that commentary put it simply: "It's greenwashing and I think it would be pretty obvious to any intelligent reader."

“Our endorsement of the scientific consensus, ‘that we must reduce the quantity of absolute greenhouse gases in the atmosphere,’ when contrasted with the company acting as a driver of new oil and gas production, creates sufficient dissonance to reasonably call our credibility into question.”
—Internal RELX employee report (2021)

“There’s no more room for fossil fuel expansion.”
—Dr. Kimberly Nicholas (at RELX’s 2021 Sustain Festival, as quoted in employee group [reports](#) and a [2024 legal filing](#))

“A spokesperson for the company said they are not prepared to draw a line between the transition away from fossil fuels and the expansion of oil and gas extraction.” —The Guardian (February [2022](#))

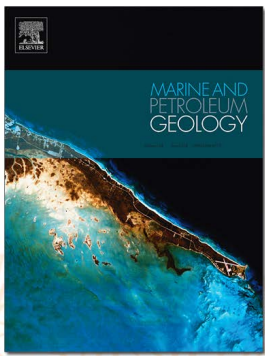
“RELX has policies that, if effectively implemented, would prohibit these activities.” —Spring 2022 employee group [report](#).

“Those familiar with RELX’s latest pledge, that we will not facilitate fossil fuel expansion after June 15, 2023 (UN Race to Zero), are being led to think that this will indeed be the case.” —Email to RELX’s CEOs (October [2022](#))

2023 *Marine and Petroleum Geology* Awards

Congratulations to all the **Editors, Reviewers, and Author!**

Find out more



RELX re-branded its journals as having missions to support climate goals that require an immediate reduction in emissions. Yet RELX actively seeks and celebrate content informing fossil fuel expansion efforts.

Rather than acting in accordance with a duty to respect human rights, RELX [altered](#) marketing materials to better match its sustainability claims. The Company, however, continued to offer products [informing](#) the “**worldwide rush to explore for and produce as much oil and natural gas as possible.**” Some examples:

- > RELX [continued](#) to facilitate new lease transactions for exploration and production (E&P) companies “rushing to lease acreage and drill additional wells.”
- > RELX [touted](#) its mining exhibition QME as facilitating increased productivity for Australian coal mine operators.
- > After investors were [informed](#) in April 2023 that the Company’s product Geofacets had been ‘repurposed,’ a [program](#) sponsored by Shell, BP, and others was offered on how to use Geofacets effectively for new oil and gas exploration.
- > Amidst rising sea levels, RELX [continued](#) to aid those “drowning in paperwork” by selling resources in service of navigating oil and gas exploration and production operations and [announced](#) an Outstanding Author award given to the co-author of a paper that [identified](#) a “key area for oil and gas exploration.”

> According to Richard Horton of *The Lancet*, RELX [pledged](#) “that the company is progressively divesting itself from the oil and gas industries.” Yet RELX division Elsevier simultaneously [joined](#) the [OSDU Forum](#), an industry group [founded by oil and gas majors](#) seeking an open data platform to find “oil deposits previously not

recognized and unlocking those deposits with methods previously thought to be too risky or expensive.” (Elsevier left the group after this grievance mechanism was announced.)

> Despite *The Lancet* Commission on Public Policy and Health in the Trump Era having [described](#) his first term as “singularly damaging,” RELX was among other large UK employers that [backed](#) the re-election of U.S. President Donald Trump, who had [vowed](#) to boost fossil fuel production. A recent Elsevier paper, partially funded by a key PetroChina research funder, [claims](#) that such fossil fuel expansion “is consistent with that of the idea of green development” and encourages the Trump administration to “actively participate in international natural gas cooperation projects.”

Today, RELX products and services continue to [support](#) the exploration and expansion of new fossil fuel assets, despite a [global heating crisis impacting billions](#), the [launching](#) of this human rights grievance mechanism, and a 2024 [lawsuit](#) alleging Company deception of shareholders. Further examples:

> RELX is [offering](#) “content pertaining to upstream oil and gas guidance” and for securing “even the most unlikely of loans for purely explorational projects” for its customers

THE NEW STATESMAN

Revealed: the British companies quietly backing Trump

Some of the UK’s biggest employers have links to the committees that fund Trump and his allies.

Barclays Group US

RELX Inc

AON Corp (AON plc)

Haleon plc

BP North America

RELX Inc

5 November 2024

RELX’s Race to Zero pledge states “Non-state actors cannot lobby to undermine ambitious government climate policies either directly or through trade associations or other bodies. Instead, they must align their advocacy, as well as their governance and business strategies with their climate commitments.”

involved in [“the exploration and production of hydrocarbons.”](#)

- > RELX products include legal [practice notes](#) on the financing of new LNG projects and [documents](#) on financing oil and gas exploration and production programs.
- > RELX helps customers [navigate](#) the construction phase of new LNG projects and [petroleum agreements](#) pertaining to exploration and production activities.
- > RELX [materials](#) inform on the planning regime for hydraulic fracturing projects and [facilitate](#) the exploration and production of conventional oil and gas projects; they generate [insights](#) on “upstream oil and gas lease transactions.”
- > RELX supports [agreements](#) for the “critical” exploration phase of new petroleum projects and [agreements](#) on “how two or more co-interest holders in an oil and gas project explore for, develop, and produce hydrocarbons.”
- > Company products offer customers [guidance](#) for successful “exploration, appraisal, development and production operations.” These are generated by oil and gas “[corporate crime](#)” professionals and [experts](#) who serve the interests of “international oil companies, independent

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#machinelearning #AI #OilAndGas

Application of machine learning and artificial intelligence in oil and gas industry



In 2021, RELX promoted the “merits of using Machine Learning and AI” to power fossil fuel expansion. In 2025, it promoted these technologies as being used by oil and gas to “transition.”

Oil and gas projects—contracts and disputes

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Practice notes



RELX generates legal documents that serve global fossil fuel expansion efforts; it also [promotes](#) itself as a member of the UN's Race to Zero, an initiative that [prohibits](#) facilitation of “new oil and gas fields.”

exploration and production companies and state-owned entities.”

- > RELX recently employed an AI-generated spokesperson to [promote](#) a “4,278 word document” that serves the continued development of ever more fossil fuel projects with notably “long lives.” RELX helps ensure faster project approvals, reduced legal risk, and accelerated fossil infrastructure deployment.

RELX is “committed to the protection of the environment, through the prevention of pollution [and to] minimising its contribution to climate change, in line with the scale of action deemed necessary by science.” (RELX Global Environment Policy, 2019)

- > RELX continues to offer guidance on new [oil field production](#) through its engineering [services](#). Oil majors publish research on topics that are indexed by Engineering Village; RELX then [provides](#) access to technical knowledge, research, and engineering standards that engineers can use when planning, designing, and optimizing new fossil fuel facilities, pipelines, and infrastructure. RELX's [technical knowledge](#) base facilitates fossil fuel exploration, extraction, and refining.

- > RELX leadership has told [employees](#) that it’s “working with the Energy industry to provide them tools” for a “transition” away from fossil fuels. Thus, RELX has been



Both RELX and its ICIS 2025 CEO of the Year describe gas as a "transition fuel." Dr. Al Jaber has drawn extensive criticism for greenwashing and helping lead the industry's sabotaging of global climate goals.

presenting its oil and gas book portfolio as serving "[oil and gas in transition](#)"; it emphasizes subject areas such as enhanced oil recovery, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and data analytics. The reality is the Company's own [products](#) showcase that these tools are being used by its customers to [generate](#) exploration [successes](#), fossil fuel [lock-in](#), and increasing [emissions](#). The industry is [clear](#) that AI "is being deployed to enhance exploration." The "merits of using Machine Learning and AI techniques in oil and gas" have been [touted](#) by RELX as tools its customers can use to accelerate reservoir evaluation, optimize production, and "[greatly boost the exploration of oil](#)."

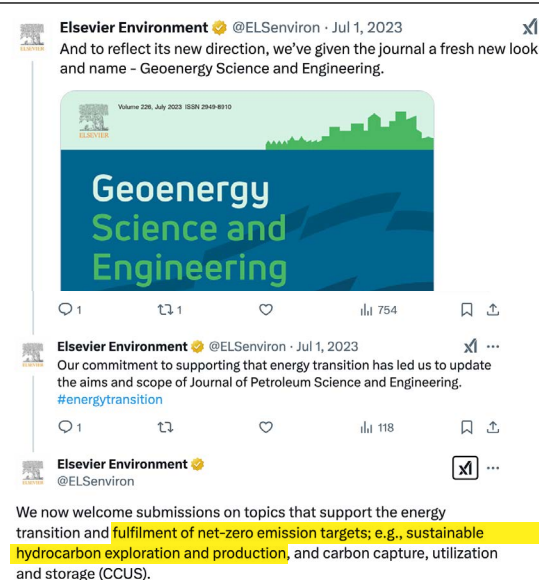
> RELX's Sustainable Energy Council (RSEC) promotes the idea that hydrogen is [crucial](#) for "achieving our climate goals" with an essential role in "the transition to a green economy." Those behind the RSEC's [World Hydrogen Advisory Board](#) are stakeholders from fossil fuel industry groups that are [heavily involved](#) in [lobbying](#) for policies based on this fossil-based "clean" hydrogen [scam](#). Labeled another "[false solution](#)," blue hydrogen projects [entail](#) a "carbon-intensive process that perpetuates our reliance on fossil fuels," break [greenwashing laws](#), and pose "[a major threat](#)" to the climate and public health." Yet [RELX](#) is striving to "kickstart the next wave of hydrogen project developments into the 2030s."

“There'll always be laggards...those that are engaging in activities, maybe, without thinking about the full impact of what they're doing.” RELX's [Global Head of Corporate Responsibility](#) (2021)

> With RELX Corporate Responsibility maintaining that RELX is "definitely focused on data for good," RELX's [data services](#) for energy companies continue to serve global fossil fuel expansion. RELX provides critical data, supply/demand forecasts, and market intelligence that helps stakeholders identify and maximize opportunities, optimize trading decisions, and "[invest strategically](#)" in fossil fuel expansion efforts. RELX activities directly underpin global fossil fuel trading, infrastructure planning, and increasing capital flow into fossil energy projects. As it provides the critical information infrastructure that enables fossil fuel markets to function at global scale, RELX [promotes](#) natural gas expansion as **a solution to managing emissions**.

> *The Lancet* is sounding the [alarm](#) regarding the health impacts of companies that are "accelerating growth in plastic production." However, RELX services also help petrochemical companies [make decisions](#) and remove barriers to enhancing plastic production. RELX services enable petrochemical capacity to expand rapidly, cheaply, and at scale, as it praises its petrochemical customers as being on the "cutting edge of sustainability."

2023: A journal that informs hydrocarbon expansion has been re-branded as supporting the #energytransition, net-zero, and "sustainable hydrocarbon exploration and production." There's no room in the carbon budget for the "[deep hydrocarbon exploration](#)" this journal supports, generating confusion about the requirements for net-zero and a just energy transition.



> [Journals](#) across Elsevier's portfolio, re-branded with missions that the Company claims "promote a pathway to a net zero future," are in reality filled with content informing fossil fuel expansion that far exceeds our carbon budget. RELX's recent publications continue to provide the industry with crucial information relating to [technology](#) "for oil and gas exploration," new [theoretical](#) "support for shale oil and gas exploration," [contributing](#) "to refining exploration strategies," [recommendations](#) for "petroleum exploration campaigns be[ing] intensified," "[critical insights](#) for future exploration and development," "[facilitating](#) more efficient and cost-effective exploration and development," providing "[significant implications](#) for hydrocarbon exploration, development, and resource evaluation," and [finding](#) "key targets for future exploration" with "[substantial](#) hydrocarbon exploration potentials." This reality contrasts heavily with management's [claim](#) it only has "seven journals which happen to talk about fossil fuels," and that "they've all been 'transitioned.'"

> RELX—whose "key environmental impact" is through products that "[inform debate](#)" and "[evidence-based policies](#)"—continues to generate and publish industry-influenced misinformation that can be used to justify government decision making regarding the unconscionable development of these new fossil fuel assets (see below).

> RELX's corporate messaging and behavior continue to be reflective of perception management strategies for preventing and deflecting criticism. One strategy has been the use of extensive sustainability and human rights [pledges](#) that RELX has [revealed](#) in a recent court filing to merely be "aspirational statements about sustainability." [Extensive questions](#) and direct [appeals](#) to [leaders](#) and [CEOs](#) across RELX to reconsider its messaging have been made for years. Such inquiries have resulted in reports of intimidation and alleged communications restrictions being placed on employee advocates.

Along with Shell and BP, RELX was recently [recognized](#) for the value it creates through its attention to reputation management. All three businesses have been highly ranked for avoiding negative perceptions, which is a "driver of investment." They are all UNGC members, guided to adhere to "precautionary" sustainability principles and maintain human rights due diligence processes. However, these businesses are also redefining a safe energy transition as something that can accommodate global fossil fuel expansion. In prioritizing revenue over an informed public, they continue to strengthen a fossil fuel energy order that threatens the health of our planetary system.

“Leadership postulates that Elsevier/RELX is in fact ‘one of the most sustainable businesses in the world’ and that global heating doesn’t actually pose any significant risks to the company. This is climate denial.” —RELX employee group report (2021)

“You have assessed many RELX business activities that work against our climate pledge.” —Sustainability leader at Elsevier (2022)

“Scientists—including experts at our own journals—have concluded that our company’s involvement in helping the fossil fuel industry expand production renders various pledges and statements inaccurate, misrepresents climate science, and accelerates climate change...our company has continued claiming that the industry is credibly ‘transitioning,’ while simultaneously altering and removing content from our websites that indicates complicity in what are being called crimes against humanity.” —RELX employee report (2022); it’s been alleged that management prohibited employees from distributing this report. (2024 lawsuit, paragraph 74)

“ Lancet Countdown warns: climate inaction is killing millions each year



The Climate Plan - invest in line with the Paris Agreement

Find out how you can use your pension to invest in environmentally friendly businesses at the forefront of the transition to a low carbon economy.

Top: The Lancet reports on the role fossil fuels play in million of deaths every year. Bottom: A financial firm markets a product containing RELX stock as being "in line with the Paris Agreement."

“How can we incentivize leaders to engage in dialogue that’s not modeled on impression management strategies?”

—Question raised in a Cell Press/Elsevier employee meeting (2025 legal [filing](#))

PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

As the largest publisher of scientific research, RELX [boasts](#) of its role informing debate to “aid decision makers globally.” RELX’s generation of deceptions relating to the fossil fuel energy order is particularly damaging to the public’s understanding of this rapidly expanding polycrisis. Misinformation and narratives such as the following are reinforced as accurate by a RELX Code of Ethics that [claims](#) RELX is ensuring “all statements made to those with whom we communicate or do business are accurate and not misleading,” including “any objective, factual, or quantifiable comments” about other companies.

*“This unfettered continuation of exploitation and destruction is rationalized through powerful narratives: that economic growth is necessary and beneficial for all; that we can rely on technologies and on corporations to fix our problems through voluntary measures; and that climate and nature are expensive and therefore bad for jobs and people. **These narratives are false.**”*
—Dr. Esther Turnhout, *Environmental Science & Policy, Elsevier (2024)*

MISINFORMATION ABOUT FOSSIL FUEL & PETROCHEMICAL CUSTOMERS

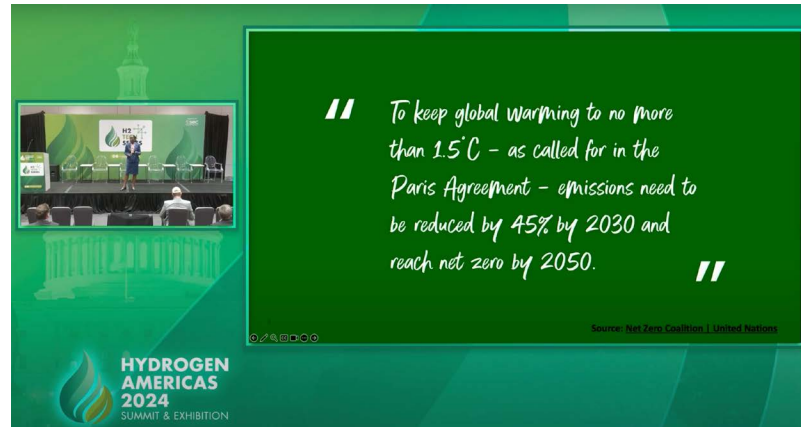
In 2021, an [employee](#) group that included editors from *The Lancet*, *The Lancet Planetary Health* and *One Earth*, pointed RELX to research that “compared oil majors to ‘Horsemen of the Apocalypse,’ due in part to compensation packages for CEOs being linked to exploration of new fields, increased extraction, and the ongoing promotion of fossil fuel demand through lobbying and government subsidies.” They noted “the industry is investing \$785 billion on new oil and gas fields between 2020 and 2029

while the world’s coal producers plan as many as 432 new mine projects. This puts us on track to produce more than double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with the 1.5°C goal.” Additionally, they informed leadership that the supposed energy transition is one that “the industry has no plans for and continues to successfully combat,” taking issue with RELX’s position that “the fossil fuel industry is doing right by the climate and ‘going green.’” RELX opted to continue misrepresenting its oil major customers as moving “[toward clean energy](#)” and assuring employees that the industry is “[heavily motivated](#)” to make their clean energy transition. RELX has opted to [promote](#) the idea that “momentum has swung decisively

in the favour of embracing sustainability in the hearts and minds of O&G decision makers at the highest levels.” One Company [video](#) has falsely claimed that “oil and gas companies that are moving to become energy companies...are changing their portfolio...[and] making the most out of existing assets rather than exploring for new prospects.” Stakeholders have been misled into thinking oil majors are becoming or already are energy companies that “[embrace renewable energy sources](#),” [elevating](#) the false idea that “the oil industry [is] on track towards integrating sensible measures to cut carbon emissions.” RELX also deceptively describes its petrochemical industry customers as committed to “[sustainability and decarbonisation](#),” despite the industry continuing to cause substantial harm to the natural environment. RELX [promotes](#) petrochemical majors as “decision-makers and influencers” that are “helping to keep us safe and secure.” The reality is that these businesses—including [Shell](#), [Chevron](#), [Unilever](#), and [Dow](#)—are generating broad [deceptions](#) and global [instability](#) while [poisoning humanity](#) and the [planet](#).

Further examples:

RELX has [framed](#) oil majors ExxonMobil, BP, Eni, ConocoPhillips, and TotalEnergies as “innovators powering the energy transition.” With customers such as [Shell and Chevron](#), RELX has deceptively [claimed](#) oil majors are “making significant investment in renewables such as wind, solar and hydrogen, reducing their exposure to upstream oil” and moving “away from legacy fuels.” The “energy transition” myth has been supported by RELX [high-lighting](#) Equinor’s “push on offshore wind” and the “smart grid investments” of TotalEnergies, a company [touted](#) by RELX as a “world leader in solar energy, power storage and biomaterials.” RELX has promoted Shell’s [green spending](#), its [carbon reduction](#) efforts and [investments](#), and its aims to meet the challenges of the [energy transition](#) as it goes “[green](#).” Shell has been [promoted](#) as set to ‘turbocharge’



RELX has helped associate companies generating emissions increases with the emissions decreases required to achieve climate goals..

its clean energy drive in the 2020s.” The same year Shell spent \$10 million [lobbying against](#) low carbon transportation, RELX promoted Shell at an event as its “[low carbon transport sponsor](#).” The oil company has benefited from RELX inaccurately presenting it as committed to “tackling climate change...and has set a target to become a net-zero emissions energy business by 2050, [in step with society](#).” In 2021, the energy transition was described as “[rapidly under way](#),” with oil majors, “including Total, BP and Shell,” going “full speed ahead.” TotalEnergies has been [touted](#) by RELX as a “green energy major” and BP [promoted](#) in 2022 as transitioning from being an oil company to being an ‘energy company.’ In 2024, at the same time BP was [freezing](#) offshore wind projects “to focus on fossil fuels,” a RELX [video](#) showcases BP as transforming “from an integrated oil and gas company to an integrated energy company” that aims to get to net zero by 2050 and “keep global warming to no more than 1.5°C.”

