

# White Star Capital's ESG Report 2024

Driving the Transition to a Sustainable Global Economy





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## Introduction



At White Star Capital, we are committed to shaping a sustainable future through strategic investments that align with global needs for a greener, more resilient economy. As technology and sustainability increasingly converge, we recognize the immense opportunities available at the intersection of responsible investing and transformative innovation. Our focus on the Sustainable Global Economy is a testament to this commitment, framing the climate crisis as a pivotal force behind what we believe to be the next industrial revolution. This shift is not merely about adapting to new realities but about leading the way in the green transition, identifying forward-thinking companies and technologies that will drive environmental impact and financial returns.

We are pleased to publish our fourth consecutive ESG report, which reflects White Star Capital's multi-faceted approach to sustainability, offering insight into our evolving internal policies and practices, strategic talent acquisition, and robust portfolio performance. We highlight key initiatives, including our internal reporting framework designed to meet increasingly stringent global regulations and our on integrating technology to enhance transparency. Furthermore, we showcase three of our portfolio companies -Butternut Box, 900.care, and Finn.auto - demonstrating how we are pioneering sustainable practices through strategic investments. By focusing on macro themes such as demographic shifts, digitization, and new digital infrastructures, we remain at the forefront of emerging sectors like Green Fintech, Circular Economy, and Carbon Management. This report serves as a comprehensive overview of how we are leveraging sustainability not just as a moral imperative, but as a long-term driver of innovation and growth for both our investors and the planet.

The White Star Capital Partnership



# Policy and Regulations





## **Policy and Regulations**

As we navigate an increasingly complex and regulated global landscape, White Star Capital has committed to setting a high bar in our ESG reporting and investment strategies. As a multinational venture capital firm, we understand the profound impact that emerging regulations and policies will have on the sectors we invest in and on our portfolio companies. By aligning our efforts with global sustainability goals and regulatory frameworks, we are not just adapting to change but helping to shape the future of responsible investing.

#### ALIGNING OUR INVESTMENT STRATEGY WITH GLOBAL REGULATORY GOALS

As sustainability takes center stage, both in global policy and market demand, the alignment between our investment strategy and international climate goals has become critical. Key regulatory frameworks like the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act and the EU Green Deal provide clear roadmaps for reducing emissions, promoting clean energy, and encouraging sustainable investment. White Star Capital's strategy strives to integrate these ambitious regulatory goals into our investment criteria. We believe that sustainability tech is becoming mainstream, and these policies are fueling the creation of the next generation of industry leaders — the future unicorns of a net-zero economy.

However, the global nature of our operations poses unique challenges. Regulations like the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), which will require companies to provide transparent sustainability disclosures, offer a guidenost for our internal processes.

Inflation Reduction Act: the largest climate investment in U.S. history. It allocates \$369 billion to support clean energy, carbon capture, and electric vehicle adoption

offer a guidepost for our internal processes. But questions remain: How do we manage differing regulatory expectations across regions? How do we maintain consistency in reporting when, for example, the definition of "minority" varies between Singapore and Paris? These are the kinds of complexities we are navigating as we expand our ESG framework.

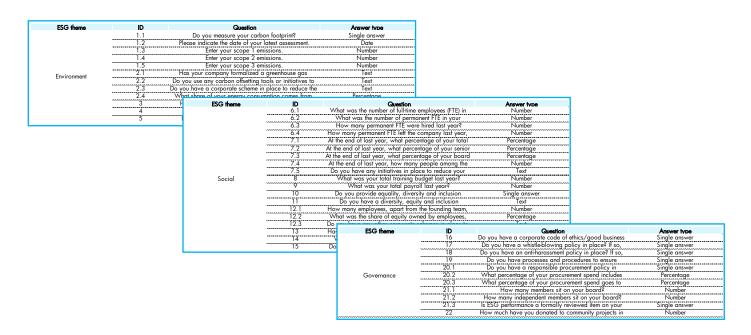
#### SETTING THE STANDARD: OUR INTERNAL ESG REPORTING FRAMEWORK

One of the biggest challenges facing us today is the increasingly diverse and complex demands from stakeholders. From LPs with differing priorities to portfolio companies with varying levels of ESG maturity, the need for a comprehensive and adaptive ESG reporting system is clear. Over the past year, we've taken substantial steps to professionalize this process.

Our new Internal ESG Reporting Framework is the culmination of ongoing discussions with our LPs and a thorough review of international reporting standards. It is designed not only to meet the needs of LPs but also to capture the evolving ESG maturity of our portfolio companies. Some topics, like diversity and inclusion, are driven by direct feedback from LPs, while other topics naturally emerge from the progress of our portfolio companies — a reflection of the bottom-up approach we've integrated into the framework.

One of our key influences in developing this framework has been the CSRD, recognized as one of the most comprehensive international regulations to date. The CSRD has guided our ambitions to ensure our reporting is exhaustive, relevant, and future-proof. Beyond the EU, emerging regulations in other key markets, such as North America and Asia, have also informed our global approach, ensuring we stay ahead of the regulatory curve across our multinational operations.

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), introduced by the European Union in 2021, expands reporting requirements to include detailed sustainability disclosures for large companies and, eventually, smaller companies. Starting from 2024, the CSRD will require over 50,000 companies, including companies in our portfolio, to disclose a broader range of non-financial information covering environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria. This directive aims to enhance transparency and accountability in corporate sustainability practices.



#### ADVANCING ESG REPORTING WITH TECHNOLOGY

While policy sets the direction, technology powers the transition. We believe that the key to keeping up with regulatory expectations and providing our stakeholders with accurate, transparent reports lies in leveraging the best technology available. We currently manage ESG reporting in-house, but as the landscape grows more complex, so do the demands for speed, precision, and scalability in reporting.

We have taken a significant step forward by conducting a thorough review of leading ESG reporting technologies, and we are in the process of identifying a partnership with a specialized provider. This transition represents our firm belief that **technology is the key driver behind the green transition**, not just for our portfolio companies but for us as well. By adopting a cutting-edge ESG software solution, we can enhance the quality, efficiency, and accuracy of our reporting while meeting the heightened expectations of both LPs and regulators. The move toward professionalizing our reporting infrastructure also allows us to better understand and support the challenges faced by our portfolio companies as they, too, navigate the increasingly stringent requirements.

