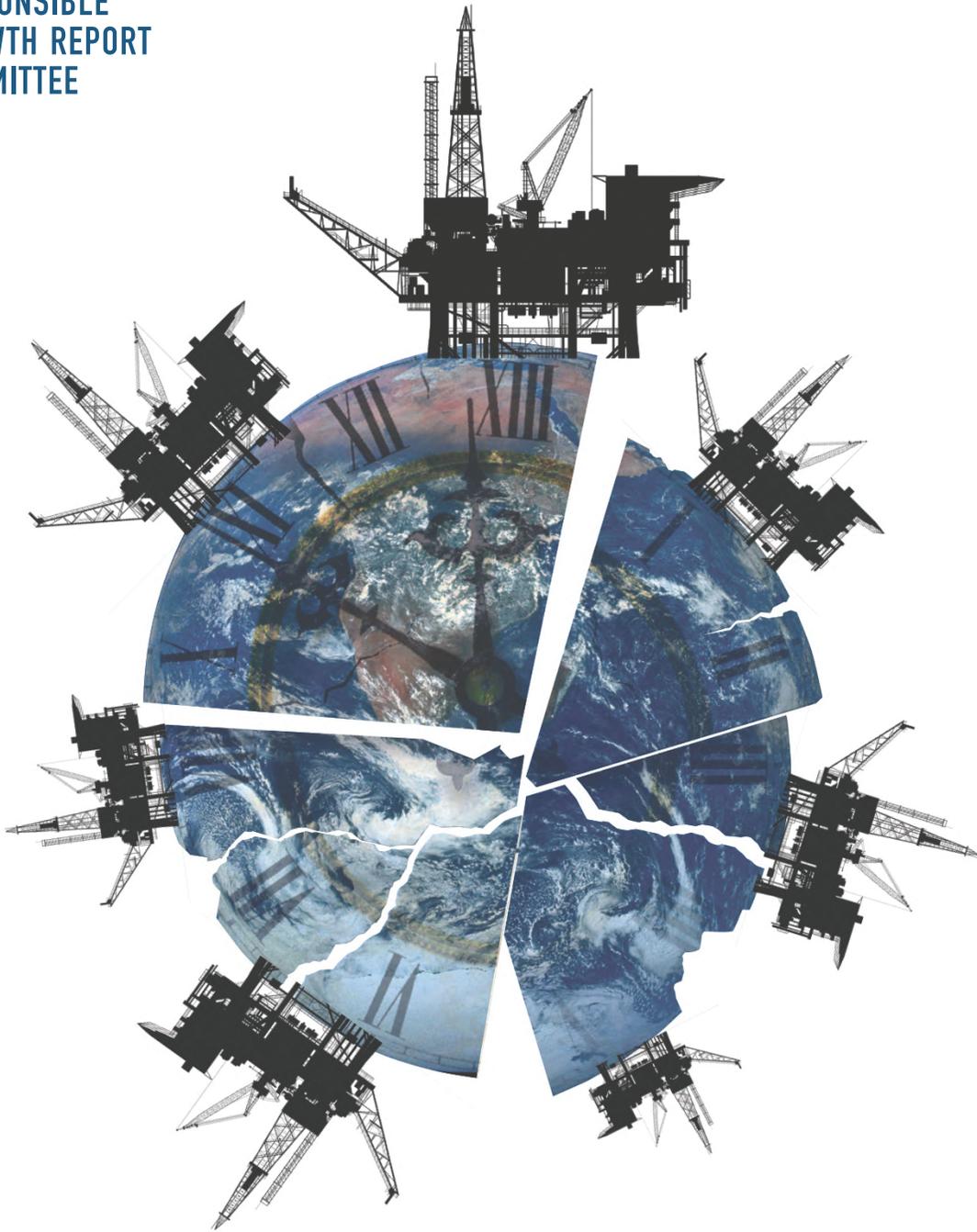




RESPONSIBLE GROWTH REPORT COMMITTEE



INFORMING ENVIRONMENTAL AND
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AT

ELSEVIER and RELX

FALL 2022 UPDATE

The Responsible Growth Report Committee (RGRC) consists of Elsevier/RELX employees concerned about the climate impacts of the company. The purpose of this group is to highlight where the science reveals misalignment of our business with our policies and with a healthy future. Operating in the spirit of a culture of integrity that insists we incorporate ethics into all our actions, speak out for what is right, and hold

ourselves accountable, we also advocate for the removal of any constraints placed upon employees that restrict our ability to follow Elsevier's Operating Principles, RELX's 'Do the Right Thing' principles, and other ethical standards by which we've been challenged to abide. For more information and to get involved with our work, please contact Kip Lyall at klyall@cell.com.