RELX has [promoted](#) ExxonMobil as also having a “low carbon strategy,” pointing to Exxon’s dubious carbon capture and blue hydrogen schemes. RELX also promoted ExxonMobil goal of “net-zero emissions in its oil and gas operations in the Permian Basin by 2030,” a goal that doesn’t account for the actual [burning](#) of its products. Having previously [boasted](#) about its own role in Repsol’s “successful evaluations,” RELX now [presents](#) Repsol as “leading the energy transition” and “committed to net-zero emissions by 2050.” The fact is Repsol has been successfully [challenged](#) for deceptive net zero claims that “omit information about Repsol’s overall business activities, including the fact that Repsol’s oil and gas activities are substantial and expanding.”



As it invests in oil expansion, Shell's business partners help promote it as acting credibly with net zero aims. Elsevier/RELX has generated misinformation about an industry it's been aiding for decades. See our examples: climaterightscoalition.com/issues#misinfo



Leading the
energy transition

Graphic from a RELX
website (2025)

Regarding Sonatrach, RELX [praises](#) it for “reducing [its] environmental footprint by the use of cleaner energies”; Sonatrach is [investing](#) \$40 billion between 2022 and 2026 in new oil and gas exploration and production activities.

“[We’re] supporting our customers to drive progress by providing them with research which will help them in their transition. The energy industry is already **heavily motivated** to make the transition.”
—An Elsevier Internal Climate Board member, responding to an employee inquiry about the Company “striving to boost the production goals of the fossil fuel industry, an industry whose existing production goals guarantee we’ll fail to meet the Paris target and lead to catastrophic global heating.”
(2022 employee group [report](#))

The reality is that these companies have severely [limited](#) investments in renewables and are investing in exploration and development that’s a deep threat to the planet. The ‘transition’ RELX claims to be serving is a [façade](#) and [promotion](#) of oil industry clean energy investments is [propaganda](#), buoyed by false claims that natural gas is “clean.” Shell is [investing](#) \$11 million per day through 2030 in new oil and gas projects incompatible with a catastrophic 2.7°C of warming. A RELX energy expo provided a Shell leader with a platform to [tell](#) attendees that the industry desires a clear policy framework—while it simul-

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taneously seeks to undermine policies that would enforce a just energy transition. Shell is actually in the top 4 of average annual investment in oil and gas exploration over the past few years and is under fire for its [deceptive advertising](#), as has fought a recent [lawsuit](#) requiring it accelerate credible carbon reduction efforts. TotalEnergies is investing \$4.5 billion dollars in new oil and gas projects, drawing [criticism](#) for “climate-related risks and human rights concerns. Equinor is also investing heavily in oil and gas expansion, [not a clean energy transition](#). In December 2023, [the ASA banned an ad](#) from Equinor because it misleadingly implied renewable energy was a significant part of its current business. In reality, the vast majority of its business and investments are still in oil and gas. In 2024, the European gas industry, including companies such as Shell, TotalEnergies and Equinor, [walked away](#) from an agreement on retraining workers to prepare for the transition to cleaner energy.



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2018: As Shell faces multiple [climate lawsuits](#) pertaining to misalignment with the Paris Agreement, Elsevier invites its CEO to the first annual Elsevier Economics Lecture, where he [promotes](#) Shell as being “in step with society’s drive to align with the Paris Agreement.” He claims that “in Canada, Shell has shown that CCS [carbon capture and storage] works.” Like other CCS projects, that [project](#) would emit far more CO2 than it captures. An RELX energy expo also helps [mislead](#) stakeholders into believing that Shell is “transforming” and changing their business model.

ENERGY VOICE

EVENTS

Video: Triple protests disrupt All Energy renewables conference



2024: A RELX energy conference generated multiple protests due to an oil firm participant ignoring their human rights obligations.

Contrary to the misinformation RELX is promoting about its partners and customers, the industry has a “[renewed commitment to oil and gas](#)” and “[locking in demand long term](#),” with offshore experiencing a “renaissance,” thanks in part to new insights being [published](#) by RELX. Rather than transitioning, the industry is planting “colossal” [carbon bombs](#) and putting more [money](#) into developing new oil and gas sites than at any time since the 2015 Paris climate deal. When a triple [protest](#) disrupted a 2024 RELX decarbonization conference, one that included participants whose hydrocarbon expansion efforts are sabotaging climate goals, BP’s SVP emphasized that “projects on the net zero journey have to make returns and be investible for their owners.” The 2024 [lawsuit](#) addressing RELX’s fraudulent claims observes that for years, employee advocacy efforts “sought records regarding Defendants’ collaborations and partnership with fossil fuel companies and their purported ‘transitions.’ Such [requests](#) were repeatedly denied and [ignored](#).” The reason for this management tactic is clear: The supposed just transition of its chosen customers that RELX claims to be serving simply [does not exist](#).

Petrochemical Industry Praise:

> RELX has [sponsored](#) an award given to Dow CEO Jim Fitterling, described by RELX as “leading the charge on decarbonisation and sustainability.” In truth, Fitterling has [denied](#) plastic is toxic in order to stave off regulation and Dow has recently [settled](#) allegations of violating the U.S. Clean Air Act for excess emissions of harmful air pollution.

> Another RELX-sponsored [award](#) was given to the CEO of LyondellBasell, described as “at the forefront of the global chemical industry’s flagship initiative to solve the problem of plastic waste in our environment.” LyondellBasell is actually “[fighting restrictions on plastic](#)” and facing accusations of “[greenwashing](#)” that have been proven [correct](#).

> In offering an [award](#) to the President of ExxonMobil Product Solutions, RELX amplified her claim that Exxon is “very focused on reducing [its] emissions.” RELX [promoted](#) her award and her company as “committed to growing its global petrochemicals and plastics business.” This was after Exxon’s [Alliance to End Plastic Waste](#) scrapped its plastic waste goals as “[just too ambitious](#).” ExxonMobil Product Solutions has been celebrated by RELX as being a repeated [recipient](#) of the ACC [Responsible Care Company of the Year Award](#), an honor for “continued and exemplary commitment to advancing environmental, health, and safety (EH&S) performance.” In reality, ExxonMobil



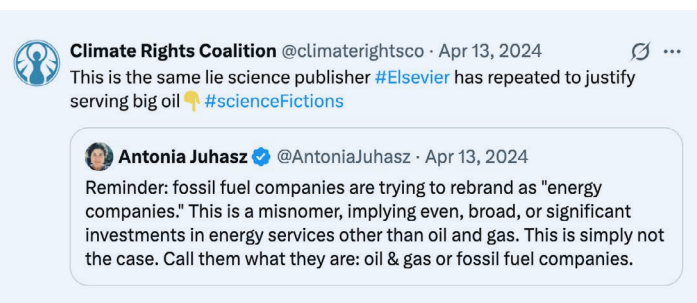
2024: After hundreds of activists storm an Arkema ‘forever chemicals’ plant, RELX praises the company for being “on the cutting edge of sustainability.” Pictured: A protest depicting an Arkema representative pouring PFAS into the water of a nursing mother.

is [poisoning](#) the planet and creating “[toxic misery](#)” for disproportionately Black and brown communities near its facilities.

> As it heavily invests in petrochemical expansion projects, SABIC (Saudi Aramco) has been promoted by RELX as being a “[leader in circularity](#).” SABIC touts RELX’s recognition of its CEO as underscoring his “[commitment to sustainability](#).” SABIC is in reality helping fuel a [global plastics crisis](#) while being sued for its devastatingly [toxic](#) impacts, including the dumping of PCB-drenched soil in [children’s playgrounds](#).

> In 2024, RELX [honored](#) the CEO of Arkema and praised Arkema for being “on the cutting edge of sustainability.” In reality, [Arkema](#) has worked to dilute U.S. climate and plastics regulation and faces a vast array of lawsuits pertaining to its poisoning of humans and the environment with PFAS chemicals (“Forever chemicals”); earlier that year, hundreds of people stormed one of Arkema’s factories in [protest](#) of its toxic impacts. Petrochemical customers such as Arkema have [pursued](#) a “[large-scale coordinated attack](#)” to combat restrictions on the production of “forever chemicals,” described as “one of the most pressing environmental and public health concerns of our modern world.”

> In 2025, RELX was “[delighted](#)” to sponsor an award given to ADNOC’s CEO Sultan Al Jaber, citing “the launch of XRG, ADNOC’s international investment arm.” RELX proclaimed that through XRG, ADNOC will “ensure energy remains a catalyst for sustainable growth and development.” In reality, XRG was in the midst of trying to acquire [Santos](#), a fossil fuel firm “pursuing massive expansion plans consistent with the failure of the Paris Agreement.” XRG is itself investing [heavily](#) in gas/LNG expansion proj-



Since the Paris Agreement, RELX has misinformed the world with messaging that suggests its oil and gas customers are "energy companies" acting consistently with climate goals and "powering the energy transition." The reality is these businesses are working to suppress any such science-based transition.

ects. Echoing messaging found in RELX materials, XRG [claims](#) gas is "a lower carbon transition fuel." The award and RELX's accompanying praise for ADNOC's commitment to sustainability helps fuel [propaganda](#) that Dr. Al Jaber is "leading discussions on climate change, sustainability, and responsible growth." The truth is Dr. Al Jaber has drawn extensive criticism for [greenwashing](#) and helping lead the industry's [sabotaging](#) of global climate goals. In accepting the award, Dr. Al Jaber [praised](#) the Company for enabling his industry "to make informed business decisions."

The U.N. has explicitly [recognized](#) the link between plastic pollution and human rights. RELX [promotes](#) the petrochemical industry as "positioned to make a meaningful difference," but it's not a good one. *The Lancet* has sounded the [alarm](#) regarding the health impacts of companies that are "accelerating growth in plastic production." The industry has "[business-as-usual investments](#) that will fail to achieve climate and pollution reduction goals." The customers that RELX champions have taken [aggressive action](#) to prevent a plastics treaty that would curb plastic production—despite the serious [human health](#) and [climate](#) implications. RELX has elevated an Exxon CEO's criticism of plastics treaty negotiators as having "mistaken plastic itself as the problem" and the need "to cap plastic production." A recent RELX online [publication](#) bemoaned that it's become "'almost fashionable' to blame producers for plastics waste," and amplified the call for an 'all of the above' approach to energy sources. RELX conferences continue to generate [business opportunities](#) for its petrochemical customers while coating the industry with an unsubstantiated veneer of "sustainability." RELX's plastics industry customers are being [criticized](#) for their own contributions to a deceptive "information ecosystem," but RELX has largely avoided such scrutiny.

PETROSTATE PROPAGANDA

In 2018, RELX [noted](#) "the winds of change" in Saudi Arabia's SaudiVision 2030, a plan that would "reduce Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil." In 2020, a RELX-sponsored [award](#) was bestowed upon Saudi Aramco's CEO, who promoted its mission to "support a cleaner future for our planet." Stakeholders were informed that "climate protection is at the top of [Saudi Aramco's] priorities and receives [its] highest attention." A 2023 RELX online [article](#) promoted Saudi Aramco's aims for "net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across its assets by 2050," falling "in line with Saudi Arabia's target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2060." RELX promoted Saudi Arabia as hosting the

Wish you and your colleagues at Saudi Aramco much continued success



A 2020 RELX sponsored video celebrates the success of Saudi Aramco's CEO.

2023 Middle East and North Africa Climate Week and, that same year, Elsevier's Global Director of Sustainability moderated a panel at the Global SDG conference in Saudi Arabia titled, [Clean Energy Focus in the Middle East](#). The event was described as promoting the Middle East's "fast-paced ambition is to lead in renewable energy" and the Saudi Arabian government's economic blueprint, "Vision 2030." The "clean energy in the region" was noted as a source of inspiration for the world, as "it will contribute to a sustainable future for all." RELX subsequently [amplified](#) the Aramco CEO's promotion of "Aramco and Saudi Arabia [having] a clear interest in solar, wind, hydrogen, and electro fuels."

The reality is that Saudi Arabia has been labeled a '[wrecking ball](#)' at global climate talks. It's thwarting global [efforts](#) to curb plastic production, [obstructing climate action](#) and "working to keep fossil fuels at the center of the world economy for decades to come." As RELX [attests](#), a key goal under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is to invite foreign investment. RELX itself offers products that cover procedures for obtaining a foreign investment license in new oil and gas projects. Further, RELX has [partnered](#) with the Aramco/Dow petrochemical company Sadara. This is the operator of "the world's largest petrochemical facility, locking in capital, infrastructure, and organizations in continued fossil dependence [for decades](#). The connections and lock-ins that characterize the petrochemical industry make it of central concern for the global energy transition and the need to phase out fossil fuels."

Saudi Arabia, a top contributor to US higher education, also works to cast doubt on electric vehicles, and pushed at the [United Nations global climate summit](#) in Egypt to block a call for the world to burn less oil and a rapid oil phase-out. Saudi Aramco, which has had [employees serving on Elsevier journals](#), "envision[s] a world where it will be selling even more" oil, with the big threat being any "lack of investment in oil and gas." Saudi Arabia—which will increase natural gas production by more than 50% by 2030—believes the industry [should invest more in new oil supply](#). The Saudi Ministry of Energy has said hydrocarbons would "continue to be an essential part of the global energy mix for decades," a talking point also being used by

[RELX](#), deflecting attention from the fact that new projects need to have stopped to avoid severe human rights risks. Like other oil majors, Saudi Aramco's "net zero" target excludes scope-3 emissions, which cover emissions from the actual burning of their products.

In accepting his 2020 award from RELX, Saudi Aramco's CEO expressed his hope for a post-COVID recovery in oil exploration and development investment. By 2023, United Nations human rights investigators [warned](#) Saudi Aramco and other companies still facilitating oil and gas expansion that they are at risk of generating deep human rights harms. Despite this, the CEO of Saudi Aramco [declared](#) in 2024, "we should abandon the fantasy of phasing out oil and gas." Rather than sounding the alarm about the human rights risks, RELX has amplified the CEO's 2024 [call](#) for more investment in "proven and reliable" fossil fuels "amid growing oil demand."

 **Foreign Investment in Oil & Gas (English/Arabic)**

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Overview

A key goal under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is to invite foreign investment in KSA through **making the investment environment more attractive**, in order to increase economic growth and achieve sustainable and positive development.

Subsequent to the release of Vision 2030, authorities have moved to simplify the processes and requirements for issuing and amending foreign investment licenses. Furthermore, there has been a shift in paradigm towards opening up more sectors for foreign investment. As one of the most powerful oil and gas markets in the world, the KSA **oil and gas sector remains an attractive one** for foreign investors.

This Practice Note will provide an overview and a brief roadmap on the **main procedures for obtaining a foreign investment license in the oil and gas industry in Saudi Arabia.**

2024: As *The Lancet* [continues](#) to urge divestment, RELX supports investment in Saudi Arabia's oil and gas sector, promoted as a way to achieve "sustainable and positive development."

MISINFORMATION ABOUT FOSSIL FUELS

“There isn’t scientific consensus that new fossil fuel exploration and development projects are objectionable.” —Claim made by Company management (2022 employee group report)

RELX continues to mislead stakeholders about the safety of fossil fuel expansion. The Company promotes the [idea](#) that the fundamental job for climate action “is to make sure that the science that we base any decision on is good and replicable and reliable.” But a vast array of recent RELX publications deeply misrepresent natural gas as:

- > “A **clean** and **low-carbon** fossil fuel.” ([Natural Gas Industry B](#))
- > “A pivotal and promising **clean** energy resource.” ([Gas Science and Engineering](#))
- > “A potential source of **clean** energy with vast resources widely distributed in permafrost and marine sediments.” ([Fuel](#))
- > “A clean and **low-carbon** natural gas resource” ([Gas Science and Engineering](#))
- > A “**clean** energy” ([International Journal of Mining Science and Technology](#), [Engineering Analysis with Boundary Elements](#))
- > The “**green** energy of the future.” ([Geoscience Frontiers](#))
- > An “efficient and **clean** low-carbon energy.” ([Applied Energy](#))
- > A “key contributor to the **clean** energy landscape.” ([Journal of Molecular Liquids](#))
- > A “resource-rich **clean** energy.” ([Engineering Fracture Mechanics](#))
- > A “**green** energy.” ([Theoretical and Applied Fracture Mechanics](#))
- > An “**environmentally friendly** fossil energy” with “immense potential” ([Petroleum Science](#)) that’s “contributing significantly to environmental conservation.” ([International Communications in Heat and Mass Transfer](#))
- > “A promising transitional energy source in the pursuit of carbon peak and neutrality.” ([Applied Energy](#))
- > “Crucial given the rising demand for **clean** energy on a global scale.” ([Rock Mechanics Bulletin](#))

RELX embeds misinformation in its own messaging as well. In offering legal guidance in serving new LNG projects and educating users on “[risks and opportunities](#)” in gas and LNG, RELX describes gas as a “[key transition fuel](#).” Gas and LNG are [promoted](#) by RELX as “building blocks for change” in “decarbonising the economy” by replacing “more polluting fuels.” Elsewhere, a RELX energy expo has provided Shell with a platform to [tell](#) attendees that we need to stop demonizing the role of gas in decarbonization. RELX has [amplified](#) Shell’s call for expanding gas resources for the purpose of achieving net zero, describing it as a “clean” energy.

The reality is that [experts warn](#) the gas development RELX promotes impedes a just energy transition, net zero aims, and risks increasing warming far beyond 1.5°C. As RELX materials portray natural gas as a green, climate-friendly fuel, a United States Senate report has [concluded](#) such messaging is deceptive and dangerous; the industry has internally acknowledged there is significant scientific evidence that the lifecycle emissions from natural gas are as harmful to the climate as coal and are incompatible with scientific emissions reduction targets.



Scientist Rebellion Finland @SrFinland · Oct 10, 2024

We interrupted Elsevier’s commercial seminar to remind the publisher that the message is clear:

Keep fossil fuels out of academia.

Elsevier and RELX must stop working with oil companies. It’s time they listen to the science they publish.

[@climaterightsco](#)



Scientist Rebellion

Researchers protest RELX’s willingness to welcome the influence and fraudulent messaging of the fossil fuel energy order into the scientific literature.

PROMOTION OF THE 'ENERGY CRISIS' MYTH

RELX has also reinforced industry messaging that expansion of fossil fuel resources are needed to meet energy needs and address “[a worldwide energy crisis](#).” RELX [amplifies](#) fossil fuel industry misinformation that demand from governments for “affordable and reliable energy” necessitates the “energy realism” of fossil fuel expansion.