#### THE PATH AHEAD: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND ADAPTATION

The world of ESG reporting is not static, and neither are we. As global regulations evolve, we are committed to continuously improving our reporting framework. The submission of our **150-page PRI Report**, which addresses over 100 detailed questions regarding our ESG practices, marked a key milestone in our journey.

It was a rigorous process that highlighted both our strengths and the areas where we aim to improve further. This experience — discussed in more detail in **Jack's interview on page 17** — not only strengthened our reporting capabilities but also gave us a deeper understanding of the challenges our portfolio companies face when implementing their own ESG strategies.

White Star Capital is setting a high standard for ESG reporting in the venture capital space, ensuring that our practices not only meet current regulatory requirements but also anticipate future developments. We are committed to creating a framework that is both adaptable and robust enough to evolve with the emerging regulatory landscape, all while supporting our portfolio companies on their own sustainability journeys.

#### LOOKING AHEAD: POLICY AND REPORTING SYNERGY

Global regulations are becoming more demanding, but we see this as an opportunity rather than an obstacle. **Our internal framework and technology-driven approach** position us to lead in the space, not just comply. As more regulations like the **EU Taxonomy Regulation** and the **SFDR** come into play, we are prepared to support our portfolio companies in navigating these complexities and turning compliance into a strategic advantage.

We recognize that sustainability is not a one-size-fits-all journey. The diversity of our portfolio, ranging from early-stage startups to established global companies, means that each faces unique challenges in reporting and implementing ESG strategies. Through our new framework and advanced reporting technologies, we are better equipped to support them, providing the insights and resources they need to succeed in this rapidly changing environment.

The **Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation** (SFDR) requires asset managers to disclose how sustainability risks are integrated into their investment processes and enforces transparency in how financial institutions disclose the sustainability impacts of their investment decisions.

As we continue to invest in the **Sustainable Global Economy**, we are excited to contribute to the development of industries and technologies that will drive the transition to a net-zero world. By integrating robust reporting processes, advanced technology, and a clear understanding of global policies, White Star Capital is helping to drive change for the future of sustainable venture capital.



# Strategic Talent and Leadership





## Strategic Talent and Leadership

At White Star Capital, our commitment to sustainability is deeply embedded in our strategic choices, particularly in enhancing our team's expertise in this critical area. We are thrilled to introduce three team members who embody this commitment: Paige Martin, Felix Winckler and Jack Scott.

Their unique backgrounds and skills not only reinforce our dedication to supporting innovative, responsible businesses but also enhance our ability to integrate sustainability into every facet of our operations. Their appointments reflect our ongoing effort to attract and nurture talent that aligns with our sustainability goals and broader mission.

Paige Martin, who joined White Star Capital in 2021, brings a global perspective shaped by her upbringing in Montreal and the Turks and Caicos Islands. As the first person to hold her role at White Star, Paige has been a driving force in integrating ESG and DEI considerations into portfolio monitoring and reporting. Her previous experience at the Business Development Bank of Canada equipped her with valuable insights into LP reporting requirements and the importance of aligning financial performance with sustainability.

In her current role, Paige advocates for consistent DEI practices across the portfolio and helps companies navigate the complexities of ESG. A CFA charterholder, Paige combines analytical rigor with a passion for driving



sustainable change, helping White Star's portfolio companies meet their ESG targets while fostering a culture of inclusion.

In our interview, Paige shared how her experience at the Business Development Bank of Canada shaped her approach to ESG and DEI. She highlighted the importance of balancing flexibility with steady progress and emphasized the role of standardized metrics in fostering transparency and inclusion across the portfolio.

#### Q&A

#### **Paige Martin**

Manager of Portfolio Monitoring and Valuation

What inspired you to pursue a career in finance, and how did your experience at the Business Development Bank of Canada shape your views on ESG and DEI? Are there specific lessons or moments that stand out from your time there?

I was drawn to finance by my passion for problem-solving and strategic decision-making, particularly the analytical aspects of evaluating data and predicting trends. At the BDC, where ESG and DEI are strongly valued, I saw firsthand how finance can drive positive change.

Can you discuss how your experience with reporting requirements from LPs at the Business Development Bank of Canada has informed your approach to ESG integration at White Star Capital? What

have been some of the key learnings in driving ESG forward?

At BDC, where ESG was a big focus, I realized that even though ESG is still relatively new for many companies—and some may not have all the resources to implement it—it's still really important. This has shaped my approach at WSC, where one key takeaway for me has been finding a balance between flexibility and a commitment to making steady progress over time.

As the first person in your role at White Star Capital, what were the initial DElrelated challenges you encountered in portfolio monitoring? How did you address them, and what were the most effective solutions? One key challenge was understanding the varying levels of acceptance of DEI reporting across regions. We had to be flexible, allowing for different levels of disclosure while encouraging regions that were hesitant to be more transparent. Developing standardized templates helped streamline the reporting process, making it easier for everyone to participate and share information.

In your role, how do you ensure the diversity and inclusion data collected from portfolio companies is both accurate and impactful?

At WSC, we emphasize the importance of transparency and consistency when it comes to reporting all metrics, including DEI ones. We have established standardized metrics, to ensure that the data we receive is reliable and comparable across the portfolio.

Diversity and inclusion are central to White Star Capital's values. How do you see your role contributing to fostering these principles within the firm and across the portfolio? What initiatives have been particularly successful?

In my role, I contribute to fostering diversity and inclusion by advocating for best practices in DEI. We hope that by asking companies to report DEI metrics, it encourages them to review and implement their DEI policies.

Can you share an example of how White Star Capital's commitment to diversity has impacted your work or influenced your professional decisions? How does this commitment shape the firm's overall approach to investments?

WSC's commitment to diversity has shaped my perspective on the importance of diverse viewpoints in investment strategies. This commitment influences our approach by ensuring we focus on inclusive companies, and recognize their potential for innovation and success. Additionally, by collecting DEI data from portfolio companies, we're hopeful to assess the impact of diversity on performance in the future.

What advice would you give to young professionals, particularly women, who aspire to join the venture capital industry and drive change through ESG initiatives? What skills or mindsets do you think are most important for success?

My advice is to stay curious and openminded. Building strong networks and embracing lifelong learning are key. Additionally, having a passion for ESG initiatives will help drive meaningful change in the venture capital industry.