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ince April 2021, our leadership has been provided with bi-annual reports that highlight business activities that contradict many of our company's pledges (see page 6). This activity includes the facilitation of fossil fuel expansion, behavior that the scientific community regards as antithetical to our policies, our mission, and a livable planet. These reports have the backing of concerned colleagues from dozens of our premier journals, requesting that the company address this word-deed misalignment. In response, members of leadership have continued to hold that the company is following its pledges and that serving the objectives of the fossil fuel industry does not render any company policies or statements to be false or misleading. They have thus far declined to provide explanation, or evidence that facilitating fossil fuel expansion is compatible with our pledges—a position that contradicts established research and the findings of all other consulted stakeholders.

Our Fall 2022 report, generated in the spirit of a 2022 Elsevier priority—to build trust by partnering with the communities we serve—contains the insights of climate scientists who’ve concluded the business is not aligned with our marketing statements. The Responsible Growth Report Committee (RGRC) has been forbidden from sharing this document with colleagues. One reason given for this is that testimonials from scientists that indicate we’re not following the science or our pledges have been deemed to be “inaccurate,” but no information has been shared to support this stance. The other reason given, one that’s previously been used to justify dismissing our concerns, is that the RGRC reports are independent of the company’s “narrative.”

The RGRC’s Spring 2022 report points to papers we publish that conclude this corporate emphasis on narrative and marketing has the effect of misinforming stakeholders and delaying actions that are required right now to prevent excessive global heating. We know the climate does not respond to pledges and narratives. Rather, the climate is responding to our decision to continue publishing materials that identify areas, technologies, and techniques that serve to expand exploration and development; it is responding to our decision to help oil majors extend offshore drilling through services that boast about exploration opportunities; it is responding to our decision to empower U.S. politicians who block political action required to address the crisis; it is responding to our decision to develop custom products for fossil fuel companies, ones increasing emissions and being sued for environmental and human rights crimes, such that they can “find

things that weren’t found before.” Stakeholders overwhelmingly consider this activity to be in violation of our stated “precautionary approach to environmental challenges,” with associated harms well beyond what should be considered an “acceptable level of risk.” It’s clear the company obtained no “prior approval before certain products, deemed to be potentially hazardous, [were] placed on the market.” Urgently, none of these business decisions are “in line with the scale of action

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deemed necessary by science” to achieve global net zero and warming goals as is being claimed. Continuing this business activity in 2022 generates no realistic pathway to achieving our goals in the future.

With leadership interpreting our many environmental and human rights pledges as allowing for activity with excessive environmental and human rights harms, our marketing claims render us vulnerable to

greenwashing accusations and leave stakeholders such as Prof. Paul Behrens, a guest speaker at Elsevier’s 2021 Sustain Festival, feeling “tricked.” He offered these thoughts in recent emails, along with permission to share them:

“I was very surprised and disappointed by the details in the Guardian article. It didn’t surprise me there were journals on fossil fuels but to see the level of integration with the industry was disturbing. To my knowledge, the broader energy journals and renewable energy journals don’t have renewable energy industry representatives on editorial boards but academics. I was even more disturbed by the business offerings for fossil fuel exploration and extraction. That is a clear decision to profit from an industry that has a well-documented history of willingly misleading the public and capturing regulators to extend their profitability. It is an industry that has already contributed to the suffering of many millions of people across the planet. It is an industry that has repeatedly stood in the way of technical progress towards a cleaner, better world. This is the industry Elsevier decided to work with while talking about the importance of sustainability.

Had I known these details before speaking at the festival I would have certainly zeroed in on this. Time and time again I find that companies are not making the decisions that would have a real, consequential impact on environmental sustainability. Instead, the focus is on inconsequential nice-to-haves, greenwashing their hands of any real impact or responsibility.

This was all unknown to me when I did the sustainability festival event so . . . you feel tricked.”

Marketing our company as a LEAD member of the UNGC and as upholding the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights generates the expectation that the company is abiding by the associated guidelines. These include the pledge that we've assessed actual or potential climate human rights impacts (climate change-related and otherwise) with which we may be involved as a result of our business relationships and discontinued activities with potentially adverse impacts. By remaining silent in the face of such harms, the UNGC defines our company as being complicit in them.