Recent Elsevier publications promoting fossil fuel expansion have justified this activity on the grounds of it being “[vital](#)” for responding to this “energy crisis.” [Improving](#) the recovery rate of shale gas has been presented as an important way “to meet the growing energy needs of human society.” [Development](#) of unconventional oil and gas resources such as shale gas and coalbed methane has been justified as needed to “meet energy demands and ensure energy security.” RELX publications [insist](#) there’s an “imperative need to expedite the exploration of heavy oil resources,” with [expansion](#) of fossil fuel resources framed favorably due to the potential for “cheap energy prices.” Indeed, the reason for the development of fossil fuel resources of “[substantial exploitation potential](#)” isn’t described as the result of longstanding, extensive, and deceitful efforts to preserve the fossil fuel energy order, but simply as a result of [people’s increasing demand for crude oil, gas, and other fossil energy](#).

The reality is that, along with being incompatible with the aims of the Paris Agreement, new fossil fuel projects being promoted by the fossil fuel energy order are [not needed](#) to meet global energy demand. [Renewables are actually cheaper](#), but RELX has [amplified](#) Saudi Aramco’s recent call for fossil fuel investment under the premise that’s what “developing nations need and can afford.” The Executive Director of The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change has [noted](#) that there is “clearly a strategy to retain our dependence on fossil fuels by scare-mongering — a claim that the alternative would be disastrous.” With fossil fuel subsidies on the [rise](#) and exploration [surging](#), she observes that countries are “talking investment in fossil fuels with the excuse of solving the energy crisis.” U.S. President Trump, who received financial support from the RELX Political Action Committee in the 2024 election, has declared an energy ‘emergency’ to justify more oil and gas drilling. Sources for such deceptive narratives are found in RELX’s fossil fuel-oriented content.

Make Sure You’re Diligent Before You Drill

May 17, 2022 • (1 min read)

With a [worldwide energy crisis](#) brewing and no end in sight, exploration and production companies are rushing to lease acreage and drill additional wells.

ELSEVIER

Gas Science and Engineering (2024)

“The exploration and development of shale gas plays a vital role in addressing [energy crisis](#), reducing carbon emissions, and achieving carbon neutrality.”



2025: RELX's PAC financially supported Trump's re-election while the candidate promised to dismantle climate policy. [Trump](#) has removed "a wide range of climate and pollution regulations, began to overhaul how the federal government responds to disasters and gave a boost to fossil fuel production...The changes have reverberated far beyond the United States, as the administration has pressured other countries to abandon their own efforts to tackle global warming."

FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY FALSE SOLUTIONS

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

RELX has [promoted](#) carbon capture (CCS or CCUS) “emission-reduction” technologies as being able to broadly “remove existing carbon dioxide emissions” and “store them safely and effectively.” CCS has been noted as playing a significant role in supporting the energy industry’s “emission reduction goals,” “sustainable business model[s],” and “net-zero initiatives.” Its been [promoted](#) and [framed](#) by the Company as enabling “large-scale emissions reduction” for oil major customers with a “commitment to advance a lower-carbon world.” Elsevier [presents](#) it as contributing to the “#SDGs” by enabling the removal of excess carbon “to make carbon-free energy vectors from #FossilFuels.”

A 2023 guest on RELX’s “Corporate Responsibility” podcast [presented](#) the technology this way: “Storing CO₂ that’s been extracted from the atmosphere permanently... provide[s] the opportunity for the capture project to generate carbon credits that can be sold and traded... CCS contributes positively to the majority of the SDGs” and “can reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly and deeply.” The researcher was on the podcast to promote an Elsevier book that presents CSS as “a proven technology.” It also references an Elsevier paper that [finds](#) “CCS is ‘indivisible’ with SDG 13 regarding combating climate change” and “does not prohibit the achievement of any other SDG.”

Elsevier for Engineering R&D
@EngineeringRnD

@Equinor, @Shell and @Total have decided to invest in the Northern Lights project which is vital to reach the global climate goals of the Paris Agreement. Learn more here: bit.ly/2Uv5cPH
#sustainabledevelopment



10:03 AM · Jun 10, 2020

In 2021, RELX [promoted](#) a paper funded by IEAGHG, an organization dedicated to “accelerat[ing] the deployment of CCUS and carbon dioxide removals projects world-wide.” [Members](#) include BP, Chevron, Eni, Equinor, ExxonMobil, Shell,

and TotalEnergies. The paper promotes how carbon capture and storage can help achieve the sustainable development goals. It also states that IEAGHG and its members assume no liability for the “accuracy, completeness or usefulness” of the information in it.

In reality, this criminally [deceptive](#) industry has no credible “emission reduction goals” and CCS is [not](#) carbon negative or neutral—it is [not](#) a climate solution. It’s a [false one](#) pushed by industry to prevent the phasing out of fossil fuels. The current strategies for reducing emissions to net zero by the middle of the century being endorsed by the fossil fuel industry implausibly assume that the world will acquire great capabilities to remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Plans for keeping climate change to 1.5°C targets generally [include CCS](#), but “[none](#) envisage it as more than a small part of a large mix of approaches.”

RELX has [emphasized](#) that a benefit of CCS is that it counters criticism of oil and gas expansion by framing it as “green-friendly” and that it would be “‘virtually impossible’ for the world to meet its climate targets without it, according to the International Energy Agency.” But the IEA has made it [clear](#) the industry needs to let go of “the illusion that implausibly large amounts of carbon capture are the solution.” This illusion has been echoed in RELX’s annual Corporate Responsibility [report](#), regarding a 1.5°C pathway: “Carbon capture and storage will need to be widespread to remove excess carbon from the atmosphere.”

In 2021, RELX employees [reported](#) to the company that CCS was irresponsible “**magical thinking**.” Shortly after, on a RELX [podcast](#) “about the energy transition required to meet the Paris Agreement,” RELX’s Head of Corporate Responsibility had her promotion of CCS receive pushback from guest Trevor Letcher: “We don’t really need much CCS...we don’t actually need it for oil and gas powered power stations because they should be stopped...**keep the**

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY HAS ARRIVED

2021: Employees at health and sustainability journals warned RELX that the industry’s push for CCS was dangerous “magical thinking.” RELX continued to promote it as enabling “large-scale emissions reduction[s]” to “advance a lower-carbon world.”

2020: RELX [promotes](#) a project of Equinor, Shell and Total as being “vital to reach the global climate goals of the Paris Agreement.” In [reality](#) the industry uses CCS to justify fossil fuel expansion: The carbon injected for this project “would amount to less than one tenth of 1 percent of Europe’s annual CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels in 2021.”

oil in the ground. I'm sorry, but I get the feeling that CCS is being supported strongly by the oil companies because they want to be kept in business." A U.S. Senate report has [found](#) such promotion of CCS is "inconsistent with statements the companies make in internal documents" and that "fossil fuel giants view publicizing CCS without actually deploying it at scale as a method to ensure that fossil fuels like natural gas are used for as long as possible." [Proponents of CCS](#) "assume that we can burn more coal, produce more oil, and still keep the world below 1.5 degrees." [Carbon capture technology](#) has been described as "a PR fig leaf designed to help Big Oil delay the phase-out of fossil fuels."

THE LANCET

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CALL FOR FOSSIL FUEL TREATY TO PROTECT LIVES OF CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

2022: As part of a health organization, The Lancet referred to CCS as a "false solution," something employees did in 2021. The Lancet has also called for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty; one of the unanswered questions of this human rights process is one requesting RELX to join calls for such a treaty—to save lives.

A 2020 Elsevier [paper](#) found that deployable carbon capture technologies at the required scales do not exist; it is "[extremely expensive and cannot deliver zero emissions](#)." A Shell carbon capture plant a RELX expo had [promoted](#) as exceeding its targets was found to emit [more carbon](#) than it's captured. The entire efficacy of the carbon capture process has been [called into question](#) by the IPCC. Observers see CCS is a "[proven failure](#)," not developed "to stop climate change, but to actually drive up the consumption of coal, oil and gas." The industry is pushing it because it "[enables oil and gas producers to continue to source fossil fuels for energy](#)" and fossil fuel [lock-in](#). It's a "[dangerous distraction](#)," and a license for them to continue "[oil and gas expansion](#)." Guest editors for a 2024 Elsevier [special issue](#) of a CCUS conference include representatives of big oil and industry-funded [research](#)

[groups](#) that are aiming to sustain fossil fuel expansion. UN secretary-general António Guterres has [accused](#) fossil fuel producers of justifying expansion by using CCUS "proposals to become more efficient planet wreckers."

A majority of global CCS plants are in fact being used to extract [even more fossil fuels](#). A Company [website](#) noted "there is a high cost to capturing carbon and dumping it into a cavern, so its use in EOR [enhanced oil recovery] makes economic sense"—and promotes "Knovel and other Elsevier sources" for engineers working in CCS. Occidental Petroleum is one such [customer](#), using "Elsevier's research tools" to "make informed decisions and improve outcomes" with CO₂ capture—supposedly enabling "large-scale emissions reduction[s]" to "advance a lower-carbon world." RELX has [amplified](#) Oxy's claim that it has "net-zero ambitions and [is] helping the world meet the Paris Agreement's climate goals." (2022) In reality, Oxy is marketing bogus "[net zero](#)" (or "[carbon neutral](#)") oil while utilizing CO₂ EOR to [increase oil supplies](#) for a "[carbon-intensive future](#)" featuring the "[indefinite production of dirty oil](#)." The CEO of Oxy, labeled a "[climate criminal](#)" who promotes net zero plans with [zero credibility](#), sees carbon capture as a "[long-lasting business](#)" that generates "no reason not to produce oil and gas [forever](#)." This is why there's been a huge increase in [lobbying](#) for government [support](#) for the technology, despite it being a [waste](#) of money that could go to renewables in support of the urgent need to move away from fossil fuels. As founding member of the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change, *The Lancet* has [declared](#): "**Phasing out fossil fuels would prevent 3.6 million deaths due to ambient air pollution worldwide annually. The same cannot be said for proposed false solutions, such as carbon capture and storage, which do little to protect health and introduce new risks.**"

In contrast, RELX [emphasizes](#) that CCS projects can benefit society by "reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change." This misrepresents the realistic scope of its effective deployment and that it's [clearly](#) being used by oil major customers to generate fossil fuel lock-in. The company [acknowledges](#) that EOR does have "several drawbacks, most importantly, environmental impacts in the form of increased seismic activity"—but adds that CCS offers firms enticing "financial incentives to explore" in the form of tax credits and grants.

Blue Hydrogen

“Blue hydrogen” is hydrogen produced from fossil fuels in which the supposed “[mature technology](#)” of CCS is used. “The carbon dioxide (CO₂) generated from [blue hydrogen] operations is captured,” RELX [claimed](#) in 2021. Blue hydrogen can potentially be “a close-to-zero carbon fuel that could be produced at scale,” making “low-carbon” blue hydrogen “a massive opportunity in the global energy transition.” The Company more recently promoted Exxon-Mobil’s blue hydrogen as part of its “[low-carbon strategy](#).” The utilization of CCS, claims a recent [publication](#), “remarkably reduc[es] the carbon,” rendering blue hydrogen “a relatively clean fuel.” Another publication [frames](#) blue hydrogen, with very low methane emissions and very high carbon removal rates, as “clean hydrogen, the same classification as green hydrogen.” A 2023 review article [identifies](#) it as “a key tool to reach a low-carbon economy” and “an ever-important necessity to enable decarbonisation at a rate to ensure Net Zero by 2050.” Similarly, another paper [claims](#) that the use of blue hydrogen “has been shown to significantly reduce CO₂ emissions.”

RELX [manages](#) the Sustainable Energy Conferences and its array of hydrogen-oriented conferences as part of a “strategy to expand in the growing low carbon sector,” claiming hydrogen is “crucial to ensure a decarbonised energy future” and will “significantly contribute to reaching net-zero goals.” RELX [claims](#) its hydrogen efforts “bring together world leaders to build a sustainable energy future.” For its energy customers, RELX is looking at the “capacity for blue hydrogen as grey hydrogen phases out between now and 2050...[and] we can look at our models and we can forecast exactly what that demand is going to be.” ([Video](#)) The demand for blue hydrogen is growing significantly, driven by the perception that it’s a low carbon fuel.

In reality, the science is “[undeniable](#)” that blue hydrogen is “a fossil fuel-derived chemical masquerading as an energy solution” that is “[neither clean nor low-carbon](#).” Greenhouse gas emissions from the production of blue hydrogen are, in fact, “[quite high](#)” and “[more emissions-intensive than simply burning fossil gas to begin with](#).” Blue hydrogen as a “clean” energy is a [myth](#), resting “on the viability of carbon capture and storage technology at scale and addressing fugitive emissions of methane.” Such production of blue hydrogen does not exist and even 90% capture is “incompatible with net zero.” To be a clean fuel, “[its production would need to have almost no carbon dioxide or methane emissions](#),” both unlikely to be

realized “in the real world.” Although the climate credentials of blue hydrogen have been thoroughly [debunked](#) by scientists without fossil fuel ties as another industry “[marketing scam](#),” RELX publications [justify](#) natural gas expansion due to the need for “carbon neutrality and blue hydrogen.” Others note that “[abundant](#)” and “[vast fossil fuel resources](#)” are available to be developed for “meeting large-scale demands of hydrogen” via CCS—even though such plans “[result in huge emissions](#)” that are “[worse than fossil fuels](#).”

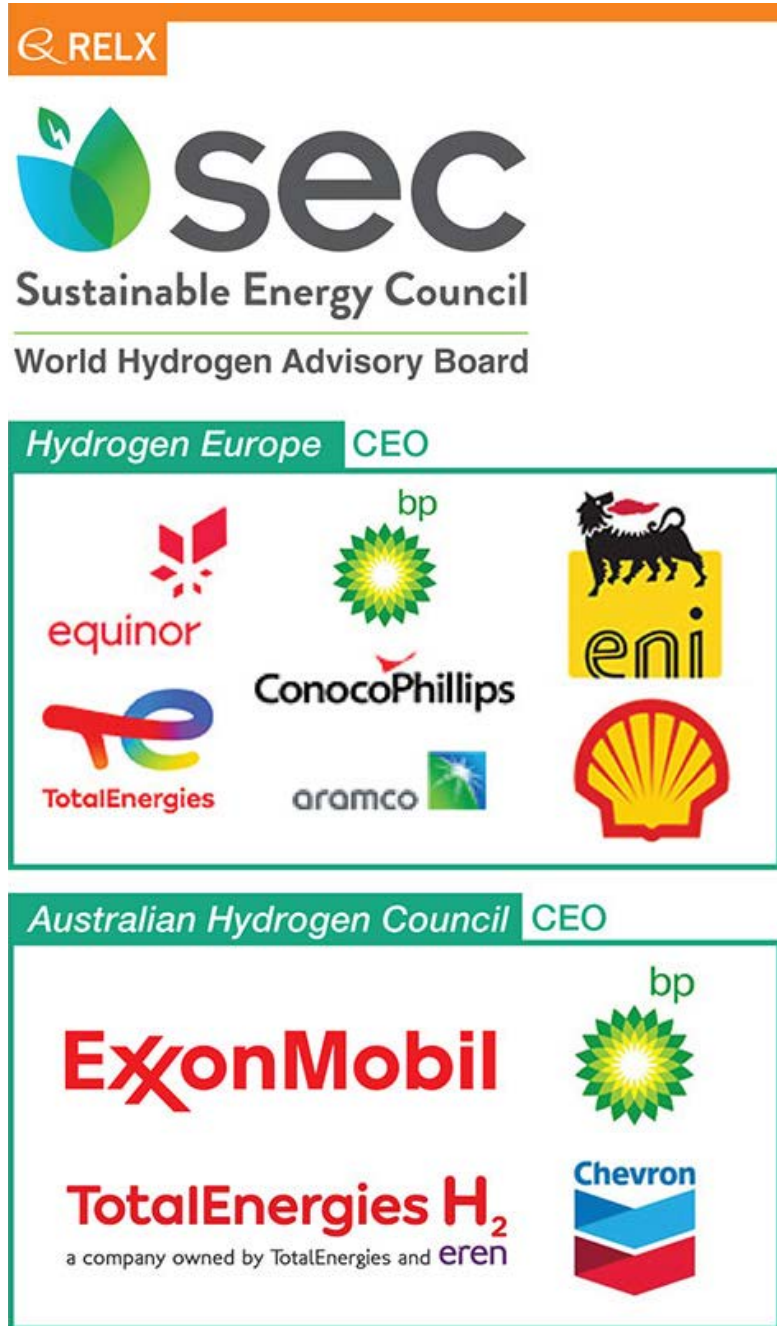


Desmog has [reported](#) on RELX's Hydrogen Americas Summit, where "fossil fuel giants attempt to redefine 'clean hydrogen, with profits in mind... Because it is created using natural gas, the production of blue hydrogen generates carbon dioxide, meaning the viability of blue hydrogen as a tool for decarbonization relies on industry promises about CCS – technology that remains ineffective and insufficient."

Evidence [indicates](#) that “the marketing hype surrounding blue hydrogen as a clean energy source is based on false and misleading claims – also known as greenwashing.” While providing “little or no benefit for transitioning to a carbon-free future,” investment in hydrogen infrastructures is actually “[the largest share among the sustainable solutions by oil and gas companies](#).” The industry is simultaneously undertaking vast lobbying efforts to secure billions in [subsidies](#) to support CSS and blue hydrogen. Employing a strategy that “[perpetuates our reliance on fossil fuels](#),” oil majors like [ExxonMobil](#) are touting blue hydrogen as having a “vital role in a lower-carbon energy system.” A 2022 Elsevier [paper](#) funded by SINTEF Industry—Equinor’s [biggest research partner](#) that’s joined with oil and gas entities to provide “[strategic guidance and investment support](#)” for the export of blue hydrogen—also portrays blue hydrogen as a “clean” and “vital technology class for oil & gas producers” that allows for “continue[d] profitable energy exports.”

The industry has [recognized](#) that if it can't "get the world hooked on hydrogen made from methane, it will face a declining market due to economic competition from renewable power." Another Elsevier [paper](#) promoting blue hydrogen states this clearly: the industry must adapt "to ensure that these [hydrocarbon] resources will continue to maintain their share in the global energy mix and generate high economic returns." To aid these efforts, the authors propose "a concept through which crude oils and **petroleum products can be marketed as low-carbon footprint energy sources.**" Insisting that to limit global heating "to 1.5 °C necessitates wide-scale introduction of hydrogen," blue hydrogen is promoted as providing the industry with a way to meet world energy needs with reduced CO₂ emissions for decades beyond 2050. This paper was co-authored by employees of the [Petroleum Research Center](#), which supports Kuwait's oil industry in reservoir characterization and its goal to [increase production](#) as it moves to developing "[deeper and more difficult oil](#)."

RELX's Sustainable Energy Council (RSEC) promotes the idea that hydrogen is [crucial](#) for "achieving our climate goals" with an essential role in "the transition to a green economy." SEC [claims](#) hydrogen "will significantly contribute to reaching net-zero goals" and the hydrogen industry "will deliver a successful energy transition." RSEC's [World Hydrogen Advisory Board](#) features stakeholders from Hydrogen Europe ([Members](#) include: Equinor, BP, Aramco, Repsol, Shell, TotalEnergies, Eni, and ConocoPhillips) and the Australian Hydrogen Council ([Members](#) include: ExxonMobil, BP, and Chevron). These industry groups are [heavily involved](#) in [lobbying](#) for policies based on their fossil-based "clean" hydrogen [scam](#) while openly [concerned](#) that "green targets are hindering [the] roll-out of projects based on fossil fuels." An Elsevier [paper](#) notes that "blue hydrogen projects are mainly pushed forward by fossil fuel interests," with the associated reliance on CCS "a solution to climate change for those who are trying to uphold an unsustainable status quo." Desmog [reported](#) that if RELX's "Hydrogen Americas conference is any guide... 'sound policy' sounds a lot like business as usual." Labeled another "[false solution](#)," blue hydrogen projects entail a [notably](#) "carbon-intensive process that perpetuates our reliance on fossil fuels," break [greenwashing laws](#), and pose "[a major threat](#) to the climate and public health." Yet [RELX](#) is striving to "kickstart the next wave of hydrogen project developments into the 2030s."