Felix Winckler, joined White Star Capital as a Venture Partner in June 2023. A French native with extensive international experience, Felix has a profound commitment to sustainability, shaped by his career as an entrepreneur and his personal passion for the environment.

His previous ventures, including Reflaunt, have significantly contributed to the advancement of circular business practices, particularly in the fashion industry. Felix's objective is to guide our portfolio companies towards sustainable practices.



Felix's career trajectory—from commercial litigator in New York to a leading figure in sustainable entrepreneurship—demonstrates his dedication to effecting positive environmental change. His involvement with Reflaunt, which offers white-label fashion resale solutions to retailers, highlights his innovative approach to circularity and his ability to drive impactful change in the industry.

In our conversation with Felix, he shares his journey from the legal field to the startup ecosystem and discusses his vision for integrating sustainability into investment strategies. His experience with Reflaunt and his observations on the visible impacts of climate change offer valuable perspectives on how businesses can drive the green transition.

#### Q&A

#### Felix Winckler

Venture Partner

What inspired you to transition from a New York State lawyer to a startup operator focused on green transition?

My transition from the legal practice to startup operator was opportunistic more than anything. A friend reached out for some help with his business idea. I was very excited by the project and wanted to get involved. I also think building your own business was at the time a little more exciting than drafting legal paperwork.

Being involved with a disruptive innovation is an exciting journey. Contributing in some way to the advancement of society is extremely rewarding. But pushing solutions to make our world a better place carries an even higher purpose. I've heard somewhere that we are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last one who can do something about it. I think many people in my generation are driven by this concern.

You mentioned that the impact of climate change is most visible from the mountains. Can you share more about your observations and how they have influenced your work?

The Mont Blanc glacier is a place where the

effect of global warming is strikingly visible. This glacier called "Mer de Glace" because of its size is now melting at the rate of around 40 meters a year and has lost 80 meters in depth over the last 20 years alone. Every year I come back to this place and find the melting ever more striking. When I was a teenager, you only needed to climb a few steps from the bottom of the glacier to reach the little train taking you down to the valley. Today, you need to climb a never ending staircase to reach that train station. As you climb up the stairs, every ten meters you can see a line in the rock with a date showing you the level of the ice cap on a particular year. It is at the bottom of these steps that you realize the scale of the problem.

How do you see businesses playing a role in mitigating the effects of climate change?

Business opportunities, job creation, and financial returns are the key drivers that will enable our society to transition toward a decarbonized world. By making the green transition economically compelling, we can build broad consensus. The case for this transition is largely embraced, and apart from a few fringe voices, it has become an integral part of the deindustrialization and critical technology strategies of most nations

## What specific actions are you taking to support businesses that can accelerate the green transition?

As investors, our role in the green transition is to bring financing to support innovators in scaling their business.

As an ex operator I'm at a personal level trying to share my modest personal experience with other founders. Over the last year I've started working as a mentor at Tech Nation Climate program as well as Techstars Sustainability program. I share with founders some advice on fundraising and help them with their pitch decks. I've also put together a workshop around go to market strategies. But I believe the main support I've been able to give has been through introduction, either to prospective clients or potential investors.

Can you provide examples of companies or projects you are currently supporting that have a significant impact on sustainability?

I've been speaking with many companies over the past year via these incubator programs or my personal network.

If I had to name a few, I would highlight:

- <u>Pact.earth</u>: Providing high quality bio leather as an alternative to animal leather.
- <u>Acuity</u>: SaaS solution helping companies reach their net zero objective. Their Alpowered tool allow clients to build carbon reduction plans and evaluate the finance cost / benefits.
- <u>Preoptima</u>: SaaS solution helping real estate promoters to evaluate the environmental impact of their project at conception level. The solution helps facilitate project pre applications and compliance.

What role do you believe technology plays in addressing environmental challenges?

Technology will be pivotal in driving the green transition. Decarbonizing our world is a monumental challenge that demands tremendous effort and ingenuity from all of us. Rethinking many aspects of our society within such a short timeframe will make innovative advancements crucial.

Can you elaborate on how Reflaunt accelerates the circular transition for fashion retailers?

Reflaunt is a technology company that helps fashion retailers to participate in the second hand trade. Its disruptive circular model allows customers of retailers to resell, donate or recycle their past purchases via a convenient resell interface integrated on the retailer's site.

Reflaunt's game changing solution allows retailers to take back control of a market set to reach \$83 bln in the next 3 years.

Today Reflaunt serves some of the biggest names in the fashion industry. Clients include luxury houses like Balenciaga or multi brand retailers such as Harvey Nichols, Net-a-Porter, Mr Porter, The Outnet, Zalora or Saks Fifth Avenue.

Reflaunt strives to define the future of luxury retail by aiming at building a world of positive consumption where customers resell before buying new.

What are the key challenges and successes you have encountered in promoting a circular economy in the fashion industry?

We faced many challenges scaling the business. But if I had to highlight a few I would mention the logistical infrastructure we had to build to allow us to trade around the world. We had to create logistical hubs, get favorable shipping rates (which is virtually impossible when you start with no

volume), build a unique backend ERP system to manage single SKUs and many other moving parts. We also had to deal with Brexit which nearly killed our business as our central hub for Europe was in the UK.

Another challenge we faced was that we were dealing with very demanding clients. Not only did they require very high standards of service, they were also very slow at taking decisions. For any startups, it is critical to have short sales cycles. As the deployment of our service is a significant change in retailers business model, it always took longer than we expected to close.

## What leadership qualities do you believe are essential for driving the ESG agenda in today's business environment?

The key to ESG is ensuring it doesn't become an obstacle to business growth. We need frameworks that guide society in the right direction because we can't rely solely on individuals becoming more environmentally conscious on their own. When rules like mandatory seat belts and car circulation restrictions were first introduced, they faced resistance, yet today they're universally accepted. ESG should be viewed in a similar way—we need clear rules, but they must be easy to follow. For companies to adopt these guidelines, reporting and implementation must be straightforward and practical.

#### How is the Early Growth team contributing to the green transition and sustainability initiatives?

One area the investment team is looking at for Fund IV is "climate tech" or companies building innovations supporting the green transition. We published a report called Sustainable Global Economy outlining our investment thesis in space and we are talking to many very exciting companies at the moment. I've been publishing research papers on a monthly basis outlining key topics I'm personally interested in. You can find all of them in my blog <u>here</u>.