One case brought to the company's attention in April 2021 is our providing Adani (now Bravus) with services it describes as "vital." Besides having financial ties to the government committing genocide in Myanmar, it's engaged in the largest expansion of coal mining on Earth—one that is also destroying Indigenous homelands. Adhering to our pledges would mean that we've engaged in "meaningful consultation with potentially affected stakeholders, including indigenous groups." Based on an email from a Wangan and Jagalingou Cultural Custodian who is one of many who are fighting Adani's activities, this is not the case.

Attention: RELX/Elsevier

To whom it may concern,
I am writing to express my concern regarding the relationship between RELX/Elsevier and Adani. Adani has not been given the free, prior or informed consent for mining operations to commence on Wangan and Jagalingou Country, in Central Queensland, Australia. The ILUA (Indigenous Land Use Agreement) that Adani has is fraudulent. Our people have been fighting against the Adani Carmichael coal mine for over 10 years. By having any association with Adani, RELX/Elsevier is complicit in the destruction of Wangan and Jagalingou Country, culture, our sacred Doongmabulla Springs and the breaching of our Human Rights. In light of receiving this knowledge, the choice is upon your company to make the right decision and cut ties with Adani.

Gurridyula Gaba Wunggu,
Wangan and Jagalingou Cultural Custodian
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This is just one case for which we have opted to not engage in the stakeholder consultation our pledges require. There are, of course, countless other non-consulted stakeholders—living and unborn—who are deeply effected by any fossil fuel expansion in 2022.



Responsible Growth Report, Spring 2021:

"In 2022, our QME Mining Pavilion will host Adani, owner of one of the world's largest untapped coal reserves (Carmichael coal mine) where it plans to begin production this year on what's been called "the world's most insane energy project." This is being done despite corporate pressure, activist pressure, and "significant data gaps and scientific uncertainties" found throughout their environmental assessment. Projected to add 4.6 billion tons of carbon pollution to our atmosphere, it will destroy Indigenous homelands, and facilitate additional coal mines in one of the largest proposed expansions of mining on Earth."

RELX narrative (from a RELX website):

"Bravus Mining and Resources [formerly Adani] is an Australian company dedicated to creating jobs and opportunities for regional Queensland communities. Bravus is delivering the Carmichael Mine and Rail Project in central Queensland which has so far paid more than \$1 billion to regional Queensland contractors and businesses, and provided direct jobs for more than 2,600 workers. The Carmichael Mine will generate billions of dollars for government in its first 30 years of operation by contributing to taxes and royalties paid by us, our employees and suppliers."



A tolerance for word-deed misalignment generates additional questions and challenges pertaining to enforcement of our ethics code, which, among other things, prohibits false or misleading statements being made about the company. Last month, concerns were sent through a Compliance officer to RELX's Chief Ethics Officer. None of the following were subsequently flagged as being in violation of any company policies or statements—environmental, ethical, or otherwise:

The company has publicly pledged to end the “facilitation of fossil fuel assets” by June 15, 2023, at which point “all external engagement activities,” including lobbying, are to be aligned with reaching global net zero by 2050; current business practices, which the company does not intend to stop by June 15, 2023, are incompatible with this pledge.

The company has for years been offering fossil fuel industry products and services directly linked to excessive global heating and massive loss of life; leadership has simultaneously been informing stakeholders the company is aligned with global net zero and warming goals, with a mission is to improve health outcomes for the benefit of society.

Ethics, Compliance, Corporate Responsibility, and others in leadership have determined serving the objectives of the fossil fuel industry does not render any company policies or statements to be false or misleading, contradicting established research and the findings of all other stakeholders who have been consulted; leadership has chosen not to provide any evidence supporting their conclusions.

The RGRC has been prohibited from sharing the Fall 2022 report—which contains insights from scientists in the communities we serve—due to its failure to adhere to the company's sustainability “narrative” and unknown “inaccuracies”; leadership has chosen not to provide any evidence that would indicate our reports are inaccurate.

The company has been using incomplete and inaccurate Corporate Responsibility reports that fail to mention the company's unwillingness to stop fostering fossil fuel expansion, while encouraging company sales teams to use these reports as a sales tool.

At a 2022 Cell Press Town Hall, a member of leadership dismissed the call to end new fossil fuel projects by inaccurately framing it as a call to end the use of fossil fuels; a request that this misstatement be corrected has not been fulfilled.

A member of our Internal Climate Board, aware of our fossil fuel-oriented products and services, has claimed we don't promote fossil fuel extraction.