GREENWASHING AND SOCIAL WASHING

“The use of misleading CSR (corporate social responsibility) tools at RELX reflects observations in the literature on systemic greenwashing practices at large MNEs and the ineffectiveness of voluntary corporate initiatives in stimulating corrective changes to corporate misbehavior.” —*Fueling the Crisis, a 2022 employee group report.*

“The inaccurate claims I’m hearing strain any credibility that there is any purpose to these [meetings] except to try to get me to get behind the company’s ‘narrative’...and simply accept these greenwashing practices.” —*Ethics complaint at RELX (2022)*

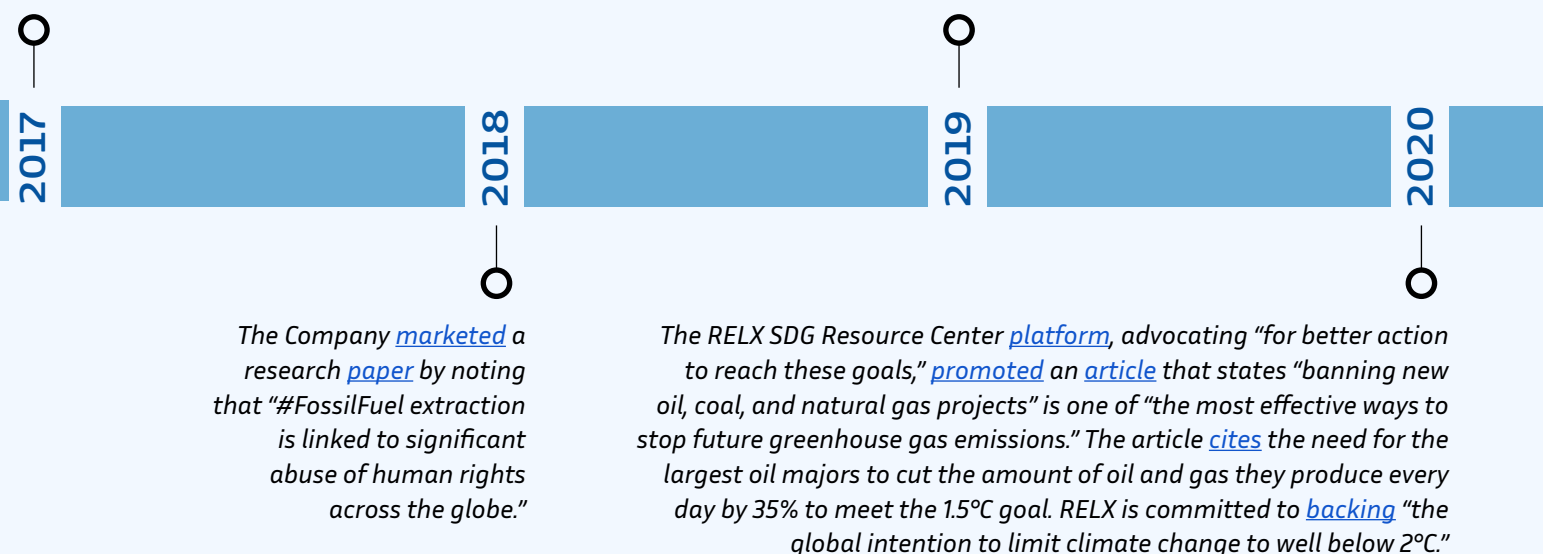
Greenwashing is the use of deceptive communications to persuade stakeholders that an organization’s products, services, actions, and goals are environmentally friendly, and social washing is the act of masking negative social

impacts through messaging that emphasizes the maintenance of ethical standards and a commitment to social responsibility.

One prevalent example of greenwashing and social washing is RELX’s substantial SDG-oriented marketing. The United Nations has been [clear](#) that “implementation of the [Paris] Agreement is essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.” Despite the fossil fuel expansion that RELX supports being incompatible with realistic pathways to the Paris warming goal, RELX marketing materials and communications have heavily associated RELX with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals since their implementation. The tactic of disseminating information that implies the company is opposed to the interests of the fossil fuel energy order has been widespread. Some examples:

The Company [amplified](#) a “call for removing fossil fuels & petrol products from chemical production” and [promoted](#) a [resource](#) that acknowledged “expanding [energy] supply with fossil fuel-based energy sources could endanger the delivery of [SDG] Goal 13 [Climate Action].” The Company also [observed](#) that the U.S. “Exit from the Paris Agreement Disregards Science and Endangers Global Environment.”

Elsevier [noted](#) that “fossil fuels increasingly offer a poor return on energy investment,” [promoted](#) the fact that “health is a basic human right,” and that climate change is a [threat](#) to this right.



After removing [marketing materials](#) that boasted of ScienceDirect being a product that serves global fossil fuel expansion, RELX re-branded its library of journals to claim they instead “advance the UN SDGs and promote a pathway to a net zero future.” These journals, however, continue to inform extensive new hydrocarbon development. Energy Geoscience, for example, is a journal RELX touts as being focused “on energy transition and achieving net-zero emission targets. The Journal explores conventional, non-conventional, and renewable energy resources including: Oil and gas exploration and development.” Its editor-in-chief is an employee of SINOPEC, publishing [papers](#) by SINOPEC and PetroChina employees that focus on realizing [substantial potential](#) for hydrocarbon exploration and [promising sites](#) for hydrocarbon exploration efforts in complex environments.

Beyond this type of greenwashing, RELX makes use of a deceptive service that distort the public’s understanding of corporate actors of the fossil fuel energy order. In 2025, pay-to-play “corporate storyteller” Bizklik promotes oil major customers as serving “[environmental objectives](#)” with “[climate-conscious](#)” solutions. It also [recognized](#) its client RELX as a top sustainability company via its “Sustainability Magazine” product. Bizklik helps to [reinforce](#) the idea that “waste and paper management” are RELX’s largest negative impacts. RELX’s Corporate Responsibility Head has recently accepted a lifetime achievement [award](#) from Bizklik on behalf of RELX’s employees; in doing so she failed to disclose that employees have [cited](#) Bizklik as part of RELX’s greenwashing efforts.

The 2024 [lawsuit](#) observes that RELX’s “greenwashing practices are materially misleading to consumers, investors, and impose severe public harm.” The filing includes a slide deck from a 2022 internal presentation which observes that “shareholders are uninformed regarding business activities fueling climate change.” The lawsuit observes that “while publicly

We’re proud to raise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) flag at our Amsterdam head office as part of our commitment to addressing critical global issues such as poverty, climate change, and inequality.

#SDGs #Sustainability #UNGlobalCompact #ClimateAction
#SDGFlagDay



11:45 AM · Sep 25, 2024 · 1,051 Views

RELX has used Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility officers to associate RELX with the UN SDGs. The UN has been clear that the fossil fuel expansion removes realistic pathways to their achievement.

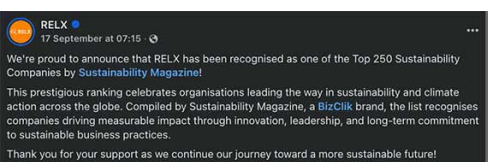
making commitments to key international sustainability codes that allowed them to be listed as one of the leading ESG investment options, they frequently engaged in actions and business practices in private that contradict those commitments and statements...Defendants were repeatedly made aware of their greenwashing practices by their own employees.”

“This is what inaction on climate change looks like. It’s what greenwashing looks like.” —Kristy Dahl, Union of Concerned Scientists (2022)

Co-opting the Language of Climate Justice

A tactic for avoiding negative attention has been for RELX to co-opt the language of activists. By disseminating the [idea](#) that “every part of our society must change,” RELX has been able to generate the perception that the business does not engage in activity that undermines the ability of society to credibly address this polycrisis. RELX’s approach to misrepresenting itself has included [promoting](#) a [publication](#) that calls for “**environmental justice activism**” to confront “**the fossil fuel energy order**.” The same publication calls for stakeholders to address the “environmental racism” of the petrochemical industry that RELX supports.

The Company has [endorsed](#) the need for “embedding [justice](#) in the 1.5°C transition,” including a “more rapid reduction of fossil fuel production” that doesn’t generate





2022: Elsevier's Global Sustainability Head [promoted](#) that the massively profitable publisher used employee donations to plant an 'Elsevier forest.' Two days later, The Guardian [reported](#) that the company was unwilling to end support for fossil fuel expansion, activity that "drags us to disaster."

"uneven distributions of economic wealth." The Company has [promoted](#) a book chapter that [illustrates](#) "the social injustice inherent in climate change impacts," the **"urgent need to replace fossil fuels,"** with a call for the democratizing of economic production and degrowth. RELX has even [elevated](#) an article calling for [climate reparations](#) going to the Global South from oil majors it serves that are **"willfully ignoring foreseeable climate harm."** The Company has [framed](#) climate justice and human rights as core elements of the SDGs, and that its approach entails ensuring "the voices from the global South are heard" rather than "expecting the Global North to come down and tell the Global South what they should be doing or what they shouldn't be doing." RELX also [points to](#) the fact that efforts in the SDG goals of "eradicating poverty and ending hunger" require meeting "energy demand, particularly in the Global South" in "socially acceptable ways."

RELX highlights the need for hydrocarbons to be included in the "energy mix," seemingly to justify fossil fuel expansion activities as being necessary. [Other](#) companies facilitating fossil fuel expansion under the banner of "climate justice" use the same argument: In being given a RELX-sponsored award in 2020, Saudi Aramco's CEO expressed hope for a post-COVID recovery in oil and gas exploration, [emphasizing](#) that "access to energy and reliable energy systems" is still denied to many populations. Fossil fuel expansion is justified due to its need to be "part of the energy mix for decades to come, and that immense contribution will be made without economic and social harm that a sudden shift from oil and gas would likely cause." In 2024, RELX again [amplified](#) the Aramco CEO's call "to invest in these 'proven and reliable' energy sources that developing nations need and can afford" He stressed

"oil demand will continue to grow in the Global South." Such reasoning was [repeated](#) by a presenter at a 2024 RELX promotional seminar when he was asked how the Company defends informing global hydrocarbon expansion: "What I hear is that, yeah, I agree with you. Climate change and fossil fuel. We're seeing hurricanes now in the U.S. and so on and so forth. But still, nowadays this kind of fuel is very important in the world. Because if you go to Africa, if they don't use that, they don't have any other ways...**it does damage, it really does, but on the other hand it's still necessary.**"

The reality is that RELX misappropriates the concept of climate justice when it invokes this narrative. Continued fossil fuel expansion is not "necessary" in Africa and it [does not benefit Africans](#). What Africans are facing is [displacement](#) and [violence](#), as [colonial-minded](#) stakeholders serving the fossil energy interests of [Europe](#) and [the West](#) turn Africa into ["a new frontier for fossil fuel development."](#) A recent [paper](#) outlines ways African governments can "attract and retain foreign investors" for their gas and oil sectors "to boost their economy." But with most fossil fuel projects in Africa controlled by companies of the Global North and over 89% of the new LNG infrastructure being [built for export](#), these resources are leaving Africa; the associated revenue is vastly more likely to go to foreign investors and a few resource-rich African nations. Fossil fuels are also displacing renewable resources that are urgently required for climate goals and sustainable development. On a continent with [39%](#) of the world's total renewable energy potential, these technologies tend to be the cheaper options in Africa (as well as [Asia](#) and across the [Global South](#)). This is especially true in remote locations where [energy scarcity](#) largely results from a lack of access to an electricity grid, not fossil fuel

GG

It is incredibly important to be able to reimagine our world in a net zero context: every part of our society must change, and it will be confrontational. This is true of the research community and it is true of the publication process as well.



Prof. Gerard Grovers
KU Leuven
Belgium



2022: RELX associates itself with the idea that "every part of our society must change" and that its efforts are "science-based."

resources. Nigeria, Africa's largest fossil fuel producer, also happens to be the nation with the [largest energy access deficit](#) in the world. The Global North falsely selling gas as a clean transition fuel under the guise of climate justice is in reality causing [deep harms to Africans](#): slower economic growth, expanding inequality, economic crises, debt, corruption, political repression, environmental damage, climate harms, and health impacts. It's clear the real winners from African fossil fuels are primarily not Africans.

In a 2021 [podcast](#), RELX's Head of Corporate Responsibility asked a guest about "ensuring equity when it comes to access to energy in Africa in particular. But also, the reliance of a number of states like Nigeria, Kenya, on oil production, which really helps with the economic development of those countries." The guest attempted to push back on this perspective: "I'm sorry, but I still feel that even in Nigeria they should be focusing on new forms of energy, and that is solar and wind. **The oil should stay in the ground, I'm sorry.** And the rest of Africa, frankly, they should be focusing on solar energy because they have more solar energy than we do here in Europe...I hope I've helped you on the Africa situation." RELX [amplifying](#) the idea that "proven and reliable" fossil fuels are what "developing nations need and can afford" provides fuel for policymakers to do the [same](#). But the reality remains that this type of development is [devastating](#) Africa's natural environment, people, and communities—as well as our climate.

The Company's [advocacy](#) for information sharing for the sake of "climate justice" lacks credibility when its publications help to rationalize the goals of businesses in the

Global North that are [planning](#) a fossil future for Africa. As seen in a recent Elsevier [special issue](#), the Company has maintained a willingness in its net zero-aligned journal portfolio to actively seek out content that helps the industry overcome "the many remaining geological uncertainties and exploration and exploitation technical challenges" in "conventional and unconventional natural gas resources in Africa and Middle East regions."

The Global North using Africa's desire for development as a [colonialist](#) excuse to extract as much gas as possible for its own use and profit is not a "[socially accepted energy transition](#)." Simply noting that "[effective policies](#)" are needed—some to curb the very business activities RELX is supporting—does not generate consistency with what's needed to be consistent with climate goals and human rights standards. Maintaining a global "energy mix" does not require hydrocarbon expansion that's condemning vulnerable populations to the overwhelming effects of fossil fuel lock-in and an unstable climate. [Pushing fossil fuels](#) on Africa is not "necessary." It is not "climate justice."

An Elsevier sustainability leader has [noted](#) that "we have to think about is who's advocating for this climate justice, whose voices are we hearing, and whose voices are we listening to?" African stakeholders participating in this human rights grievance mechanism have [expressed](#) a commitment "to raising awareness about the detrimental impact of fossil fuel expansion and holding those involved accountable. The voices of those directly affected by these activities must be amplified, and we support efforts to challenge the pursuit of corporate profits without regard to the destruction of life on our planet." Their voices urge the Company to "reconsider its involvement in activities that perpetuate the climate emergency" and to stop enabling "one of the world's most brutal and exploitative industries."



2024: RELX's CSO is a panelist at an [event](#) hosted by a marketing agency that, in [2021](#), stopped working with oil companies because they'd failed to stop generating "new oil and gas fields, which is a central requirement of the IEA's recent Net Zero By 2050 Roadmap"; the event explores "climate action narratives," "effective climate storytelling," and "how to navigate the fine line between sustainability leadership and greenwashing."

Corporate Pledges and Voluntary Initiatives

“RELX’s environmental and human rights pledges don’t prohibit the Company from committing ecocide.” —*Fueling the Crisis, a 2022 employee report*

RELX emphasizes activity aligned with sustainability-oriented corporate [initiatives](#), reinforcing such mechanisms as effective in generating positive outcomes and avoiding negative impacts. Extensive research published by the Company, however, shows that businesses use voluntary initiatives such as the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) largely symbolically, [mapping](#) existing initiatives onto the SDGs to [greenwash](#) and manage their reputation [at the expense of societal needs](#). RELX has extensively promoted the SDG’s, launching an SDG Resource Center in 2017 to help guide “[action to reach these goals](#),” without taking steps required to itself be aligned with their actual achievement. Instead, these vital goals have largely been used as a marketing tool that draws attention away from the Company’s continued support for activities that can be defined as ecocide. For example, an Elsevier sustainability leader has [boasted](#) that “between 2019 and 2020, about 41.2% of publications published in Fuel were linked to the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals], including 27% related specifically to Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy and 14.3% related to Goal 13: Climate Action.” The promotion of Fuel as being indicative of the Company’s SDG-alignment obscures the fact that the journal publishes extensive content aiding “[risk assessment in oil exploration](#)” and new [oil field development](#), revealing “[unconventional production potential](#),” and generating “[future petroleum exploration](#).” Such activities are incompatible with the aims of the Paris Agreement and SDGs.

For decades, RELX has promoted its membership in the UN Global Compact (UNGC). The UNGC [supports](#) a “**pre-cautionary approach to environmental challenges**” in which a lack of scientific certainty is no reason to postpone measures to prevent environmental degradation if there are “**threats of serious or irreversible damage**.” Deciding on the “acceptable” level of risk involves considering acceptability to the public and “obtaining prior approval before certain products, deemed to be potentially hazardous, are placed on the market.” UNGC also [declares](#) that “businesses have minimum responsibilities to meet



2021: The same month RELX promoted its UNGC “LEAD” status, an employee group reported to leadership that it’s violating UNGC Principles, UNGP guidelines, endangering public health, and practicing “climate denial.”

to respect human rights. They must act with due diligence to avoid infringing the rights of others, which includes addressing any negative human rights impacts related to their business.” The UNGC pledge is not forward-looking, as RELX has claimed in a legal filing, but compels [members](#) to “take proactive, ongoing steps to understand how existing and proposed activities may cause or contribute to human rights impacts, as well as how the company’s operations may be directly linked to such impacts.”

“The short answer is no.” —*Management’s answer to an employee inquiry regarding RELX’s willingness to reform its political engagement to be aligned with UNGC guidelines (2022 employee group report)*

The reality is corporations face little to [no consequences](#) for non-compliance with such voluntary initiatives that ultimately [don’t entice firms to end destructive activity](#) in the face of revenue considerations. Promotion of such ineffective initiatives enables companies still supporting fossil fuel expansion to deflect criticism with an image of sustainability. Some other examples:

RELX signs the [We Are Still In Declaration](#), aiming to “continue to support climate action to meet the Paris Agreement [...and] remain actively engaged with the international community as part of the global effort to hold warming to well below 2°C and to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy.”