# What are your long-term goals for contributing to the green transition and sustainability through your work with Early Growth?

Our long-term goal is to demonstrate to our LPs that investing in climate tech isn't 'impact investing' but rather about backing profitable businesses. I'm convinced we're at the dawn of a new industrial revolution, where the unicorns of tomorrow will emerge from solutions driving the green transformation. I look forward to being involved with some of these companies.

## What are the key lessons you have learned throughout your career that can help others in their sustainability journey?

Reflaunt was supported by organizations that held us to high sustainability standards. As a startup, setting net zero goals can be challenging, so we focused on our most significant emissions. Our primary Scope 1 emission was team travel, so we made a deliberate decision to minimize it. In a world where video calls are widely accepted, reducing flights is an effective first step. Not only does it lower our carbon footprint, but it also results in substantial cost savings. Other examples could be to support bike schemes for employees, use greener data centers, invest in carbon projects, no-plastic policy in the office etc. With a little effort, any organization can find areas where they can make improvements.

Jack Scott, joined White Star Capital in February 2023 as the Manager of Portfolio Monitoring and Valuation. Based in Guernsey, Jack combines a deep understanding of venture capital and private equity valuations with analytical expertise and strategic insights. His primary responsibilities include overseeing the performance of our investments, conducting detailed valuations, and offering critical data insights.

Jack's role is not only to ensure the financial health of our portfolio but also for supporting our sustainability objectives. By ensuring accurate financial assessments and performance monitoring, Jack helps align our investments with broader ESG goals.



His role contributes to our ability to make informed decisions and supports the effective management of our portfolio's sustainability targets.

In his interview, Jack discusses his approach to portfolio monitoring and valuation, emphasizing how rigorous financial oversight and detailed valuation processes are essential for aligning investments with sustainability goals. He also highlights his involvement in compiling and analyzing data for the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) reports, which helps ensure our investments adhere to environmental and social governance criteria. Jack's work with PRI reporting reinforces our commitment to transparency and responsible investment practices.

#### Q&A

#### **Jack Scott**

Manager of Portfolio Monitoring and Valuation

How has White Star Capital integrated the PRI's Principles of Responsible Investment into its investment processes and decision-making?

When considering a potential investment, the PRI principles are considered by our investment team's decision-making process. In today's market many investors are seeking investment opportunities that not only generate a return, but solve some of humanity's greatest challenges. The PRI principles are a useful component of our due diligence process as we seek to expand our portfolio while delivering the best returns for our LPs.

How does White Star Capital integrate ESG principles throughout the entire investment process, from the initial due diligence stage when evaluating potential investments to ongoing portfolio management?

From my perspective in the Portfolio Monitoring and Valuations team, I can speak to the portfolio management aspect of our investment portfolio. Our current portfolio is mostly made up of early-stage investments such as Series A and B startups. Many of these companies are in the early stages of their life and as such do not always track and report on a full suite of ESG

metrics as part of their daily operations. In this situation, we collaborate with them to develop and report these metrics which has been a rewarding aspect of my work. We work closely with our portfolio on a quarterly basis to review core ESG metrics and suggest improvements where possible. In this situation, we collaborate with them to develop and report these metrics which has been a rewarding aspect of my work. We work closely with our portfolio on a quarterly basis to review core ESG metrics and suggest improvements where possible.

Can you discuss the internal collaboration required to complete the PRI reports? Which teams were involved, and how did you ensure consistent and accurate data collection?

Creating and answering these reports requires contributions from across our team. With a large investor base distributed across North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, we often have multiple reports and questionnaires to complete. Fortunately, at White Star Capital, we have an exceptional technology team that supports us. With their help we have implemented several innovative processes that allow us to quickly collect and compile data on our portfolio.

For some of our earlier stage portfolio companies, they may not always have immediate access to this information, so we ensure that we spend time helping them through the initial process of enabling tracking of key metrics.

How does White Star Capital ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data submitted in the PRI reports? What quality control measures are in place?

We have a rigorous review process, any reports are initially drafted and then reviewed multiple times, before the results are compared with previous survey results. This helps ensure that we spot any anomalies in the data that is shared with us.

As mentioned above we have a large stakeholder base that we report to, along with quarterly performance reporting we create our annual PRI report and many other investor specific ESG reports showing both ours and our underlying portfolio's performance.

The document mentions the production of both Private and Public Transparency Reports. How does White Star Capital balance transparency with the need to protect sensitive information?

ESG and DEI metrics are becoming more available globally and so most companies are comfortable sharing this information. This information can be an important consideration in the investment decision making process and so it is helpful for us to have as much information as possible.

However, this information is still highly sensitive and not everyone feels comfortable sharing it – and regulation differs from market-to-market, meaning that some companies are unable to share data that could be collected in other markets. Consequently, we do not put pressure on our portfolio companies to share more than they want to, and work with them on a collaborative basis to ensure we have the most holistic view possible.

How do you communicate your ESG efforts and PRI reporting results to stakeholders, including investors and portfolio companies? What feedback have you received?

Reporting on ESG-related topics to our investors is an increasingly important and expanding area. Over the past couple of years, we have begun collecting detailed

ESG and DEI data from our portfolio companies.

We then review and present the relevant information to our investors in a more digestible format. This is an area where we are continually striving to grow and enhance our capabilities, with plans to present YoY progress in future reports.

Since the initial implementation of the PRI Reporting Framework, what improvements have been made? How has the framework evolved to better meet WSC'S ESG objectives?

With regards to the six main principles I feel my main involvement here at White Star Capital has been around appropriate disclosure of ESG related issues. mentioned, I am heavily involved collecting the ESG data from our portfolio companies and so I see this data transform from numbers on a sheet into the informative final reports that are published. Having originally started my career as a Chartered Accountant at PwC I spent a lot of time working with financial statements, specifically the required disclosures in them. Adapting our financials to meet the relevant accounting requirements whilst still incorporating the PRI principles is crucial if we want to deliver a polished final product to investors.

Given the increasing demand for ESG data from corporate partners, how does the VC Fund see this trend influencing its strategy moving forward?

We plan to place even greater emphasis on integrating ESG considerations into our investment decisions and portfolio This includes management processes. enhancing our data collection and reporting capabilities, as well as working closely with our portfolio companies to ensure they understand and can effectively manage their ESG responsibilities. By prioritizing ESG, we aim to align more closely with the values of our partners, mitigate risks, and ultimately create long-term value for all stakeholders.