A 2022 letter from leadership to internal and external stakeholders claims the company's climate action is science-led and points to an external Climate Action Advisory Board as guiding and prioritizing our actions to deliver a net zero future; this Board's members have called for the end of new fossil fuel projects, with one calling for the industry “to be shut down.”

After the RGRC's Fall 2021 report was submitted, our company took steps to remove content from our websites that disclosed complicity in fossil fuel expansion.

A member of leadership reached out to some members of the RGRC to provide them with false information; a member of leadership has pressured at least one RGRC member to remove their name from our latest report; a member of leadership, in a Sustain meeting, explicitly discouraged individual advocacy; the company declined to follow their own ethics reporting guidelines, including the requirement that the company communicate their non-retaliation policy to those reporting concerns.

Our neglect of various environmental and ethical pledges needs to be addressed to build trust and to enable the immediate climate action required to meet these goals and help avoid catastrophic heating. The last 8 years have been the warmest on record, a period during which our company has been offering—and continues to offer—products and services that the scientific community and employees have shown to be antithetical to our policies, mission, and a livable planet. By silencing scientists because their findings don't align with our narrative—or with our prioritization of commercial pledges over environmental and ethical ones—we're falling short of our commitments to each other and to our mission to improve health outcomes for the benefit of society.

—Kip Lyall
RGRC, November 2022

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The Climate Reality:

There must be no new coal, oil, and gas projects—with most reserves staying in the ground—if the world is to achieve net zero by 2050¹ and to have any realistic chance to keep warming below 1.5°C²

Our Company Pledges:

Recognizing the impacts of our products and services, RELX has committed to minimize our contribution to climate change at the scale of action deemed necessary by science³ to hold warming to well below 2°C⁴ and support global efforts to achieve net zero emissions before 2050.⁵

FURTHER INFORMATION: RELX has pledged to discontinue “activities with potentially adverse climate change-related human rights impacts.”⁶ We pledge to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts “where [we] have not contributed to that impact, when the impact is nevertheless directly linked to [our] operations, products or services.” We’re guided to act by the severity of the potential impact, including whether a delayed response may make the impact irremediable.⁷ We’re to emphasize prevention rather than remediation of environmental harms, with any lack of full scientific certainty not a valid reason to postpone measures “where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage.”⁸ We’ve pledged to control both direct and indirect environmental impacts, identifying risks of contributing to adverse impacts and taking “the necessary steps to cease or prevent [our] contribution” and “any contradiction between [our activities] and sustainable development.”⁹ We’ve pledged to consider the carbon impact of not only our own products and services but how our entire sectors choose to do business.¹⁰ For data, we’re meant to take active consideration of how to minimize misuse of data and its negative impact on people.¹¹ For those people who will be potentially impacted by decisions and actions likely to have climate-related human rights impacts, we’re meant to obtain free, prior, and informed consent.¹² Our Ethics Code and Operating Principles require we act in conformity with the above and other policies and prohibit false or misleading statements being made about the business.¹³

Our Business:

R&D and data services that promote or inform the expansion of new fossil fuel development.

Elsevier has a portfolio of R&D solutions and data management services used to attain production gains for the fossil fuel industry. We help companies prioritize finding new exploration opportunities, accelerate exploration efforts, and maximize total recoverable volumes of oil and gas resources.¹⁴

Research papers that promote or inform the expansion of new fossil fuel development.

In 2022, Elsevier publishes research that seeks “to find the potential petroleum plays,” “new frontier for natural gas exploration...for increasing the reserves of trillions of cubic meters of natural gas resources,” areas “richer in oil and gas [that have] greater potential for exploration and development,” “ultra-deep target[s] worthy of exploration,” “research and development in...technology for tapping remaining oil,” “favorable exploration area[s] for] shale oil,” and “breakthroughs in hydrocarbon exploration.”¹⁵

Books that promote or inform the expansion of new fossil fuel development.

Examples of 2022 Elsevier publications: Unconventional Shale Gas Development; Gas Injection Methods (EOR series, “Different techniques are described, along with the latest technologies, such as nanotechnology applications, data mining and unconventional reservoirs.”); Deepwater Sedimentary Systems (“This book serves as the essential reference for companies, consultancies, universities, governments and deepwater practitioners around the world seeking to understand deepwater systems and how to explore for and produce resources in these frontier environments.”)