RELX stated it will “implement science-based targets on climate and drive actions that are consistent with a 1.5-degree pathway to achieve net-zero.” ([Climate Pact](#))



With RELX claiming leaders are ensuring ethical considerations are at the forefront of all business decisions, RELX employees [informed](#) leadership that it could no longer serve fossil fuel expansion while claiming “adherence to our stated values, operating principles, ethics code, and other policies.” A subsequent employee [report](#) titled Fueling the Crisis: Defensive Stigma Management Techniques at Elsevier and RELX contains the following abstract:

“This report examines the response of Elsevier and RELX to internal advocacy conducted by employees regarding the Company’s **failures to adhere to its environmental policies and pledges**. As a large MNE (multi-national enterprise) with business goals that include the generation of significant production gains for the fossil fuel industry, RELX publishes research that indicates these fossil fuel aims are entirely incompatible with the Company’s climate goals. Research also indicates the voluntary policies, initiatives, and communications strategies that RELX has embraced are widely utilized by large MNE’s as tools for impression management of stakeholders that enable companies to conceal substantial negative impacts and resist reforms or changes to their operations that would hinder revenue generation. While Company performance

of CSR (corporate social responsibility) includes ethics guidelines that prohibit false and misleading statements, **the Company has neglected to directly address employee concerns about use of deceptive policies and communications that include the amplification of fossil fuel industry misinformation.** The misleading of stakeholders generates a false consciousness regarding CSR, the Company’s attitude towards the climate emergency, and the capacity of it and other large MNE’s, due to their legal-economic structures, to refrain from business activities that are fueling the environmental crisis that is presently unfolding.”

This report covers the Company’s “use of misleading CSR (corporate social responsibility) tools” that reflect “observations in the literature on systemic greenwashing practices at large MNEs and the ineffectiveness of voluntary corporate initiatives in stimulating corrective changes to corporate misbehavior...the Company supports a business-as-usual approach that involves accelerating fossil fuel extraction, supplemented by a growth in renewables. This path does not constitute an energy transition that Elsevier’s CEO has described as ‘mission critical’...Serving the current aims of [the fossil fuel] industry inhibits RELX’s



“Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.”

“Companies should take proactive, ongoing steps to understand how existing and proposed activities may cause or contribute to human rights impacts.”

ability to sound the alarm about what these companies are doing, and how RELX's business with them will have increasingly severe ramifications for the health of society and the planet. Despite the Company's commitment to achieving business goals 'in an open, honest, ethical, and principled way,' leadership has been unwilling to openly confront the reality that **the fossil fuel activity RELX is engaged in cannot realistically be a part of a world that stays below 1.5°C warming** or acknowledge that **environmental policies that permit the Company to participate in ecocide are fundamentally misleading**. The inability of CEOs and other leaders across RELX to comply with both environmental policies and ethics guidelines underscores observations in the literature regarding the misleading nature of symbolic CSR tools and their ineffectiveness in bringing about the transformational changes that such MNEs claim to be striving for, but that commercial considerations compel them to resist.”

The report observes that “employees at RELX have been told they ‘own’ corporate responsibility, but it’s unlikely they can effectively do so while being subjected to impression management practices that are consistent with what the literature defines as greenwashing...With policies and codes that are neither clear nor operational, there’s a need to go beyond the carefully cultivated corporate image and engage with actual corporate practices, considering their impacts on the lives of people.”

“Helping the fossil fuel industry expand production renders various pledges and statements inaccurate, misrepresents climate science, and accelerates climate change.” —2022 employee group [report](#), allegedly blocked from distribution by leadership.

SBTi

RELX has marketed its [participation](#) in another voluntary corporate initiative, SBTi—an organization that requires submission of “science-based” climate targets. SBTi is under [investigation](#) by the U.S. government and has been criticized in the [media](#), by [advocacy organizations](#), and by one of its [original instigators](#) as having clear conflicts of interest. Observations include that “comprehensive scientific studies find SBTi’s methods inferior,” SBTi “prioritizes its own and its clients’ confidentiality over and above the public interest,” it’s an “SBT standard setter that also serves as a SBT validator with a business model tied to validation growth,” and that SBTi’s targets neglect to include “historic responsibility for emissions.” Uncertain if the organization is “[incompetent or insidious](#),” former SBTi Technical Advisory Group member Bill Baue has concluded the organization is “[irredeemably corrupt](#),” is “[flouting the science](#)...and [is] making a mockery of the claim to scientific integrity implied in its name.” He observes that SBTi has “huge blindspots on the substance side of things” and has concluded that “science-based corporate pledges don’t square with facilitating fossil fuel expansion.” He [rejects](#) the “fundamental systemic flaws of the corporate sustainability field...transformation efforts within the existing economic and cultural systems are doomed, as the self-reinforcing dynamics of these systems are too strong.”



2022: RELX's CEO's and other leaders were asked to have RELX withdraw from UN Race to Zero, due to the Company not intending to abide by the initiative's requirements; after this, communications restrictions were placed on employee advocates.

UN Race to Zero

Race to Zero is a initiative with [members](#) that "must restrict the development, financing, and facilitation of new fossil fuel assets in line with appropriate scenarios." Scenarios referenced include the IPCC's and IEA's guidelines of no new coal, oil, and gas projects after those planned by 2021. Further, members must "not harm achievement of other SDGs," not make "unrealistic assumptions on development and deployment of future technologies," and must "align external policy and engagement" to the goal of "reaching global (net) zero by 2050."

“RELX appears to have signed up to the UN Race to Zero Initiative and the Race to Zero Initiative has recently updated and strengthened its criteria...So maybe that is a case for them cutting back their work [promoting] fossil fuel exploration and use?”
—Researcher, Oxford Net Zero ([July 2022](#))

A 2022 employee [report](#) made this observation about RELX's Race to Zero commitment: "Elsevier/RELX's latest commitment is membership in the UN's Race to Zero campaign, requiring an actionable plan demonstrating that, after June 2023, we will no longer be involved in facilitating new fossil fuel production. Plans for Race to Zero are being reviewed by the UN Secretary General Expert Group on Net Zero Pledges, a panel that's concerned with science over corporate narratives. As one member of the assessment group, Bill Hare, pointed out in 2021, **'all new fossil fuel investments and infrastructure—oil, coal and gas—need to stop. Not next year, not in 2030, but today.'**" It's been alleged that management [forbid](#) the

distribution of this report, at a time when Elsevier had just joined the OSDU Forum, an industry group dedicated to fossil fuel expansion.

In October 2022, it's been noted that an editor at *One Earth* [pressed](#) management to address the misrepresentations in its Race to Zero pledge: "I have made the point that in many respects, this is less about whether the company is doing the right or wrong thing more generally (although there are of course fundamental issues there) but specifically about how we have signed a pledge (without paying sufficient attention to the small print) and now much **either a) abide by that pledge or b) withdraw.**" That same month, the CEOs across RELX were [informed](#) that "those familiar with **RELX's latest pledge, that we will not facilitate fossil fuel expansion after June 15, 2023 (UN Race to Zero), are being led to think that this will indeed be the case.**"

Other 2022 [inquiries](#) were allegedly made to RELX Corporate Responsibility and RELX Compliance: "Since the science is clear that the world continuing fossil fuel expansion renders our global net zero and warming goals realistically unachievable (not to mention the SDGs—or the massive loss of life associated with such activity), we've found no credible scientist to testify that the company is being truthful in its statements. This echoes the findings of many colleagues that have already made this known to leadership...[RELX] has no intention to honor our latest [Race to Zero] pledge—to end our facilitation of fossil fuel expansion by June 15...stakeholders like me are wondering why and how false claims are determined to be exempt from our ethical commitments around how we achieve our business goals."

In 2023, Compliance and HR were purportedly [alerted](#) that "the company's publicly claiming through our Race to Zero membership that by mid-June it will refrain from facilitating fossil fuel expansion, while internally leadership has conceded it will not do this. **Why is this deception considered compatible with the ethics code and the Do the Right Thing principles?**"

A 2023 [complaint](#) filed with the Massachusetts (U.S.) State attorney general's office includes the observation that managers were unwilling "to have the company withdraw from Race to Zero, given the business decision to not abide by the requirements of that pledge."



“I would say your interpretation is correct... our starting line criteria says: ‘Pledge at the head-of-organisation level to reach (net) zero GHGs as soon as possible, and by 2050 at the latest, in line with the scientific consensus on the global effort needed to limit warming to 1.5C with no or limited overshoot, recognising that this requires phasing down and out all unabated fossil fuels as part of a global, just transition.’” —Race to Zero Policy and Engagement Lead, Climate Champions (2023)

“It was rejected because their activity was inherently related to [fossil fuel] production despite not being a producer. So, from my sector perspective, if you are an enabler, you don’t make the cut.” —Global Energy Cluster Lead, Climate Champions, on a company promoting fossil fuel extraction being rejected by UN Race to Zero (2023)

A subsequent legal [filing](#) in the United States contains these observations: “Defendants made concrete and actionable statements about their sustainability commitments, including their pledge to UN’s Net-Zero campaign goals, UN Race to Zero, and more...By stating that it is pledging and committing to be aligned with the Net Zero and Sustainability Pledges while continuing to support new fossil fuel explorations forms the basis for investor fraud... As one of many examples, when Defendants state in its Annual Report to shareholders that it is committed to Net Zero, and UN Race to Zero, it is plausibly inferred that a shareholder will materially understand this to mean that Defendants are aligning its practice to the Net Zero and Race to Zero goals...Defendants made the prom-

ise and pledge to perform concrete actions adherent to UN Net Zero and UNGC, yet in contrast they provide services and tools to support new fossil fuel exploitation, while also paying policy makers who deny climate change. Defendants also shirk responsibility by arguing that their representations cannot be held to such a high standard as to require actual and present compliance (or attempted compliance), but that it should have been read as aspirational...Not only do Defendants’ arguments seek for this Court to make baseless factual inferences about the mind of the reasonable investor, the arguments are not even logically coherent. Indeed, the Net Zero and UNGC principles highlight an urgency in absolutely ending promoting of fossil fuel explorations, and Defendants’ own representations (as opposed to any interpretation or opinion by Plaintiff) were that Defendants are in compliance with the Net Zero and UNGC policies. See SAC ¶¶ 12, 44 (quoting from RELX Annual Report, “only commission new content that advances the energy transition and reduction of CO₂ emissions”).”

The case has been [dismissed](#) due to a failure to meet the initial filing deadline.

RELX Code of Ethics

RELX's Code of Ethics assures stakeholders that the Company prohibits the use of false or misleading statements. Scientist organizations in 2023 [observed](#) that "the RELX Code of Ethics and Business Conduct requires that representations of the company 'must be accurate and not misleading.' Given the disconnect between your company's public claims and its practices, we are concerned that RELX/Elsevier is not living up to its ethical commitments."

In light of RELX's misrepresentations, management has appeared unwilling or unable to internally answer questions regarding what RELX considers unethical. One such [question](#) was reportedly brought to RELX Compliance in 2023: "Due to the company's continued facilitation of fossil fuel expansion, there are zero known credible climate scientists who agree with leadership's claim it is responding to the crisis 'at the scale deemed necessary by science.' Leadership has conceded we're continuing to maintain fossil fuel-expanding commercial activities—despite the objections of the research communities we serve—but simultaneously claiming the business' climate commitment is 'science led.' Why is this deception considered compatible with the ethics code and the Do the Right Thing principles?" Another such question [raised](#) to RELX Compliance and Sustainability officers was asking if the business activity in question "contrasted with [RELX's] statements doesn't violate the Ethics Code, as the company claims, then what does?" They appear to not have been capable or willing to effectively answer such questions.

RELX's inconsistent interpretation of this policy has allowed it to dishonestly portray businesses investing heavily in fossil fuel and petrochemical expansion as being praiseworthy climate and sustainability leaders.

UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

Leaders at the 2012 Annual General Meeting of investors were [asked](#) about awareness of amendments of the OECD Guidelines "consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and if so, whether this had any concrete consequences for Reed Elsevier's policy." The company Chairman stated Reed Elsevier is a "committed supporter of human rights and had been a signatory of the UN Global Compact for a long time." He was not familiar with the amendments of the OECD guidelines but stated "Reed Elsevier's CSR (corporate social responsibility) team could certainly engage on this matter."

Besides investors, UNGP guidelines have been brought to leadership's attention by employees in 2021, scientists and science organizations in 2022, and the Climate Rights Coalition in 2024.

The primary reasons for this ongoing grievance mechanism are RELX's failures to comply with the UNGP's [guidelines](#) to: 1) Discontinue "activities with potentially adverse climate change-related human rights impacts." 2) Conduct "appropriate and adequate consultation on their own decisions and actions likely to have climate-related human rights impacts." 3) [Seek](#) to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts." The Guiding Principles consider a business enterprise's "activities" to be "both actions and omissions, with companies [guided](#) "by the severity of the potential or actual impact identified, including whether a delayed response may make the impact irremediable." 4) [Participate](#) "in effective operational-level grievance mechanisms that can remediate climate and environmental concerns raised by affected persons," with "all those seeking to access or interact with grievance mechanisms...able to do so without fear of reprisal."

“ [RELX Corporate Responsibility] expressed a belief that the Company doesn't have a policy that says we're to refrain from providing goods or services that we know will cause harm; it was pointed out this is in fact an aspect of one of our policies.” —Fueling the Crisis: Defensive Stigma Management Techniques at Elsevier and RELX (2022)

Investor-oriented Narratives

In 2022, employees reported that "there's been an increase in social, environmental and sustainability reports by businesses like RELX that are involved in the extractive industries because they work: such companies are now considered to be global leaders on social responsibility and sustainability...RELX's reports and presentations are reflective of this reality, omitting all references to business goals that run counter to environmental goals, leaving employees, investors, and other stakeholders largely unaware of these activities. The 2021 Corporate Responsibility (CR) investor presentation [...] made no mention of the Company's business goal of furthering fossil fuel exploration projects, something that would be of particular

importance to an audience the Company acknowledged as being concerned with investing responsibly."

RELX has since been [recognized](#), alongside [Shell and BP](#), for the value it's added through reputation management. RELX has long promoted its pledges and memberships with current and potential investors in its annual "corporate responsibility" reports, online materials, and investor presentations. Leaders have also spoken directly to shareholders about climate and human rights at its Annual General Meetings (AGMs), but have avoided being forthcoming about activities associated with longterm **negative impacts:**

Shareholders were [assured](#) that the Company was "setting a good example of sustainable business practice." When an investor expressed concern that the CEO's presentation didn't mention "climatic concerns," Mr. Erik Engstrom emphasized that "corporate responsibility [is] very important to Reed Elsevier." Investors were told the company had come a long way in "contribut[ing] positively to the sustainability and social responsibility agenda" and "that the businesses the Company was in was essentially in many places supporting sustainability."

The Company [informed](#) investors it was "very pleased with the way that the sustainability agenda had become embedded in the company."

When a shareholder [asked](#) leadership if the Company was being attentive to human rights guidelines in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and OECD Guidelines, leadership told investors that it was "keeping up to date [on human rights], and also challenging itself to do everything that could be done...Reed Elsevier [is] very active on the human rights area." The Company also assured investors that "Reed Elsevier's audits **included questions that explicitly dealt with the adherence to human rights,**" including "environmental business practices."

RELX shareholders were [assured](#) of "its alignment with the UN Global Compact," while a Company [report](#) boasted that "sustainability is deeply embedded within Elsevier."

RELX told [investors](#) it had "won a number of awards in the sustainability area."



2011

The Company [promoted](#) how the research it publishes helps to advance oil and gas exploration. RELX produced an oil and gas [webinar](#) titled *How to Make a New Venture Project More Successful*. While maintaining membership in ALEC, the group held a [session](#) at its annual meeting titled "Warming Up to Climate Change: The Many Benefits of Increased Atmospheric CO2."



2013

The Company positioned itself "as the [leading book publisher](#) for the oil and gas industry" and [launched](#) the *Journal of Unconventional Oil and Gas Resources* to support "field development of unconventional resources."



2014

RELX product Geofacets works to [accelerate](#) fossil fuel exploration. In "helping solve the exploration puzzle in upstream oil and gas," RELX claims that "exploration has never been more seamless." ([Video](#))



2015

RELX [offered](#) due diligence solutions for oil and gas to remove barriers to opening operations in emerging markets.



2016

An Elsevier R&D Solutions [case study](#) noted that for "helping experts dig deeper and discover more...there's no better partner." The company [marketed](#) its oil and gas books as serving the "increased need to locate unconventional resources," covering "full development cycle of unconventional resources, from exploration through production."

RELX has also long promoted its strong ESG ratings as part of its “corporate responsibility” credentials. This in itself is deceptive due to researchers [observing](#) that ESG ratings providers predominantly define ESG as “the impact of environmental and social risks on financial performance” and that “ESG ratings have low associations with environmental and social outcomes.” ESG professionals themselves have come to this same conclusion: ESG has been [described](#) by the former Chief Investment Officer at BlackRock (one of RELX’s largest institutional investors) as “marketing gobbledygook” that “is actively misleading people.”

A 2025 RELX investor [presentation](#) showcases RELX’s positive rating from various ESG ratings schemes, including Morningstar’s Sustainalytics. RELX has been [promoted](#) by Morningstar as one of the best sustainable companies to own; however, a Senior Sales officer with Morningstar has confirmed that **“involvement in facilitating fossil fuel assets] is not a downgrade trigger for GSS [Sustainalytics’ Global Standards Screening].”** With many ESG-branded investment products touting alignment with UNGC Principles that RELX has been repeatedly accused of violating, a Senior Project Manager at the UNGC has observed that she doesn’t believe investments “supporting fossil fuel expansion would be considered in line with the UN Global Compact or its Ten Principles, particularly the principles that sit under ‘Environment.’”

A November 19, 2024 legal filing [observes](#) that RELX stated “in its Annual Report to shareholders that it is committed to Net Zero and UN Race to Zero (see, e.g., Compl. ¶¶ 10-12), it is plausible that a shareholder will materially

RELX Group is honored to be one of the leading companies earning a position on @CDP’s Climate Change A List – spearheading corporate action on climate change. bit.ly/Scores2018

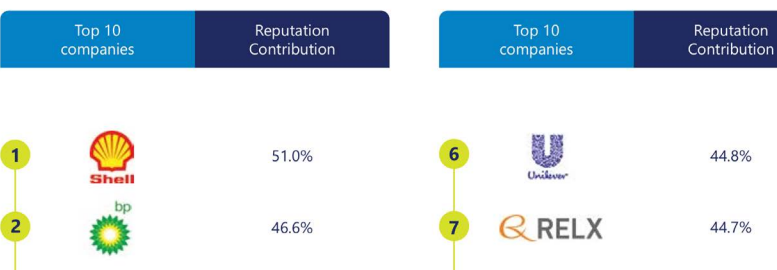
#CDPAList #ActOnClimate #ClimateChange @RELXGroupCR



Falsely claiming its primary negative impacts result from paper use, travel, waste, and energy use, RELX has earned high sustainability ratings that it promotes to investors.

understand this to mean that Defendants are aligning its practice to the Net Zero and Race to Zero goals.” The filing observes that RELX “take[s] the position that their sustainability related statements are nothing more than puffery, and should be deemed immaterial. Such assertion is **morally and legally troubling**.”

A 2025 amended class action complaint [observes](#) that a manager allegedly told the plaintiff that he needed “to ‘try to think about what’s palatable for the company’ and that leadership isn’t going to admit ‘certain things are out of alignment.’” The lawsuit asserts that “statements made by Defendants to its shareholders which materially misled investors to believe that RELX has a robust CSR program and implementing ESG goals to its business practice.” The complaint observes that “a pension scheme provider included RELX in its Impact Plan and [spotlighted](#) it: ‘RELX has demonstrated measurable impacts on both society and the environment. But beyond the tools it develops its stated purpose is that **these tools are used for the benefit of the world**. This is why it was selected for inclusion in the Impact Plan.’” Pension Bee’s newer [Climate Plan](#), an [investment](#) presented as being “**in line with the Paris Agreement**,” has promoted that it “goes further” than simply investing in “companies committed to reducing their carbon emissions” by excluding “companies misaligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” Investors are [informed](#) that “the plan’s objective is to align with the goals of the Paris Agreement to keep the



2023: Echo Group partners with RELX for a [meeting](#) on the lack of transparency in environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) standards; RELX wins a 'Britain's Most Admired Companies' award, [sponsored](#) by Echo Group. Other winners include oil majors undermining global health. Echo Group has [praised](#) "Shell, BP, and RELX [as] among the top ten for highest Reputation Contribution, reflecting consistent leadership, energy transition strategies, and stakeholder confidence." Their 2025 [report](#) that quantifies "the impact of corporate reputation on market capitalisation" ranks RELX a top 3 riser in Reputation Value. RELX is "focused investment in brand, stakeholder engagement, and clarity of purpose can yield strong reputational dividends."