At White Star Capital, our commitment to driving sustainable change and growth extends beyond leadership; every new hire becomes an ambassador of our values, actively contributing to positive change both within and outside the organization. Cristina Ventura, General Partner and Chief Sustainability Officer at White Star Capital, sets a powerful example of this through her tireless advocacy for ESG principles, particularly in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Her leadership on pro-bono initiatives, such as mentoring female entrepreneurs, serving on the Singapore VC & PE Association's DEI Committee, and supporting programs like the UBS Female Founders initiative, reflects her passion for driving positive change beyond professional ambitions.

This culture of empowerment extends throughout our team. Each new member, like our recent addition Friederike Keitlinghaus—who has joined Women in VC and VC Ladies Germany to champion female representation in the venture capital industry—takes on the mantle of leadership and contributes to our collective mission. By hiring people who embody our core values, we foster a workplace where sustainability and inclusion are not just goals but central to our operations, inspiring others within our organization and beyond.

By hiring people who embody our core values, we foster a workplace where sustainability and inclusion are not just goals but central to our operations, inspiring others within our organization and beyond.

Recognizing that hiring the right people is only the first step, we are dedicated to cultivating and sustaining these values through strong institutional commitment. To reinforce this dedication, White Star Capital has implemented a range of internal policies aimed at promoting an ethical, inclusive, and supportive workplace. Our Diversity, Violence, Discrimination, and Sexual Harassment Policy supports a safe and respectful environment for all employees, while our Global Parental Support and Compassionate Leave Policy provide essential support during personal milestones or hardships. Our Environmental, Social, and Governance Policy guides us in integrating ESG principles across our operations, and the Code of Conduct Business and Ethics ensures that all team members uphold the highest standards of integrity. Additionally, we have introduced a Whistleblowing Policy to encourage transparency and accountability, along with a Valuation Policy, Social Media Policy, and Privacy Policy to regulate key aspects of our business operations.

We also prioritize employee wellbeing by offering benefits like private health care insurance and providing a monthly \$100 allowance for wellbeing or fitness activities, with some offices granting free gym access.

Together, these initiatives exemplify our commitment to strategic talent acquisition and leadership, reinforcing our vision of sustainability as a shared responsibility that is integral to the culture at White Star Capital.



# Portfolio Companies Updates





## **Portfolio Company Updates**

#### **ESG FACTS & FIGURES**

\$33.9tn

ESG-related assets under management (AuM) are expected to reach \$33.9 trillion by 2026, up from \$18.4 trillion in 2021. In the United States, ESG-oriented AuM is expected to more than double from \$4.5 trillion in 2021 to \$10.5 trillion in 2026. In Europe, ESG-oriented AuM is projected to increase by 53% to \$19.6 trillion by 2026. The Asia-Pacific region is expected to see the fastest percentage growth in ESG AuM, with projections indicating it will more than triple, reaching \$3.3 trillion by 2026

90%

90% of GPs believe incorporating ESG into their strategies will improve returns.

21.5%

By 2026, ESG assets are projected to constitute 21.5% of total global assets under management.

90%

90% of Limited Partners (LPs) consider ESG in their investment decisions. 77% of LPs use ESG as a criterion for selecting General Partners (GPs).

64%

64% of startups consider investors' sustainability expertise when fundraising.

#### THREE BEST-IN-CLASS PORTFOLIO COMPANIES

Our portfolio companies—Butternut Box, 900.care, and FINN—share a common commitment to deeply embedding ESG principles into their business strategies. Each company leverages innovative, technology-driven models to accelerate sustainable growth, making sustainability a core element of their decision-making process.

All three companies set clear, measurable ESG goals to achieve tangible results. Whether through Butternut Box's 2024 sustainability framework, 900.care's Green OKRs, or FINN's ESG-focused OKRs, their efforts are aligned toward creating positive environmental and social impact.

A shared focus on environmental initiatives drives their sustainability efforts. Butternut Box reduces its carbon footprint through waste reduction and heat recovery technologies, 900.care minimizes plastic waste and CO2 emissions with refillable, low-impact products, and FINN champions fleet electrification and circular economy practices.

To ensure accountability, each company has implemented strong governance structures to monitor and guide their ESG initiatives. From Butternut Box's Sustainability Business Review Forum to 900.care's independent ESG committee and FINN's preparation for upcoming ESG reporting requirements, governance plays a key role.

Finally, innovation is the cornerstone of their approach. While Butternut Box develops lower-protein recipes, 900.care creates innovative products like dissolvable deodorants, and FINN promotes electric vehicle adoption through its unique business model.

Read on to discover how our portfolio companies exemplify how sustainability, innovation, and social responsibility can drive both business success and positive environmental impact.

## **Butternut Box**

Activity: pet food Launch: 2016

Headquarters: London, UK Investment date: January 2018

At White Star Capital, we proudly spotlight Butternut Box in this ESG report, celebrating a company that is truly leading the way in sustainability within the pet food industry. With a mission to deliver health and happiness to pets and their owners, Butternut Box has seamlessly woven Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations into its corporate fabric, setting a high standard for industry peers and driving meaningful change.

#### ESG INTEGRATION: A VISION FOR HOLISTIC SUSTAINABILITY

sustainability is not only a facet of its operations but a foundational element of its strategy. corporate Recognizing that leadership in the pet food industry extends beyond product excellence to impact. environmental encompass and social stewardship, the company has embedded sustainability deeply into its objectives. This core commitment is articulated through its 2024 goals, which

Butternut Box's dedication to revolve around three pivotal pillars: Planet, People, and Product.

> **Planet** represents Butternut Box's commitment mitigating its environmental This pillar drives efforts to minimize carbon beyond local initiatives. emissions, reduce waste, and enhance energy The company's include transitioning renewable energy optimizing for energy of processes conservation, implementing cutting-edge advancing waste reduction techniques.