Political contributions from REPAC that empower politicians practicing climate denial.¹⁶

Lexis Nexis Risk Solutions claims to offer services to the oil and gas industry that removes obstacles to exploration in emerging markets.¹⁷

These services are meant to “manage a reputation that the public already perceives as tarnished” with “environmental activists already opposed to Arctic drilling” seen as “yet another hurdle for the oil and gas industry to overcome.”

Exhibition services that promote or inform the expansion of new fossil fuel development.

- *Brasil Offshore*: Brasil Offshore turns “market opportunities into business” for “the sectors of the entire oil exploration and production chain.” The event promotes that it is “driving the industry”¹⁸ and that “with the return of auctions, production could triple in a decade.”¹⁹
 - *WA Mining Conference and Exhibition*
 - *Asia-Pacific’s International Mining Exhibition*
 - *Queensland Mining and Engineering Expo*
- These are mining events in Australia, the world’s biggest exporter of coal. With Australia’s six biggest coal producers creating more greenhouse gas emissions each year than the entire domestic economy, these events are meant to help participants grow their businesses and boost coal production.
- *Fenasucro & Agrocana*: Fenasucro & Agrocana is “the main fair of bioenergy and the sugar-energy sector in Latin America.” It’s held annually in Brazil, touted as “the country with the highest production potential in the world.” Brazilian biofuels are considered a threat to the planet’s climate, with a 2019 decree enabling sugarcane production in the Amazon that is capable of creating “a carbon debt that could take centuries to offset.”

1 <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>

2 <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/>

3 <https://www.relx.com/-/media/Files/R/RELX-Group/documents/responsibility/policies/environmental-policy-2021.pdf>

4 <https://www.wearstillin.com/we-are-still-declaration#:~:text=Since%20its%20initial%20release%20on,We%20Are%20Still%20In%20declaration.;SDGs;UNGC>

5 <https://www.relx.com/-/media/Files/R/RELX-Group/documents/responsibility/policies/climate-change-statement-new.pdf>

6 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/KMBusiness.pdf>

7 https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FAQ_PrinciplesBusinessHR.pdf

8 <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles/principle-7>

9 <https://www.oecd.org/daf/inv/mne/48004323.pdf>

10 <https://www.comparably.com/news/how-these-companies-do-their-part-to-combat-climate-change/>

11 <https://www.data4sdgs.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/GPSDD%20EthicsPolicy%20Oct%202019.pdf>

12 <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/KMBusiness.pdf>

13 <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles/principle-7>

14 We commit to upholding: UN Global Compact; UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises; RELX Climate Change Statement; We Are Still In Declaration; Responsible Media Forum’s Climate Pact; RELX Global Environment Policy; RX Sustainability Charter; UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights; other company statements.

15 <https://www.oilfieldtechnology.com/exploration/14062018/elsevier-and-the-american-association-of-petroleum-geologists-aapg-collaborate-to-improve-productivity-for-global-oil-and-gas-exploration-teams/>
<https://www.elsevier.com/connect/harnessing-the-science-of-where-to-unlock-the-value-of-geoscience-data>
<https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/13337/408134>

16 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876380422600211>; <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876380422600260>;

17 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876380422600247>; <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876380422600235>;

18 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876380422600156>; <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876380422600028>;

19 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876380422600193>

16 <https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary?cycle=2018&id=D000067394>

17 <https://www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/professional/risk-management/resources/oil-and-gas-whitepaper.page>

18 <https://rxglobal.com/rx-brazil>

19 <https://www.brasiloffshore.com/en-us/exhibit.html>

20 Morton, A., “Coal from six biggest miners in Australia produces more emissions than entire economy.” The Guardian, October 31, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/nov/01/six-biggest-coalminers-in-australia-produce-more-emissions-than-entire-economy>

21 Fenasucro & Agrocana, Reed Exhibitions, <https://www.fenasucro.com.br/en-us.html>

22 Ferrante, L. and Fearnside, P., “The Amazon: biofuels plan will drive deforestation.” Nature, January 7, 2020, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00005-8>

23 Ferrante, L. and Fearnside, P., “Sugarcane threatens Amazon forest and world climate; Brazilian ethanol is not clean (commentary).” Mongabay, November 18, 2019, <https://news.mongabay.com/2019/11/sugarcane-threatens-amazon-forest-and-world-climate-brazilian-ethanol-is-not-clean-commentary/>

24 Lima, M. et al., “Sugarcane: Brazilian public policies threaten the Amazon and Pantanal biomes.” Perspectives in Ecology and Conservation, July-September 2020, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2530064420300262>