The Climate Plan - invest in line with the Paris Agreement

Find out how you can use your pension to invest in environmentally friendly businesses at the forefront of the transition to a low carbon economy.

Get started

When investing, your capital is at risk



A financial product containing RELX stock is marketed by a firm as being "in line with the Paris Agreement."

rise in global surface temperature well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. **Any companies who negatively impact or hinder the progress of environmental UN SDGs are excluded from the investment portfolio.** Created in [partnership](#) with State Street Global Advisors in response to "desire among savers to evolve how they invest their values," this [fund](#)—labeled "Paris Aligned"—holds over 14,000 [shares](#) of RELX stock (2025).

According to one employee [report](#), concerns about RELX's representations made to shareholders was raised in 2021: "Is the company adequately providing information to investors and the general public that is sufficient to accurately evaluate our involvement in climate change-related human rights harms?"

“The suggestion that the Company could refrain from claiming it’s fully aligned with the Paris Agreement until it could verify that claim was not embraced, nor was the idea of altering the wording of our policies in order to more accurately reflect the business.” —Fueling the Crisis, a 2022 employee [report](#)

The following are some recent examples of funds that invested heavily in RELX and how they’ve been marketed by investment firms (not RELX) to consumers:

2021

An Eiris Foundation [guide](#) for “funds that are exclusively available to charity investors” who seek “outcomes such as the Sustainable Development Goals” and investment decisions that “promote public benefit” features RELX as a top 10 holding in 11 funds. 8 of the funds seek to avoid

environmental and human rights infringements, including Epworth Climate Stewardship Fund for Charities, which **screens against “all companies that extract or refine fossil fuels, [and] those companies that have a material involvement in supplying them with goods or services.”** Two of these funds are offered to church trusts and “grounded in the advice produced by the Church of England’s Ethical Investment Advisory Group.” This group prioritizes “investing for a renewed and sustainable world” with investments that “reflect the Church’s teaching and values on a range of issues, including climate change, human rights, responsible technology and extractive industries.”

2022

RELX is the 5th largest [holding](#) for Triodos Investment Management B.V., with RELX in the top 10 investments made in 3 of its funds in 2022. These offerings seek to “make money work for environmental and social change,” “contribute to the transition to an economy within planetary boundaries,” and “contribute to the transition to an economy where all humans can enjoy a prosperous life.” Investments that “cause significant harm to any environmental or social sustainable investment objective,” or are misalignment with OECD Guidelines and the UNGP, are excluded. Exclusions include any **“exposure to companies active in the fossil fuel sector.”**



ESG Companies Bankroll GOP AGs—the Very Officials Retaliating Against Their Climate Goals

2022: A Center for Media and Democracy (CMD) investigation identified “companies that are publicly committed to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles yet have recently donated large amounts of campaign cash to a group of Republican state attorneys general that is hyper-focused on eroding air and water regulations, promoting fossil fuel companies, and using state governments to punish companies that try to limit their climate-related risks by divesting from oil, gas, and coal.”



Michiel Kolman, PhD
@michielams

...

Just launched: comprehensive overview of Elsevier's science-based Climate Action program, led by [@rachelcmartin](#): lnkd.in/et2aBvKi

9:15 AM · Dec 28, 2022 · 50 Views

2022: Elsevier claims its Climate Action program is "science-based"; fossil fuel expansion and misinformation are not compatible with climate goals.

2023

RELX is the asset constituting the 2 greatest proportion of investments in the [ONE Sustainable Fund](#), a fund that "invests in companies that provide services and technologies with a positive environmental impact." PensionBee informs investors RELX products are "used for the benefit of the world" and "advance [the] United Nations Sustainable Development Goals." [RELX](#) is one of 15 companies in the Aoris investment portfolio, which applies "ESG principles to [its] ownership decisions." Aoris **cites RELX's net zero pledge and that it has identified how it helps advance progress on all but 2 of the 17 SDG's, including Good Health & Wellbeing and Climate Action.**

[RELX](#) is a top investment of Handelsbanken Europa Selektiv, a fund that "promotes environmental and social characteristics through sustainable investments" that are "aligned with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights." [RELX](#) maintains its position in the VanEck Sustainable European Equal Weight UCITS ETF, which [invests](#) in companies "that comply with the UN Global Compact Principles for responsible corporate behavior."

[RELX](#) is included in Nordea's European Responsible Enhanced Equity Fund and Global Responsible Enhanced Equity Fund, which invest in "companies and issuers involved in activities that contributed to an environmental or social objective as outlined in UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and/or the EU Taxonomy," and **excluding those violating the UNGC and OECD principles.** For 2023, [RELX](#) is a top investment for 8 of Schroder's funds. Schroder seeks **investments that "enable system-or economy-wide reductions in carbon emissions."** The funds exclude companies that have breached one or more 'global norms' causing environmental or social harm, such as those in the UNGC principles, the OECD Guidelines and the UNGP, or that **lack "processes and compliance mechanisms to monitor compliance** with UN Global Compact principles and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises."

2024

Listed as a [favorite choice](#) for ESG investments, RELX is in the top 10 assets for ESG funds offered by [Goldman Sachs](#), [BlackRock](#), [Fidelity](#), [Lazard](#) and [Invesco](#) ("To support the transition to a low carbon economy over the medium to long term with a view **to achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.**") [RELX](#) is in the top 10 holdings of the Goldman Sachs Patrimonial Balanced Europe Sustainable fund, which selects "companies that pursue a policy of sustainable development." The fund does not invest "in issuers involved in activities related to...Arctic drilling and shale oil & gas." [RELX](#) is the top holding of EdenTree Responsible and Sustainable UK Equity fund, which holds companies with "**sustainable and socially responsible practices.**" [RELX](#) is the 2 largest holding of the Trojan Ethical Income Fund; for investing decisions, Troy's [assessment](#) includes whether a company has "set targets aligned with the objectives of the Paris Agreement ('**Paris-aligned**')."

2025

RELX is [listed](#) as among the top ESG fund managers' favorite UK shares. The [WS Epworth Climate Stewardship Fund for Charities](#), investing in companies that "help the transition to a lower carbon economy," features [RELX](#) as its 5th largest holding. [RELX](#) is a top 10 holding of the S&P UK Net Zero 2050 Paris- Aligned ESG Index, a [fund](#) "weighted to be collectively compatible with a 1.5°C global warming climate scenario at the index level." Its [methodology](#) entails the exclusion of companies with "violations



of the principles of the United Nations' Global Compact." Exclusions are based on Sustainalytics' Global Standards Screening (GSS), an assessment of a company's impact on stakeholders and the extent to which a company causes, contributes, or is linked to violations of international norms and standards based on UNGC Principles, as well as OECD and UNGP standards. [RELX](#) is a top 5 holding of Mirova Europe Sustainable Economy Fund, which invests in "companies that contribute to the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and/or reduces the risk of not achieving one or more of the UN SDGs." [RELX](#) is a top 10 holding of "M&G (Lux) Pan European Sustain Paris Aligned Fund EUR A Acc," which invests in "companies that contribute towards the Paris Agreement climate change goal." M&G [excludes](#) companies "in breach of the **'Do no significant harm' principle**. These include companies which are flagged as violating the UN's Global Compact."

“Elsevier is directly marketing to the industry. It is thus selecting them as customers and hoping they use the products Elsevier is promoting to them. The medical principle of ‘first do no harm’ comes to mind: ‘First don’t create and promote products to a destructive industry.’” —Dr. Julia Steinberger, in a 2022 employee group [report](#)

[RELX](#) is the 4th largest holding of the Rathbone Greenbank Global Sustainability Fund, which invests "in companies that operate sustainably and are committed to helping achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals." The FTSE All-Share Paris aligned (PAB) Index, designed for investors seeking to align their portfolios **"with the climate goals of the Paris Agreement,"** features [RELX](#) as a top 10 holding. The [Green Century MSCI International Index Fund](#) portfolio of investments has an [investment strategy](#) to "invest in companies that meet high ESG criteria" as it "seeks to invest in **companies that have not driven climate change.**" Its fossil fuel free investing [guide](#) notes that many people **"do not want to support the industry and companies that misled the public for decades about climate change" but "many people who care about the environment continue to inadvertently invest in companies that harm our planet."** Green Century MSCI International Index Fund holds over \$3 million U.S. in [RELX stock](#).

RELX asserted in a 2024 [legal filing](#) that information about its products and services "are not secret, but rather are available to every investor." But it's not clear that the market is aware that things like [paper and travel](#) are not actually RELX's primary negative impacts; that RELX considers "data for good" to include data and misinformation in service of fossil fuel and petrochemical expansion; that RELX is interpreting its commitment to the SDG's, warming targets, net zero pathways, and UNGC Principles as allowing it to still support fossil fuel expansion; that its decades-long adherence to the UNGC's 'precautionary approach' to environmental harms and its commitments to acting on credible human rights due diligence processes are apparently forward-looking pledges; and that by promoting itself as one of the most sustainable businesses in the world, RELX substantially misrepresents itself and what it considers to be acceptable negative impacts. The 2025 amended complaint [argues](#) that "RELX's misstatements created a reliance on members of the public who believe in their statements and commitments to protect the environment...RELX misrepresented to asset and investment management companies about their business practices so that they can deceptively gain funds from investors who seek sustainability as a criteria for making investments."

“Based on business activity and inaction resulting from greenwashing concerns, RELX does not consider greenwashing or promoting destructive energy projects to be issues that need to be addressed within the scope of its business...Company policies and statements [should] accurately reflect the full extent of the company's business activity. —2022 employee group [report](#)

“There is dishonesty about how these issues are being addressed.” —Cell Press editor (2022)

UNDERMINING AND ATTACKING CLIMATE SCIENCE AND ADVOCACY

“Companies like RELX prevent us from seeing critically important information that’s supposed to be public...about pressing problems like climate change.”
—WIRED

Richard Horton, the editor-in-chief of the Company’s flagship journal *The Lancet*, has [called for](#) health sector activism “to **keep fossil fuels in the ground**,” and has more broadly called for scientists to engage “in the struggle for [climate justice](#).” But his employer has worked to undermine climate advocates, with materials that [demean protesters](#) as having “no fracking clue.” RELX published an online [commentary](#) in 2023 that bemoans how “the lack of a North Sea exploration and production... is undermining the [oil and gas] industry,” **pointing criticism at the influence of “the climate agenda.”** RELX has [promoted](#) the idea that the Keystone pipeline would have “little climate impact”—despite the oil industry influenced report cited being labeled “[a sham](#)”—and it has [repeatedly promoted](#) an [article](#) that claims the real story of the Dakota Access Pipeline was the “polluting encampment” of people protesting “the safest pipeline to be designed in history.” In 2023, RELX [published](#) an online commentary that mocked European “disapproval of fossil fuel energy development” through withholding money from hydrocarbon projects and cutting the duration of gas contracts as “creating an illusion of defying gravity. Here on earth, however, [the] apple will always fall down.” Another Company [post](#) was critical of narratives focused on the

“demonisation of fossil fuels indiscriminately of their actual carbon emission impact.” This RELX communication also criticized those calling on banks to “[stop financing new oil, gas and coal expansion](#)” by falsely framing this as a call for the “abrupt elimination” of fossil fuels. The Company has elsewhere [attempted](#) to dismiss climate advocates as “want[ing] us to leave all fossil fuels in the ground,” adding the observation: “Will fracked gas cause climate change? Sure it will...[but] by bringing jobs and other benefits, why not frack for gas?” Perversely—despite its own [publications](#) indicating climate change threatens “the future of a hospitable planet Earth”—the RELX Board has [concluded](#) that **climate change “will be unlikely to have a significant impact [on RELX] in the medium and longer term.”**

When confronted by a scientist-investor at the 2023 Annual General Meeting, the Company confirmed it was continuing to provide the industry with “data, and analytics, and information.” RELX leadership [emphasized](#) that “the world still needs fossil fuels.” RELX leadership’s deflective discourse at the meeting, that “it is a transition,” was echoed by a RELX analyst on a 2025 [podcast](#). The host emphasized that Europe “need[s] investments in gas plants...**we need those additional [gas] plants.**” He states there’s a need to build **more of everything**—emphasizing that “it is effectively an energy transition, right? It doesn’t happen overnight.” RELX reframing the energy transition as something that can accommodate hydrocarbon expansion is devastating to scientists and activists who are sounding the [alarm](#) about the human rights risks such expansion is generating for **billions of people.**

Oil, Gas & Petroleum
@gulfpublish

No Fracking Clue! bit.ly/2jtR5rF



RELX has undermined climate advocates as being clueless.

Journal of Political Ecology

ARTICLES

Greenwashing at Elsevier: A political ecology of corporate publishing

Authors: Angus Lyall (Universidad San Francisco de Quito) , Mark Ortiz (Penn State University), Emily Billo (Florida State University)

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Abstract

The largest science publishing corporations, including Elsevier, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, Springer, and Sage, are key partners for the oil, gas, and coal industries insofar as they distribute scientific research and data that facilitate fossil fuel exploration, production, and distribution. Critical researchers seldom trace fossil fuels and, in turn,



Climate Rights Coalition @climaterightsco · Jun 6, 2024



A 2021 climate & #humanRights ethics complaint at #Elsevier caused it to enforce a rule effecting the sharing of content in the complaint: Elsevier's #fossilFuel marketing materials & paywalled climate science. A senior Cell Press manager's reaction 🙄

1/5 🇺🇸

“Wtf?”

A recent research [paper](#) highlighted “how corporate publishers attempt to actively conceal their relations with the fossil fuel industry through increasingly dynamic greenwashing strategies in the public sphere and through evolving ‘greenwashing rituals’ among workers.” It observes that “Elsevier representatives have detailed this problematic position: ‘...the IPCC and IEA (International Energy Agency) indicate that fossil fuels will continue to play a role in the energy mix for many years to come’ (Martin, 2022). The IPCC and IEA, however, have been clear that fossil fuel exploration must halt.” These greenwashing rituals among workers were extensively documented in the Spring 2022 employee [report](#) referenced above. Besides use of misleading pledges and policies, RELX makes use of what employees described as ‘defensive stigma management’ tools to help ward off criticism. The communication strategies directed at employees include deflection, dissociation, deception/non-disclosure, denial, and disengagement. The report observes leadership internally dismissing employee concerns by expressing “disappointment” that employees “didn’t focus on positive impacts of the Company”; that “there isn’t scientific consensus that new fossil fuel exploration and development projects are objectionable”; informing employees that “there [are] not alternatives” to oil and gas; and claiming “paper and travel” are the Company’s primary negative impacts.

“We hope to exceed the Paris Agreement goals – including our tier 3 emissions. Think of major contributing factors such as paper and travel – if the rest of the world does that too, we make a real impact.”
—Elsevier’s Managing Director of STMJ (2022 greenwashing report)



richard horton

@richardhorton1

Follow



A question. If you discovered that your organisation had a Political Action Committee that gave money to US Congressional politicians who were anti-science, climate sceptics, and supporters of US disengagement from WHO, what would you do? And how disappointed would you be?

1:21 PM - 18 Aug 2020

Richard Horton's advocacy has failed to have RELX act consistently with its pledge to align lobbying with critical climate goals; After RELX supported US President Trump's re-election, The Lancet noted a “shift to policies that threaten the health and survival of people in the USA and worldwide.”

“Leadership demonstrated its desire to frame and control the debate when one of the members from the Internal Climate Board discouraged any individual environmental advocacy at the Company.”
—2022 greenwashing report

A [complaint](#) was made in 2022 of leadership’s refusal to “correct a misleading statement made to the entire Cell Press community that dismissed the calls of climate scientists regarding the severe impacts of new fossil fuel projects.” Other observations included management’s claims that “there’s an ‘allowance’ before fossil fuel-expanding activities need to cease,” that RELX “does not even promote fossil fuel extraction,” and other positions that are not “reflective of the reality of our business, policies, or science.” These and management’s actions pressuring advocates to disengage from their concerns apparently “[raised no flags](#).” Questions pertaining to RELX’s use of claims that undermine climate science and advocacy appear to have been consistently [ignored](#) by managers over an extended period.



2023: A scientist-investor at the RELX Annual General Meeting asks leadership to justify its fossil fuel expanding efforts. In misrepresenting the requirements for a just transition, the investor notes: “I don’t think you understand what ‘transition’ means.”

“The company keeps lying about this. That may be true...You might work at a company where you’re never going to think they’re doing the right thing. And then it’s a question of is this a place you really want to work?” —Company manager, 2023 (2024 lawsuit, paragraph 70)

RELX’s dishonest communication techniques have extended to addressing scientist advocates who initiated and signed a 2022 [petition](#) that called on RELX to “cease engaging in business activities that are demonstrably antithetical to conceivably meeting these climate goals.” RELX Corporate Responsibility avoids confronting the fact that various divisions of RELX are failing to abide by its pledges, including LexisNexis “removing barriers to exploring and operating in emerging markets through Lexis Nexis Risk Solutions for oil and gas.” On this point, RELX’s [reply](#) was simply that the specific white paper cited “was not from our Risk business and was withdrawn from circulation,” sidestepping the underlying issue that the scientist groups were forced to [address](#) yet again: that LexisNexis “continues to provide guidance for the industry to ‘carry out oil and gas exploration and production,’ including legal resources for licensing, insurance, commercial agreements, joint ventures, and ‘contracts that are available for use throughout the oil and gas industry.’ The point is not the existence of a single white paper, but LexisNexis’ decision to aid fossil fuel expansion after 2021.” This point remains unaddressed.

In its 2024 [legal filing](#), RELX defended its actions by asserting “the ongoing need for energy from the oil and gas industry for many years to come.” RELX argued that “Plaintiff conveniently ignores the ‘net’ part of ‘net zero’—no serious policy goal asserts that humanity will produce absolutely zero carbon by 2050, and virtually all acknowledge there will be some ongoing need to produce oil and gas for the indefinite future.” Here the world’s largest publisher of scientific research has found it appropriate to misrepresent the mid-century net zero goal’s requirement for the cessation of new fossil fuel projects. RELX undermines the science-based warnings of the IPCC, IEA, and the scientific community by asserting that the plaintiff has “a subjective, philosophical disagreement with RELX about what it means to be sustainable and thinks that RELX should have adopted his views instead...Differing opinions about what constitutes progress towards a generalized, forward-looking goal do not suffice to plead intent to defraud...others at RELX simply held a different view about what actions RELX should take to comply with aspirational statements about sustainability.” By continuing to facilitate global fossil fuel expansion, RELX’s misrepresentations undermine climate advocates, climate science, and the very idea of what ‘sustainability’ means.