People underscore the company's toward internal its external includina their work environment while also sustainability contributing positively to the process, communities it serves. This functional diversity and inclusion within reporting the organization expanding charitable efforts



efficiency. Product focuses on ensuring strategies that every aspect of product to development with aligns sources, sustainability This goals. production includes responsible sourcing ingredients, innovative solutions, and packaging and nutritional excellence to enhance the health and well-being of pets.

responsibilities In 2024, Butternut Box has and introduced а new stakeholders sustainability management customers. framework to operationalize Butternut Box strives to create these pillars effectively. This a supportive and inclusive includes a revamped monthly reporting integrating crossteam includes fostering a culture of establish clear metrics and mechanisms. and doing so, they ensure that all team members are engaged towards sustainability goals.

monthly **Business** Review acting as an ESG Steering facilitate cross-departmental commitment Committee. represents

forum includes representatives board from teams aligned with the sustainability The introduction of a bi- three sustainability pillars and remain Sustainability serves as a platform to track broader Forum, progress, identify issues, and reinforcing a decision-making. Additionally, excellence.

and informed about progress significant advancement. This the annual ESG update to the ensures that initiatives integrated with strategic goals, the company's **ESG** to

#### KEY ESG INITIATIVES: PIONEERING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Butternut Box's achievements carbon in the ESG space over the past implementing Science-Based expanded reflect a proactive Targets approach to sustainability. A the implementation of heat accuracy of carbon footprint the recovery technology between its Ace's Pantry fulfilment center and Rudie's Kitchen production facility. This pioneering step marks the beginning of Butternut Box's journey toward establishing a zero Scope 1 emission factory. By capturing and reusing waste heat, the company reduces gas consumption and enhances overall energy efficiency, aligning perfectly with its goal of minimizing its second B Corp Impact Report governance and onboarding environmental footprint. The company has also enhanced comprehensive update on its initiative ensures its carbon reporting by incorporating more activitydata and utilizina primary emission data from This actively calculating

footprint Initiative reduction measures. calculations and supported associated compliance with regulatory requirements.



Further demonstrating commitment to sustainability, responsible sourcing processes Butternut Box published its and 2024. providing progress towards high standards of social and all ESG initiatives, reinforcing environmental report lays key delivery partners, who are groundwork for the company's their 2025 recertification efforts. In

and addition, the company has its European (SBTi) market presence with lower-This protein, red meat recipes, notable initiative in 2024 was approach has improved the which are designed to lower carbon footprint with meat evolving production, aligning with its commitment to responsible sourcing and environmental impact reduction.

> The onboarding of the majority of Butternut Box's supply base onto the Sedex ESG supply chain platform has its enhanced transparency supported improved a models for new suppliers. This ongoing meeting alignment and progress across performance. the company's commitment the to sustainability excellence.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND** CIRCULAR **ECONOMY:** REDUCING FOOTPRINT AND ENHANCING EFFICIENCY

Butternut Box demonstrated progress in reducing principles. In 2023,

environmental footprint and stage of a heat recovery production

has company installed a reverse Scope 1 gas consumption. significant osmosis plant, followed by the Additionally, the installation of its implementation of the first electricity meters across the process has embracing circular economy process in 2024, both of which enabled Butternut Box to the have contributed to reduced identify and target high-usage

areas, further electricity consumption and saving energy and lowering contributing to lower carbon enhancing energy efficiency.

The company's management practices have sourcing of products have waste considerable further also seen improvements. Butternut Box emissions. The move towards making has transitioned to a thinner a web for base reducing plastic usage by 12%, waste has reduced road miles

decreasing an equivalent of 60 tones, by transport emissions. Efforts to emissions packaging optimize waste Woolcool insulation and local By focusing on designing out reduced more local pouches, digestion provider for food and circular economy.

11,000 annually, and improved for waste management efficiency. and minimizing transport packaging, Butternut Box is significant anaerobic towards a more sustainable

#### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE **CULTURE**

Butternut Box's commitment dedication to fostering an employees diversity, equity, (DEI) inclusion is fundamental aspect of its has implemented corporate culture. In 2024, the review cycle to talent map launched the company "Belonging Matters" training for Operational program teams to address key DEI areas and emphasize the importance of building an inclusive culture. The also introduced company training on Interview Skills, Cross-Cultural Awareness, Giving Feedback, and Anti-Bullying & Harassment, continuina provide to to all education team members. The publication of the second Gender Pay Gap Report and the introduction of Talent Barkademy, leadership program with 63% female participation, underscore Butternut Box's

and equitable

address and workplace. potential biases, ensuring that a Furthermore, the company performance evaluations are a new fair and inclusive.



#### CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED: NAVIGATING THE ESG LANDSCAPE

challenges. The sustainability business nature

Sustainability making

Navigating the complexities of requires active participation Steering Committee, which sustainability has presented from various teams across the facilitates shared goal-setting Butternut Box with several business. To address this, the and ensures that all factors systemic company established a cross- are considered in decision-The processes.

evolving regulatory landscape, Through its journey, Butternut such with increasing emphasis on verifiable data, has also been a challenge. Butternut Box has addressed this by implementing carbon а accounting platform and partnering with Sedex to enhance chain supply transparency. These measures to stay ahead of regulatory requirements and maintain high sustainability standards.

Box has learned that carbon charitable intensity targets are more Regular effective than absolute targets employees on sustainability is for driving decarbonization in another key lesson. Providing fast-growing with growth environmental progress. 'why' Additionally, setting support the company's efforts tracking targets across both organizational environmental social and and metrics has enabled company to advance in areas decision-making processes.

as volunteering and contributions. training for companies. both new and existing team These targets help balance members with comprehensive meaningful training on the 'how' and of sustainability and initiatives fosters stronger commitment integration the sustainability into core

#### FUTURE ESG GOALS: PAVING THE WAY FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS



Looking ahead, Butternut Box is focused on several ambitious ESG goals for the coming years. The company aims to recertify as a B Corp in 2025, continuing its commitment high to standards social of and environmental performance. On the environmental front, Box plans progress with heat recovery initiatives, install on-site photovoltaic electricity generation, and work closely with suppliers on decarbonization efforts. The company is also committed to reducing food waste through improved detection of subquality pouches and amount of increasing the through waste recycled ongoing analysis and

expanded waste management beyond partnerships. Butternut Box plans enhance the volume of lower to enhance emissions data carbon meals in Europe and accuracy. The company will implement a filtration system also focus on future-proofing for effluent to increase water against evolving regulations recycling.

On the social front, Butternut improving employee ESG compensation and benefits, aspect creating career development Butternut opportunities for members from minority positive backgrounds, and expanding achieving charity partnerships. company also plans to explore sustainability Poland. To goals, Butternut Box implement а accounting platform accelerate modelling scenario dynamic, enabling teams

sustainability to Further, model carbon impacts, and to working closely with suppliers and making carbon reduction initiatives more transparent.

is dedicated to continuously By integrating comprehensive principles into of operations, its Box exemplifies squad how a company can drive change while business success. The Their approach to sets local supply chains for some standard for the industry and treats and ensure that all ESG reinforces their position as a initiatives are integrated into leader in sustainable pet food. the design and build of their As they continue to innovate new manufacturing facility in and expand, Butternut Box support these remains committed will mission of delivering health carbon and happiness to pets and to their while owners, all decarbonization advancing the broader goal of efforts. This includes making a sustainable and responsible more future.



Activity: personal care product

Launch: 2019

Headquarters: Paris, France

Investment date: December 2020

Since its inception in 2019, 900.care has rapidly emerged as a leader in the sustainable hygiene industry. The company's mission to reduce single-use plastics and minimize carbon emissions has driven continuous innovation, resulting in a growing portfolio of eco-friendly personal care products. The year 2023 has been particularly pivotal, marked by significant product launches, robust sales growth, and strengthened Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) commitments.

#### ESG INTEGRATION: SUSTAINABILITY AS A CORE BUSINESS DRIVER



Environmental sustainability is at the core of 900.care's business strategy, every decision the company ESG makes. company has established objectives: plastic

avoided, CO2 reduced, and water transported. These goals are operationalized through Green 900.care's Objectives and Key Results measurable and significant. As (OKRs) implemented across all of July 2024, the company has departments. Introduced in avoided 5,702,521 units of 2023, these OKRs integrate plastic waste, reduced CO2 sustainability into the aspect of ensuring that all strategic 817,818 liters of water. These planning and decision-making figures illustrate the direct processes contribute directly environmental guiding to achieving the company's 900.care's innovative product objectives. This mission-driven framework supports 900.care's push ambitious growth strategy, sustainable hygiene. three quantifiable ecological targeting a tenfold increase in waste sales over the next five years

emissions while maintaining a strong not commitment to sustainability.

impact is every emissions by 2,386 tones, and business, avoided the transportation of benefits This lines and its ongoing efforts to the boundaries

#### PRODUCT INNOVATION AND CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Product innovation is central 30,000 customers, achieving a commitment to reducing its 900.care's sustainability. In of beginning 2024, company launched its highly on deodorant emits four times which deodorant, uses a dissolving tablet instead of eight times traditional plastic containers. conventional excellent feedback from over highlight

approach to rating of over 4 out of 5 stars. carbon the confirm that the refillable roll- product quality. previous deodorant stick and introduce less than a toothpaste

footprint while the Independent measurements maintaining high standards of

anticipated refillable roll-on less CO2 than the company's Later in 2024 900.care plans to a new paste that will supermarket refillable via a dissolving stick, The new product has received deodorant stick. These results further expanding its range of 900.care's low-impact products. Although

feedback on the toothpaste is not yet available, tablets, the company continues to customer prioritize innovation reformulating products, such as its shower product offerings,

paste gel sticks to enhance experience by ecological impact. existing continuously refining its 900.care

and toothpaste aims to provide sustainable both alternatives that reduce the and environmental footprint By personal care products.

#### B CORP RECERTIFICATION AND GOVERNANCE ADVANCEMENTS

after its company Only two years 900.care has significant strides enhancing its sustainability practices, preparing for its first footprint, recertification in 2024. In contrast to the initial certification period, when the contract,



operated founding, 900.care became B shared offices, 900.care now oversight, Corp certified in 2021. Since occupies its own office spaces. sustainability made This shift has enabled the remain ambitious, actionable, in company to exert greater and control over its operational company's long-term goals, including, example, the ability implement a green electricity upcoming improve water 2024. consumption practices, and establish waste sorting systems.

> 900.care's commitment to sustainable change. independent ESG committee

from continues to provide rigorous ensuring strategies aligned with for with the ambition of achieving to a score of over 100 in the recertification

comprehensive This governance framework supports 900.care in scaling responsibly, while staying true These advancements highlight to its mission of minimizing ongoing environmental impact and social driving fostering positive An outcomes.

#### LOOKING AHEAD: SCALING IMPACT WHILE MAINTAINING SUSTAINABILITY

expand, it remains dedicated existing formulas and creating to minimizing environmental its enhancing offerings and deepening its sustainable environmental impact. The traditional options on the change company's recent success, highlighted by a doubling of sales and a turnover of €10 million, demonstrates its effective balance between growth and 900.care plans to introduce care industry. The company's additional eco-friendly dedication broader industry such as reduced sustainable items. company also intends to

product new products that offer more impact remains at the heart of alternatives market.

900.care's strategic focus on sustainability and innovation positions it as a catalyst for sustainability. change within the personal replacing to products and advocate for traditional products with more changes, sustainable alternatives VAT on ensures that it not only meets The but exceeds its ambitious ESG objectives. As it continues to

continues to improve its impact by refining scale, 900.care's commitment to its operations, driving positive both within hygiene industry and beyond.





Activity: car subscription platform

**Launch**: 2019

Headquarters: Munich, Germany Investment date: December 2020

At White Star Capital, we are proud to feature FINN in this report, as the company exemplifies how traditional carbon-intensive industries can be transformed into models of environmental responsibility. FINN stands out as a best-in-class example of how a company can seamlessly integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into its core business strategy and operations, from fleet electrification to supporting global carbon offset projects.

#### ESG A STRATEGIC NORTH STAR

FINN's ESG strategy is deeply vehicles (EVs) from 25% today Running embedded in its purpose to to 80% by 2028. This bold promotions, such as offering "drive change for people, organizations, and the planet determination to lead the who choose electric vehicles, through frictionless mobility," mobility industry toward a and partnering with energy which serves as the guiding more sustainable future and providers principle for strategic decision- demonstrates its leadership in charging making. This purpose operationalized through that quarterly Objectives and Key individual mobility by car is tax benefits to make EVs more Results (OKRs) set at the the most substantial lever for financially company, department, team, reducing carbon emissions, employees of companies who squad, a cross-departmental sustainability strategy. team responsible for driving the company's ESG strategy, closely with works departments to integrate ESG goals into their work, ensuring alignment with the company's priorities. broader integrating ESG directly into its core purpose, FINN unites stakeholders—investors, its leadership, employees, partners—around a common goal of sustainability.