“[RELX Corporate Responsibility has] argued that their fossil fuel activity ‘shouldn’t negate all of the amazing work’ they have done with renewable energy. Scientists point out that continuing support for fossil fuels is exactly what will negate all their work and the work of the scientists they serve.” —Health for Extinction Rebellion [statement](#) (2025)

Union of Concerned Scientists
@UCSUSA

Scientists are calling out Elsevier, a major publisher, for anti-climate and [#greenwashing](#) practices. It’s a big deal.

➔ Read more here: act.ucsusa.org/3g98eXt

✅ Get involved: act.ucsusa.org/3VtZYBh

Climate Rights Coalition
@climaterightsco

📌 This piece on @microsoft employees confronting #greenwashing has deep parallels w/ science publisher #Elsevier, where employees also told leaders their #fossilFuel expanding activity negates its positive efforts. 1/5 [grist.org/accountability...](#) @grist @WeAreDrilled @themasadstone

MICROSOFT	ELSEVIER
Employee email to leaders (2024)	Employee email to leaders (2023)
“This work to maximize oil production with our technology is negating all of our good work , extending the age of fossil fuels, and enabling untold emissions”	“The expansion we’re presently informing needs to already have stopped... Most pressing is an end to activity that negates our many sustainability efforts. ”

Julia Steinberger @JKSteinberger · Apr 25, 2024
This is a big deal. #Elsevier #Climate #Scandal

Climate Rights Coalition @climaterightsco · Apr 25, 2024
The Director of @theLancet in 2022 forbid employees at science publisher #Elsevier from sharing a report containing scientist insights about Elsevier’s support of #fossilFuel expansion. @StuartBCapstick made this contribution. 1/4

“The science is clear—science that Elsevier itself publishes—that there can be no new oil and gas exploration if the world is to meet its climate commitments. The company has a choice: align with that science and the urgency of climate action, or turn a blind eye in order to supplement its profits.”

—Dr Stuart Capstick
Cardiff University
September 20, 2022



“It’s time the hydrocarbons energy sector **improved** its messaging.”

RELX has promoted and used a fear-based strategy for dealing with climate advocates.



Fear-based Tactics

RELX has repeatedly [promoted](#) the “[helpful](#)” advice of an [article](#) that calls for oil and gas to push back on “the ‘no more fossil fuels’ movement” by using Trump-inspired fear-based tactics. RELX has itself made use of this suggestion with communications that warn of the dangers of moving away from fossil fuels: A mining expo has promoted that an “Australia coal rush” is “[needed](#) to keep lights on.” Leadership is telling its [employees](#) and customers that fossil fuel expansion is “necessary.” Another [communication](#) emphasized that a modern military is inconceivable without oil. RELX more recently [promoted](#) the appointment of Saudi Aramco’s CEO to the board of BlackRock—RELX’s largest institutional shareholder—as a “savvy” move that “embraces market realities,” while sharing the [warning](#) that “the most environmentally conscious populations are learning about the **harsh realities of trying to quit fossil fuels.**”

Fear-based strategies appear to have been used to target RELX’s own employees, seemingly to help prevent the spread of awareness about the Company’s misrepresentations. Starting in 2021, it’s been alleged RELX [failed](#) to follow procedures “required of ethics complaints.” Leadership was also unwilling to assure employees that RELX adheres to the OECD’s non-retaliation guidelines for the reporting of human rights concerns to internal and external stakeholders.

“For those questioning the company’s commitment to our policies, could [Cell Press leadership] please speak to their understanding of the company’s pledge to ‘refrain from discriminatory or disciplinary action against workers who make bona fide reports

to management or, as appropriate, to the competent public authorities, on practices that contravene [our] policies?” —Unanswered [question](#) submitted to Cell Press’ management team by a group of employees

“I don’t feel senior or secure enough personally in my role to be very outspoken.” —Editor at *The Lancet Planetary Health* (2022)

A 2022 employee [report](#) expressed the concern that the company’s focus on information suppression following a formal ethics complaint pertaining to Company deceptions was “a response to greenwashing concerns that an editor-in-chief at an Elsevier journal described as ‘intimidation.’” [Later](#) that year, management “successfully pressure[d] employees to remove their names from a greenwashing report; as part of the rationale for blocking the report, management would claim the company does not promote fossil fuel expansion.” A [complaint](#) through an ethics reporting channel flagged management’s “insults and baseless claims” and that “employees at different levels have expressed apprehension about making that same decision [to speak up] due to concerns about retaliation.” This “raised no ethical flags” and resulted in “no known corrective actions.”

“[Richard Horton] mentioned that he was asked to remove his name from your list in the report – this is a bit sinister...He just thought you might want to know.” —Editor at *The Lancet* (2022)

The 2024 [lawsuit](#) raised management's use of "harassing, intimidating, and isolating" tactics and "baseless and derogatory" claims as part of efforts to undermine "the voluntary participation and collaboration of employees." The complaint observes: "On or around October 26, 2022, Mr. Lyall reported new ethics concerns to Elsevier's Compliance and Ethics department, stating the company maintained 'a psychologically uneasy work environment' because (a) it declined to communicate its retaliation policy; (b) management's use of intimidation tactics; (c) attacks on Mr. Lyall's honesty and integrity; (d) Mr. Lyall's manager informing him that she 'can't protect [him] forever'; and (e) leaders at the company isolating Mr. Lyall. In response to Mr. Lyall's expressed concerns about his psychological safety in the workplace, including harassment and intimidation tactics from [RELX's] leadership, the Ethics Department dismissed the concerns on the false grounds that they had already been addressed."

“Plaintiff recounts the experience: The pressure put on me to conform to the company's 'narrative' turned my paycheck into a bribe.” —Legal filing, 2024

The lawsuit alleges that Mr. Lyall was told by management that “not everybody you engage with is going to be as authentic as you want them to be.” He reached out to “an anti-bullying initiative explaining the Defendants’ hostile actions and that ‘the only ‘solution’ that’s been offered is the suggestion that I may want to reconsider working here.” After this, HR was informed of “concern about the lack of follow up on ‘psychological safety concerns of employees from fear of retaliation.” A follow up communication was sent “regarding the lack of acknowledgment about the harms he suffered as a result of the hostile and intimidating work environment.” Neither generated a reply. His employment was [terminated](#) in 2023, “shortly after seeking accommodations for a mental health disability triggered by management’s backlash over his advocacy against the company’s alleged climate-related ethics violations.”

“In case of a perceived threat, the main interest and kneejerk response of the institution will be to protect the institution. And as Ahmed (2021) has pointed out, in practice this means that it will protect specific people, those who hold power in our institutions, over other people that are seen as disposable.” —Dr. Esther Turnhout, Environmental Science & Policy, Elsevier (2024)

One of the [unanswered questions](#) posed by Kristina Dahl (Union of Concerned Scientists) and Stuart Parkinson (Scientists for Global Responsibility) prior to announcing this UNGP grievance mechanism was this: “Does the company agree to follow its UNGP pledge to ‘participate in effective operational-level grievance mechanisms that can remediate climate and environmental concerns raised by affected persons’...with ‘all those seeking to access or interact with grievance mechanisms...able to do so without fear of reprisal?’” In issuing legal threats prior to and following the launch of this grievance mechanism, RELX is thus far failing in its UNGP duty to not use fear-based tactics to undermine this process.

"Companies with a culture of integrity [...] make a positive impact on society"

Jennifer Jung

2025: RELX promotes a culture of "psychological comfort," "doing the right thing," and being "honest, transparent and fair – even when it's not popular."

RESPONSES TO RELX'S CLAIMS



Protesters at RELX HQ in 2023.

“At RELX and Elsevier we consider corporate responsibility for human rights and the environment to be a duty and not a voluntary matter.”

Based on business activities going back decades that have included misleading the public about RELX's chosen fossil fuel and petrochemical customers, and the dangers of supporting their business aims, this claim is demonstrably false. RELX's business decision to actively support fossil fuel expansion past the point such activity was determined compatible with the Paris Agreement and global net zero goals renders RELX's claim to be demonstrably false.

“We have in the past provided detailed responses which address the main points raised in the latest communication sent to RELX in February.”

RELX's claim that it has provided responses that address the points that have been raised is demonstrably false. Climate-related human rights questions submitted to the Company from employees ([2021](#), April 2022 [deadline](#)), scientist groups ([2022-23](#), November 2023 [deadline](#)), and the CRC ([2024](#)) are not known to have received any substantive replies. Stakeholders remain unclear on how large the negative human rights impacts associated with RELX's business decisions would need to be in order for them to be considered antithetical to its conception of 'sustainability' and its duty to protect human rights. No information has been provided regarding the existence of any RELX environmental impact assessments; regarding the existence of any credible human rights due diligence addressing negative impacts linked to products, services,

and business relationships; regarding any steps taken to refrain from providing information to the public based on inaccurate, misleading, and unfounded assertions that harm the ability of the public to make informed decisions pertaining to the fossil fuel industry and climate change; regarding how RELX has and will be providing for appropriate remediation. In addition, stakeholders are unaware of when the Company will withdraw from the market all products, services, and messaging that supports fossil fuel expansion and industry misinformation.

“Elsevier does not develop, finance or facilitate new fossil fuel assets.”

Based on the above observations, RELX's claim that the Company does not facilitate new fossil fuel assets is demonstrably false.

“We share the urgency of the global risk from climate change, and we take seriously the part we play in enabling the action needed to address it.”

Based on RELX's dissemination of fossil fuel industry misinformation and generation of products and messaging that continue to support new fossil fuel projects, RELX's claim that it takes seriously the part it plays in climate change is demonstrably false. Describing any business supporting fossil fuel expansion and misinformation as “leading the energy transition” completely misrepresents the requirements for a just energy transition and for maintaining internationally recognized human rights standards.

"We are taking well-documented, science-based action, including alignment of our operations, products and services with a net zero pathway."

Based on verifiable observations, RELX's claim that the Company's products and services are aligned with a net zero pathway is demonstrably false.

"We have reviewed our journals to ensure their missions reflect and advance the UN SDGs and promote a pathway to a net zero future...[and] ensure they support an energy transition."

The content of Elsevier's journals, which include the latest insights promoting vast new fossil fuel development with the capacity to cripple the planet's life-supporting capabilities, are not reflective of their supposed missions to 'advance the UN SDGs and promote a pathway to a net zero future.' This claim misleads the public and policy makers regarding the essential requirements needed to meet the aims of the SDGs and a net zero future, which included the cessation of new fossil fuel projects and infrastructure beyond those that were planned in 2021.

"Elsevier supports scientific discourse, underpinned by editorial independence...we believe supporting the advancement of knowledge through evidence-based, verified research is the most effective way in which we can contribute to the energy transition."

This statement sidesteps the reality that RELX's messaging and its research journals are littered with fossil fuel industry misinformation, including that fossil fuel expansion is consistent with the idea of green development and climate goals. Such claims are not evidence-based & can be used to justify State policies that promote continued fossil fuel expansion. RELX's most impactful contribution to the energy transition has been to maintain activities preventing a timely, just transition from taking place.

"We have discontinued Geofacets...We are not a member of the OSDU Data Platform... We have also been actively working to reduce our own environmental footprint across our business and value chain for more than 15 years...We are committed to become net zero for all direct and indirect emissions by 2040. We are guided in our efforts by an independent Climate Advisory Board."

RELX's statement does not address Geofacets being used to promote fossil fuel expansion past the time the scientific community determined such activity needed to cease to ensure a safe and stable future, nor how the Company plans to provide remediation for the negative impacts associated with products that continue to serve hydrocarbon expansion. The statement regarding the OSDU Forum does not address the Company's decision in 2022 to join the OSDU Forum, an industry group dedicated to fossil fuel expansion, nor how the Climate Advisory Board that Steward Whayman co-chairs determined the human rights impacts associated with supporting the aims of the OSDU Forum are compatible with RELX's human rights obligations. It's clear that RELX is failing its duty to protect human rights by performing and acting on credible human rights due diligence processes.

RELX's claim that it has been reducing its environmental footprint for more than 15 years is demonstrably false. Such a claim neglects to consider the impacts of helping to flood the world with additional hydrocarbons at a crucial point for our planet, while knowingly misleading the world about the dangers of this activity. **15 years ago, researchers were clear that fossil fuel expansion is a threat to global health; the science is clear that RELX's actions over the past 15 years will have increasingly devastating consequences.**

“It is uncontested that the majority of carbon reserves listed on stock exchanges must remain underground if we are to avoid exceeding a 2C rise in global mean temperature and the catastrophic health impacts this would have...It is wrong to profit from an industry whose core business threatens human and planetary health.” —Dr. Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of The Lancet (2015)

“As the crisis worsens, won't it get harder for those tasked with maintaining a business orientation to claim a scientific one?” —Question from a 2022 Cell Press employee presentation.

CONCLUSION

Attempts by [employees](#), [investors](#), [customers](#), [scientist organizations](#) and other [advocacy groups](#) requesting that RELX cease serving the interests of the fossil fuel energy order through its products, services, and messaging have proven unsuccessful. Responses by Company representatives have consistently been marred by RELX prioritizing its own interests over planetary health. While RELX appears to have started adding [legal disclaimers](#), [previously absent](#), to materials that promote fossil fuel expansion, such actions have zero effect in addressing or providing remediation for RELX's past and continued promotion of activities being linked to human rights harms. Shareholders may benefit in the short term, but society is deeply imperiled by fossil fuel expansion. Due to the troubling observation that RELX considers its negative impacts to be acceptable, this UNGP Human Rights Grievance Mechanism is being continued by Scientist Rebellion and other allied stakeholders.

“International human rights law should be further interpreted in the light of the best available science, which indicates that: Most of the world's proven fossil fuel reserves must be left unburned...fossil fuel supply must decline by 55 per cent by 2035 on 2023 levels; Fossil fuel usage must decrease rapidly...No new fossil fuel-burning power plants should be built...These science-based measures are necessary to prevent further intergenerational human rights harm, as climate actions implemented in this decade will have impacts now and for thousands of years.” —United Nations report (2025)

“[Europe] need[s] investments in gas plants...we need those additional [gas] plants.” —RELX podcast (2025)



QUESTIONS AND ACTIONS

Please email responses to:
scientistrebellion-relx@protonmail.com

RELX BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Erik Engstrom: erik.engstrom@relx.com

Human Rights Statement:

In accordance with this process, stakeholders first require the RELX Board to generate a human rights statement that includes an **apology** and an **acknowledgment** of RELX's complicity in delaying a just energy transition and making business decisions that hinder realistic, science-based pathways to net zero and warming targets. This should include the removal of any communications restrictions pertaining to climate-related human rights harms that have been placed on employees.

Further, stakeholders are entitled to **guarantees of non-repetition**, ones that ensure that RELX's messaging will no longer misrepresent or contradict the climate science or misrepresent other businesses. In addition, RELX will outline corrective steps it will take to make policymakers and other stakeholders aware of the misinformation the Company has disseminated, including in its research journals, that misrepresents fossil fuel expansion as being consistent with global climate goals. These corrective steps should include efforts to retract or issue corrections for the publications in question, as well as outline methods for making stakeholders aware of fossil fuel industry-linked authorship and funding sources for the research that it publishes. This human rights statement should include answers to the 12 questions submitted to the Board; it should be disseminated in a press release, sent to employees, external editors, shareholders, and policymakers, and be displayed on the homepages of all RELX divisions for a period of no less than 6 months.

Questions:

In addition to the 9 unanswered questions from the initial communication that were submitted to the RELX Board of Directors in 2024 (**see Appendix**), the following are being introduced into this process:

10) Stuart Whayman, co-chair of Elsevier's Climate Action Board, has made inaccurate claims in the context of this human rights grievance mechanism. Do you regard it as ethical or fair to Stuart Whayman to enlist him to respond on your behalf using deceptive talking points? Isn't being associated with such a communication a threat to Stuart Whayman's personal and professional reputation? Do you regard it as fair to all the stakeholders who have engaged with the RELX Board in good faith to not hear directly from the Board?

11) It's been reported that leadership considers there to be "an 'allowance' before fossil fuel-expanding activities need to cease." With no science or ethics-based reasoning for this, it's understood that this originates from revenue-based considerations. How much smaller would the impact from lost revenue need to be for RELX to cease any activities associated with broad human rights harms?

How much larger will the projected loss of life and damage to human health and the environment need to be for RELX to consider actions supporting fossil fuel expansion and industry misinformation to be antithetical to its conception of 'sustainability' and its climate, human rights, and ethical pledges and statements?

12) At what point in the future will RELX start credibly performing and acting on human rights due diligence processes regarding the use of its products and services? This is a **minimum requirement** of the UNGP, as well as

the UNGC—an initiative that RELX has marketed its membership in for decades.

Further actions:

As scientists, we also request that RELX immediately:

- Refrain from continuing to misrepresent the dangers of fossil fuel expansion, continuing to misrepresent oil major customers investing in fossil fuel E&P activities as credibly transitioning, continuing to frame calls to end fossil fuel expansion as being calls for the abrupt elimination of fossil fuels, and any further calls for investment in fossil fuel expansion.
- Refrain from distributing any materials that claim RELX is actively ensuring “all statements made to those with whom we communicate or do business are accurate and not misleading,” until such claims are ensured to be accurate.
- Refrain from misrepresenting the growing dangers of global heating, such as by claiming that climate change “will be unlikely to have a significant impact [on RELX] in the medium and longer term.”
- Remove itself from the UN Global Compact, UN Race to Zero, and other sustainability-oriented voluntary corporate initiatives, due to the fact that RELX interprets these guidelines as allowing for RELX to support fossil fuel expansion and industry misinformation. Such interpretations mislead stakeholders about RELX and/or the causes of this polycrisis.
- Refrain from continuing to claim RELX’s corporate responsibility program is being steered by employees across the business, as it’s unclear if employees have provided their informed consent to be associated with what RELX considers to be ethical behavior and acceptable negative impacts.
- Refrain from continuing to provide employees with deceptive fossil fuel industry talking points, including the ideas that 1) fossil fuel expansion is still “necessary,” 2) there aren’t alternatives to fossil fuels, and 3) journals informing fossil fuel expansion and containing industry misinformation are aligned with a net zero future.
- Refrain from having employees cite the UN Race to Zero’s acknowledgment that “fossil fuel phase down and out does not refer to a single universal date” as a means of obfuscating the fact that net zero pathways and the carbon budget have no room for the fossil fuel expansion that RELX continues to serve. This point misrep-

resents the fact that Race to Zero members are prohibited from facilitating new oil and gas fields.

- Refrain from generating further praise for CEOs of companies with hydrocarbon and petrochemical expansion efforts that are a deep threat to planetary health; such actions on RELX’s part mislead the public about the dangers of such activities.
- Refrain from any further promotion of the idea that fossil fuel majors should learn from U.S. President Trump and use fear-based tactics to serve their business aims. Refrain from the use of fear-based messaging in support of the fossil fuel energy order. Refrain from permitting RELX’s PAC to continue financially supporting any politicians pledging to increase fossil fuel production or who deny the existence of climate change.
- Refrain from concealing from employees, investors and other stakeholders the fact that RELX considers its statements, pledges, and climate commitments to only be [forward-looking](#) and aspirational; RELX should make it clear to employees, investors and other stakeholders that its statements, pledges, and climate commitments, including maintaining the UNGC’s ‘precautionary approach’ to environmental challenges, allow for RELX’s continued [support](#) for industry misinformation and the “worldwide rush to explore for and produce as much oil and natural gas as possible”; RELX should make it clear to employees, investors and other stakeholders that it has been considering such activities to be consistent with international human rights standards and its conception of ‘sustainability.’
- Refrain from imposing any further communications restrictions or guidelines that dissuade or prohibit employees from freely sharing information related to understanding actions that are fueling climate-related human rights harms.

Along with the **Human Rights Statement**, we request that the RELX Board of Directors provide detailed answers to all of the 12 questions that have been posed as a part of this process and specify the extent of RELX’s willingness to abide by each of the requests listed above. If the RELX Board continues to be negligent of its human rights responsibilities, members of the scientific community reserve the right to start directly informing policymakers and other stakeholder groups why RELX’s past and ongoing support for fossil fuel expansion and misinformation poses a threat to effective policy making and to our planet’s capacity to sustain life.

If the following recipients don't feel safe responding or don't feel they can engage honestly at this time, please feel free to refrain from doing so.

Stuart Whayman

S.Whayman@elsevier.com

1) Your response to this UN Human Rights Grievance Mechanism contains familiar talking points used by other RELX employees. It's therefore reasonable to conclude you did not fully author the email that represents RELX's engagement with this mechanism. Could you please clarify: i) Who are those responsible for your message's content? ii) Were you aware when you sent it that RELX considers that it represents the Company's response to this UN Human Rights Grievance Mechanism? and iii) When you sent it were you aware that it contains demonstrably false claims?

2) In your opinion, how much larger would the number of anticipated premature deaths from the lack of an immediate energy transition need to be for RELX to stop supporting fossil fuel expansion and industry misinformation? Why don't RELX's ethical and environmental policies, some in place for decades, prohibit this activity?

3) Do you think RELX should refrain from any further promotion of the idea that the fossil fuel industry should "learn from Trump" by using fear-based messaging to achieve its business aims? Do you think RELX should follow any of the actions requested of the RELX Board that are listed above?

Dr. Richard Horton, Dr. Alastair Brown, Dr. Lewis Collins, and Dr. Melissa Plail

Editors-in-Chief at The Lancet, The Lancet Planetary Health, One Earth, Cell Reports Sustainability

richard.horton@lancet.com, alastair.brown@lancet.com, lcollins@cell.com, mplail@cell.com

As editors at premium journals, it's presumed that you may have been involved in employee climate advocacy at RELX. A 2021 employee [report](#) noted the urgency of ending "all new oil, gas, and coal projects" but that your employer, by "promoting, informing, and profiting from new fossil fuel production," is practicing "climate denial" and appears "unfazed by the prospect of the world pushing well beyond the 1.5°C target." Subsequent internal

reports from recent legal filings detail employee concerns about the Company's greenwashing practices. Dr. Horton asserts in one [report](#) that he doesn't see "how RELX can claim to be a supporter of climate action" and describes a company climate board he resigned from as "a corporate greenwashing initiative." With RELX's business activities and messaging undermining the work you do to protect global health, we request that your journals, collectively or separately, publish editorials in 2026 discussing the issues central to this grievance mechanism. It's also hoped you'll engage in this dialogue portion of this human rights grievance mechanism process by providing answers to the following questions:

1) Science-based net zero requirements

The 2022 employee greenwashing report in which Dr. Horton is quoted includes management's internal assertion that "there isn't scientific consensus that new fossil fuel exploration and development projects are objectionable." Do you agree with this position?

In responding to a 2024 lawsuit, RELX [cited](#) the "ongoing need to produce oil and gas for the indefinite future" in the context of the global net zero goal, continuing the practice of obfuscating that goal's requirement of ceasing new fossil fuel projects and ending others. Policy makers, investors, and other stakeholders can cite RELX products, journals, and messaging to conclude fossil fuel expansion is consistent with the SDG's, green development, the Paris Agreement and global net zero goals with which RELX associates itself. Do you find it appropriate for the world's largest publisher of scientific research to undermine the findings of the IPCC, IEA, and scientific community in this way? As was previously [asked](#) in *The Guardian*, "What does that do to the whole premise of validity around the climate research?"

The United Nations has been [clear](#) that "implementation of the [Paris] Agreement is essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals." Is it appropriate for the Company to have its employees distributing the talking point that its journals, ones that continue to inform massive fossil fuel expansion and assert that such expansion is consistent with green development, are aligned with the UN SDG's and a net zero future?

In responding to a 2024 lawsuit, RELX disclosed that it regards its pledges as being aspirational and forward-looking. Yet some of these pledges guide firms to

engage in ongoing human rights due diligence processes so they can maintain a 'precautionary' approach to avoiding harms. At what point in the future do you think RELX should start performing human rights due diligence regarding its products and services?

2) Disclosure

A 2022 employee report observes that “RELX’s environmental and human rights pledges don’t prohibit the Company from committing ecocide.” RELX has [asserted](#) that the company’s actions “are not secret, but rather are available to every investor.” Do you think investors and the general public have been made properly aware of what RELX considers to be acceptable negative impacts? To repeat a similar unanswered question submitted to Cell Press’ leadership team in a 2021 employee [report](#): “Is the company adequately providing information to investors and the general public that is sufficient to accurately evaluate [RELX’s] involvement in climate change-related human rights harms?”

The same 2021 report asks if similar disclosures should be made to customers, “particularly ones whose research touches on these issues,” as well as “to current and prospective employees?” Do you think RELX is misleading these stakeholders, and do you consider leadership’s assertions that employees such as yourselves are guiding the company’s ‘corporate responsibility’ program to be accurate?

The same 2021 report asks for “evidence that the company has the informed consent of potentially effected people regarding Elsevier/RELX activities that are likely to have climate-related human rights impacts.” Was any evidence provided to the employees who requested it?

3) Marketing

Multi-national corporations are incentivized by their legal-economic structure to risk bending the truth if they regard that doing so will serve share value. Further, the dishonest marketing of a firm’s ‘sustainability’ claims has the potential to mislead the public not only about a company’s actions, but about the climate crisis itself and what’s needed to credibly address it. As the largest publisher of scientific research, do you find RELX has a special responsibility to refrain from deceptive marketing and what steps, if any, do you think stakeholders should take to incentivize the firm to refrain from making misleading claims? Do you find RELX marketing itself as an ESG-ap-

propriate investment and promoting fossil fuel majors investing in substantial hydrocarbon expansion efforts as “leading the energy transition” undermine the public’s understanding of what is appropriate action for credibly addressing this global public health crisis? Do you find it appropriate for financial products containing RELX stock to be marketed as being “Paris-aligned” and aligned with the UNGC environmental and human rights Principles?

4) Advocacy

While Dr. Horton has publicly denounced RELX’s PAC, it appears other advocacy has remained internal. Do you think it’s justifiable for stakeholders to be concerned that RELX is compelling the editors of its health and sustainability journals, as well as other employees, to remain silent about RELX’s complicity in climate-related human rights risks? Have management practices generated reluctance in yourselves or other employees to speak externally to these issues? Have you ever been pressured by management to disassociate yourself from these concerns or had any communications restrictions placed on you? Are you aware of any communications restrictions placed on other advocates or bullying concerns raised by any employees? Do you find any such restrictions risk RELX compelling employees to engage in the UNGC’s definition of [silent complicity](#) in human rights harms? Why do you think employee efforts to have RELX to correct its inaccurate messaging have been so unsuccessful? Are you concerned about the deep suffering associated with RELX’s business decisions?

While it’s clear there may be professional risks for engaging openly and honestly in this UN human rights grievance mechanism process, we hope you’ll consider what opportunities employees have in more openly confronting the continued influence of the fossil fuel energy order on global health, global stability, and RELX.

“In the absence of any systematic scrutiny and pressures that would highlight corporate hypocrisies and hold them to account, there is unlikely to be any changes in corporate behaviors, to their organizational culture, and in their role in the climate crisis.”
—2022 employee [report](#) on RELX’s greenwashing practices.

Rachel Martin

Global Director of Sustainability, Elsevier
R.Martin@elsevier.com

1) RELX's Mission

A 2022 employee [report](#) on RELX's greenwashing tactics features the following question: "It's hard to understand how the Ethics Code and Doing the R.I.G.H.T. Thing allow for the company to align its business objectives with those of the fossil fuel industry, whose plans for this decade will make the Paris goals and SDGs unattainable. Our business activity in R&D, publishing, exhibitions etc. that aims to have that industry exceed its current production goals is clearly at odds with our public statements about aligning with the Paris Agreement. If this activity contrasted with our statements doesn't violate the Ethics Code, as the company claims, then what does?" While your reply contains no insight regarding what RELX's ethics code prohibits, it emphasizes that the company's mission is to "advance science and improve health outcomes for the benefit of society." Four questions:

- 1) Shouldn't RELX be willing to disclose to employees what its code of ethics prohibits? Are there any ethical considerations that would take priority over revenue considerations, or is the performance and marketing of ethics at RELX another function of RELX's commercial aims?
- 2) How is it considered consistent with RELX's mission for it to be knowingly supporting fossil fuel expansion that vastly exceeds our carbon budget?
- 3) How is it considered consistent with RELX's mission for it to knowingly disseminate misinformation that undermines science and can be cited by policymakers to support fossil fuel expanding policies?
- 4) Do Company actions that threaten global stability align with your personal values? Have you ever been compelled by management to prioritize RELX's business aims over your own personal values or the health of the planet?

2) RELX's Marketing

Why does the company's messaging to employees, investors, customers, and other stakeholders fail to reflect that the company considers it environmentally responsible to be boosting the production aims of an industry whose current business plans all but guarantee we'll fail to meet the Paris target—something the company has declared to be 'our best hope for avoiding dangerous climate change'? What responsibility does the largest publisher of scientific research have to stop misinforming the public about RELX and the causes of the climate crisis?

3) Accountability

You've shared your [perspective](#) that "accountability" is "what climate justice is all about." How can stakeholders generate accountability for RELX's past and ongoing actions? If RELX opts to deny there are human rights harms associated with its business decisions, to what extent does this deny the veracity of the climate science that it publishes?

Marcia Balisciano and Jennifer Jung

RELX Head of Corporate Responsibility and RELX Chief Compliance Officer
m.balisciano@relx.com, jennifer.jung@relx.com

The level of global heating associated with RELX's past and ongoing actions has the potential to threaten a habitable planet. What is the moral justification for using communications strategies to deceive the public about this science-based observation? Please explain the ethical reasoning for imposing communications restrictions on employees raising concerns about RELX's failure to disclose what it considers to be acceptable climate-related human rights harms?

The Lancet reports that climate inaction is killing millions each year. How much larger will the projected loss of life and damage to human health and the environment need to be for RELX to consider its actions supporting fossil fuel expansion and misinformation to be antithetical to its conception of 'sustainability' and its climate, human rights, and ethical pledges and statements? Are there any ethical considerations that would take priority over revenue considerations, or is the performance and marketing of sustainability and ethics at RELX purely another function of RELX's commercial aims?

It's been reported that leadership considers there to be "an 'allowance' before fossil fuel-expanding activities need to cease." With no science or ethics-based reasoning for this, it's presumed that this originates from revenue-based considerations. How much smaller would the impact from lost revenue need to be for RELX to cease activities associated with climate-related human rights harms?

Current and Former Employees, and other Stakeholders

All are welcome to offer any relevant insights, including ones based on these questions:

Is the Company adequately providing information that is sufficient for stakeholders to accurately evaluate RELX's complicity in climate change-related human rights harms?

Do you find RELX promotion of fossil fuel expansion and misinformation to be consistent with your understanding of 'sustainability' or ethical norms?

To what extent does RELX bear responsibility for any charities or other consumers purchasing financial products containing RELX stock that have been marketed as aligned with the Paris Agreement, the SDG's, and/or the UNGC Principles?

Should RELX refrain from any further promotion of the idea that the fossil fuel industry should learn from Trump by using fear-based tactics to achieve its business aims? Should RELX refrain from continuing to undermine climate science or climate advocates?

Do you find it appropriate for RELX and Corporate Responsibility officers to accept sustainability and lifetime achievement awards from a self-described "corporate storyteller" that receives compensation from RELX?

Has the Company ever imposed communications restrictions on you related to informing other stakeholders about RELX's climate-related human rights impacts and/or deceptive messaging? If so, what were they?

A recent research [paper](#) observes that "despite claims that its corporate responsibility is 'owned by our more than 33,000 people across the business,' none of RELX's divisions have formal, democratic mechanisms for aligning company policy with worker values." Considering what RELX considers acceptable negative impacts, do you feel it's accurate or appropriate for RELX to point to employees as 'owning' its corporate responsibility regime? Do Company actions risking severe and irreversible harms to the planet's life-supporting capabilities, and messaging that misleads policymakers about the role of fossil fuel expansion in these harms, align with your personal values?



APPENDIX

Dr. Elia Valentini's communication to RELX's CEO and Head of Corporate Responsibility (May 3, 2024).

Dear Mr. Engstrom,

As an advisory board member at the Climate Rights Coalition, I'm writing to follow up on the document and questions that were submitted to the Board of Directors in February. This UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights grievance mechanism process, in part, seeks to generate clarity as it pertains to RELX's human rights due diligence procedures, research, and conclusions.

As UNGP guidelines indicate, "on an ongoing basis, business enterprises should identify and assess any actual or potential adverse human rights impacts. Specifically concerning climate impacts, the guidelines are unequivocal: "business enterprises should conduct human rights due diligence that addresses the adverse climate change-related human rights impacts that the business enterprise may cause or contribute to through its own activities, or which may be directly linked to its operations, products or services by its business relationships."

While it's promising that RELX considers "corporate responsibility for human rights and the environment [to be] a duty and not a voluntary matter," our submission indicates a concern that RELX is demonstrating an inadequate response to its influence in climate change-related human rights harms, particularly as it pertains to continued support for fossil fuel expansion that drastically exceeds our carbon budget.

Our initial communication contains extensive documentation covering climate science, the UNGP, and the obligations of businesses with respect to climate-related human rights harms; as such, I understand that it may take more time for the Board to go through the material in full before it's prepared to respond.

I therefore request that you please provide an estimate by May 20 indicating when RELX will reply to our submission and be true to its UNGP duty to engage in meaningful

consultation with potentially affected stakeholders.

Sincerely,
Dr Elia Valentini PhD, FHEA
Senior Lecturer
Environmental rep for UCU
Member of the Centre for Environment and Society Department of Psychology and Centre for Brain Science, University of Essex

Stuart Whayman's reply to Dr Elia Valentini (May 23, 2024), representing RELX's response.

Dear Dr Valentini,

I'm writing in response to your email to Erik Engstrom on 3rd May in my capacity as co-Chair of Elsevier's Climate Action Advisory Board.

Firstly, thank you for reaching out on this important topic as we share the urgency of climate change and the need to take action to address it. As you noted, at RELX and Elsevier we consider corporate responsibility for human rights and the environment to be a duty and not a voluntary matter.

As a supporter of the Climate Rights Coalition (CRC), you will be aware that we have in the past provided detailed responses which address the main points raised in the latest communication sent to RELX in February. It is unfortunate that the Climate Rights Coalition website and its representative, Kip Lyall, continue to perpetuate inaccuracies and misrepresentations which are misleading for the scientific community as well as the public. Please allow me to reiterate the facts for your benefit. In summary:

As an information provider Elsevier does not develop, finance or facilitate new fossil fuel assets. We share the urgency of the global risk from climate change, and we take seriously the part we play in enabling the action needed to address it. We are taking well-documented,

science-based action, including alignment of our operations, products and services with a net zero pathway.

As a scientific publisher, Elsevier supports scientific discourse, underpinned by editorial independence, by publishing peer-reviewed research (630,000 articles in 2023) in our journals. Science is central to the advances we see in both cleaner and renewable energy; we believe supporting the advancement of knowledge through evidence-based, verified research is the most effective way in which we can contribute to the energy transition and addressing the climate change challenges which the world faces today.

Accordingly, we have actively grown, and continue to grow, our portfolio of journals supporting climate change research and renewable energy. Currently, we have 160 journals are dedicated to environmental sciences, renewable and clean energy, with new journal launches planned.

We have reviewed our journals to ensure their missions reflect and advance the UN SDGs and promote a pathway to a net zero future. Out of our portfolio of 2,900 journals, we previously had a small number of journals that were focused on hydrocarbon science -- we have either closed those or changed their scope to ensure they support an energy transition. We also continually review the editorial boards of our journals to ensure they include expertise in climate change and renewable energy, and a greater representation from the global South.

We have discontinued Geofacets, an earth science tool which helped spatial location. We are not a member of the OSDU Data Platform, as claimed on the CRC website. We have also been actively working to reduce our own environmental footprint across our business and value chain for more than 15 years. We have achieved substantial emissions reductions in that time, the figures are disclosed in our Corporate Responsibility Report. We are committed to become net zero for all direct and indirect emissions by 2040. We are guided in our efforts by an independent Climate Advisory Board.

We are transparent about our progress as well as plans

to continue decarbonizing our operations through new initiatives, including carbon pricing and targeted supply chain engagement.

Please see our [2023 progress report on our climate action program](#) in which we openly share the lessons and insights we have learnt as we continue in our net zero journey. Additionally, the [Elsevier Climate Action Roadmap](#) outlines the broad actions and approach we are taking to address climate change in our operations, and through our products and services as we move towards our 2040 goal.

I hope you will find this information helpful.
Best wishes,

Stuart Whayman
Managing Director, Researchers and Librarians
Co-Chair of Elsevier Climate Advisory Board

Initial questions posed to the RELX Board of Directors in February 2024

1. Please provide information on the environmental impact assessments carried out prior to the approval of and/or during the development of products and services facilitating fossil fuel expansion, and whether these studies were prepared with a human rights-based approach, considering the climate change impacts, as well as the social and cultural impacts of this activity.
2. Please indicate measures taken to ensure that your company complies with international environmental laws and human rights standards, especially in relation to climate change.
3. Please advise the steps taken to ensure that your company respects human rights in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including by conducting human rights due diligence that addresses how to prevent, mitigate, and remediate the adverse climate change-related and other human rights impacts that your business may cause or contribute to through its own activities, or which may be directly linked to its operations, products or services by its business relationships.
4. Please indicate any steps your company has taken to identify your Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions, including products and services which have and will continue to serve fossil fuel expansion, with an explanation of how such identification is science-based, verifiable, informed by expert input, as well as being based on meaningful consultation with all relevant stakeholders.
5. Please advise about the steps that your company has taken to refrain from providing information to the public based on inaccurate, misleading, and unfounded assertions that harm the ability of the public to make informed decisions pertaining to the fossil fuel industry and climate change. In this context, please also indicate how your company respects the right of all persons to benefit from science and its applications.
6. Please indicate measures taken to disseminate information on the environmental and climate change impacts of previous, ongoing, and/or planned products and services and/or policies, taking into consideration the rights to a healthy environment, participation, and remedy.
7. Please provide information on any steps taken to implement fair and just policies and programs to address the adverse effects of climate change, in view of regions that stand to be highly impacted by climate change, as well as future generations.
8. Please indicate, in the context of climate change, where your company has contributed to severe impacts, such as activity over the past decade that has served the global expansion of new fossil fuel projects, and how your company has and will be providing for appropriate remediation that accords with your responsibility for the harm.
9. Following unanswered inquiries made by employees and representatives of the Union of Concerned Scientists and Scientists for Global Responsibility, please indicate the dates at which the company will 1) have fully withdrawn from the market products and services that facilitate new fossil fuel exploration and development, and have ceased business relationships with fossil fuel companies and organizations which are not aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement; 2) remove and cease generating messaging which risks misleading the public about RELX and the company's fossil fuel industry customers and partners; 3) join the scientific community and the broader public in their calls for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