A key pillar of FINN's ESG its ambitious strategy is commitment to fleet electrification. aimina increase the share of electric

is the EV space. Recognizing introduction electrification

has implemented a range of clients with electric-only fleet initiatives to encourage EV policies. include adoption. These

dedicated target reflects the company's loyalty points for customers to simplify process. The B<sub>2</sub>B of product "JobAuto" leverages accessible and individual levels. The ESG FINN has made it central to its offer this benefit. As a result of these efforts, demand for EVs significantly increased, has To accelerate this shift, FINN especially among corporate



By expanding its portfolio to meet the rising demand for carbon footprint but also role and ensuring a robust supply global decarbonization efforts. sustainable global economy. of electric options, FINN is not The company's progressive reinforcina only

its approach to fleet

commitment to reducing its electrification underlines its in accelerating the zero or low-emission vehicles contributing meaningfully to transition to a low-carbon,

#### CARBON OFFSETTING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS



the central pillar of FINN's carbon also company since founding further mitigate and is investing over half a that million euros each year to efforts support projects in China, Ghana, long-term South Sumatra, and the USA.

While electrifying the fleet is These projects focus on both avoidance and carbon reduction strategy, the removal, reinforcing FINN's supports commitment to reducing its climate protection programs carbon footprint. However, the by company places a stronger engaging in carbon offsetting emphasis on direct emission its reductions, viewing offsetting environmental impact. Since as a supplementary rather September 2023, FINN has than a primary solution. This partnered with South Pole balanced approach ensures FINN's sustainability are grounded environmental tangible actions that lead to environmental benefits.

#### CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND VEHICLE LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT

FINN extends its commitment extends the vehicles' lifecycle a second life after their initial to sustainability by embracing and circular economy principles, affordable attractive EVs to Additionally, particularly in vehicle lifecycle the secondary market. management. At the end of subscription their nearly that those are damaged, are resold for use in currently the secondary market, either impressive 98%. This KPI is made, this area still requires used through car leasing, or other applications. loss This practice

brings even

periods, The company measures its discussions all vehicles, except fleet's reusability ratio, a key recyclability totally performance indicator that components, stands at sales, calculated as 1 minus the total further development. share, reflecting significantly average rate of vehicles given

more subscription period with FINN. FINN has engaged with car manufacturers to advance around the of vehicle acknowledging an that while progress is being

#### DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND A CULTURE OF OPENNESS

particularly in fostering a new diverse. equitable, inclusive corporate culture. In

FINN's approach to ESG also 2023, the company revisited empowers employees. One of prioritizes social responsibility, its core values and rolled out a the newly established core cultural and designed to create a safe, reinforces a commitment to motivating environment that inclusivity,

framework values, "Embrace Openness," honesty, and diversity. These values are female bi-annual reviews and through the election quarterly Ambassadors.

underrepresented mentoring program, pairing recent quarters. In addition, systemic pay gaps.

employees embedded into the company's mentors to guide their career training for senior managers, performance development. This program, equipping them with tools to celebrated complemented by workshops lead of on conflict management and empathy Culture leadership, has contributed to conflicts perceptions improved diversity and belonging within transparent To support the growth of the organization, as measured system, groups, by an increase in employee equitable FINN introduced a women's survey scores from 7.1 to 7.5 in minimizes

with FINN implemented leadership diverse teams with and manage effectively. These of efforts are complemented by a salarv which ensures treatment and risks such as

#### GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE WITH EMERGING ESG REGULATIONS

increasing regulatory key the requirements around Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) set to take effect in 2026, FINN has proactively mapped its exposure to these new regulations and developed a roadmap to ensure compliance by the deadline. company has begun developing policies related to anti-money user laundering, and anti-bribery reporting software. Challenges

As FINN continues to grow, it and corruption, while ensuring in this area include navigating remains focused on meeting comprehensive tracking for the yet undefined aspects of metrics such ESG reusability, recyclability,



this To manage reporting landscape, plans to adopt dedicated

as CSRD requirements EV determining how to effectively reporting. With the Corporate ratio, and Scope 1-3 emissions. conduct a (double) materiality assessment and engage stakeholders. Nevertheless, FINN is committed to continuous improvement, leveraging insights from training sessions with Leaders for Climate Action frequent exchanges with its complex network to stay ahead of FINN regulatory developments.

#### LOOKING AHEAD: FUTURE ESG GOALS AND VISION

FINN's ESG journey continues A as the company refines its assessment has helped the sustainability strategy sets new goals for the coming focus areas for the future: years. Electrifying 80% of the sustainable product offerings fleet by 2028 remains a top and but FINN is also practices. priority, focused on offset carbon reporting ahead improving capabilities, and deepening its requirements and deliver on engagement stakeholders on ESG topics.

recent and company identify two key enhanced governance By incorporating expanding its these areas into its strategic programs, planning, FINN aims to stay of regulatory with its promise of driving positive change for people,

materiality organizations, and the planet.

# Conclusion





#### Conclusion

As we conclude our fourth ESG report, we reflect on the progress we've made and the opportunities that lie ahead. Our focus on fostering a sustainable global economy, combined with a commitment to responsible investing, has allowed us to drive meaningful impact across our portfolio. The initiatives outlined in this report showcase not only our achievements but also our readiness to take our ESG efforts further.

Looking forward, we are excited to implement our new ESG reporting framework across our current and future funds, including our Digital Asset Fund and Growth Funds, to ensure compliance with emerging global regulations. Finalising our collaboration with a specialised ESG reporting software provider will be a significant step in leveraging technology to enhance transparency, accuracy, and efficiency in our reporting processes. This partnership will professionalise our internal ESG infrastructure and enable us to better support our portfolio companies as they navigate the complexities of sustainability reporting.

We are committed to identifying new areas to elevate our sustainability practices to the next level. By focusing on emerging sectors within our Sustainable Global Economy investment theme like Green Fintech, Circular Economy, and Carbon Management, we aim to drive innovation that delivers both environmental impact and financial returns. Our strategic emphasis on macro themes such as demographic shifts, digitization, and new digital infrastructures will continue to guide our investment strategy. As we embark on the next phase of our journey, we look forward to collaborating with our investors, portfolio companies, and stakeholders to build a more sustainable and resilient economy for the benefit of both our investors and the planet.

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