



ABOUT AEGON ASSET MANAGEMENT

With \$337bn in AUM, Aegon Asset Management is a large investment firm with operations across Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Aegon offers fixed income, real assets, equities, and multi-asset solutions for its global client base of pension plans, public funds, insurance companies, banks, wealth managers, family offices, and foundations.



THE CHALLENGE

- Lacked transparency between the team in different regions
- Struggled with contrasting techniques for ESG engagement tracking
- Faced a daunting overhaul decision



THE SOLUTION

- Unified workflow and enhanced collaboration between Netherlands and UK offices
- Enriched research processes using a universal platform
- Migrated historical notes to retain research continuity



THE RESULTS

- Streamlined team methodology and workflow
- Simplified communication and gained better reporting
- Enhanced all-time ESG engagement tracking capabilities

Aegon Asset Management Swaps Disparate ESG Engagement Workflow for FactSet's Research Management Solution

Aegon optimizes tracking and historical notes storage with FactSet's intuitive Internal Research Notes (IRN) platform

THE CHALLENGE

Working with two distinct methodologies in two different countries, the Responsible Investment (RI) team at Aegon Asset Management began to feel the strain of not having a common strategy or platform for their growing commitment to ESG engagement. Between the difficulty in seeing each other's work, separately tracking engagement progress, and a general lack of transparency, they knew they needed a more cohesive and intuitive solution than their current Excel-based method—but the requirements didn't stop there. To maintain their existing research and ensure data continuity, the RI team needed to find a solution that kept and stored their historical notes. Facing these two main challenges—disparately tracking research and retaining past work—brought possibly the biggest challenge among them all: the risk of change.

THE SOLUTION

Recognizing the main Investment team at Aegon has been successfully using FactSet's Internal Research Notes (IRN) for years, some data-driven members of the RI team showed interest in learning how FactSet could help optimize their increasingly important ESG engagement workflow.

Considering all concerns, FactSet's team explained to Aegon how adopting IRN would not only help combine differently formatted workflows with the ability to regularly revisit and refresh, but would also initiate a historical research note migration. IRN provides high flexibility to maintain consistency across research process changes. It promotes collaboration in a centralized location to log research over time. And most importantly, it's easier than they expected.

Before and during implementation, FactSet's dedicated consultants collected requirements to build a tailored ESG engagement workflow using the team's proprietary language on ESG-related themes and parameters. IRN bridged the geographical gap between Aegon's RI teams who were using Excel-based templates in different ways; now, they have the connection and visibility to work in sync while honoring the distinct benefits of each team's original process.

Simultaneously, FactSet began the transition of the team's engagement historical notes by manually collecting and loading over 6,500 research notes into IRN. This process ensured no continuity breaks and allowed the RI team to hit the ground running with the new ESG engagement workflow. "Our engagement history is invaluable," says Miranda Beacham, Head of UK Responsible Investment. "We have been active in this space for decades and the reality is that many engagements with companies can span over many years. It is important to have the context of previous conversations to understand where the company has come from and what is achievable in the future. Being able to clearly track and report on material updates for our clients with the confidence that the information is accurate and can be done in a timely manner is of utmost importance."

On top of tracking ESG engagements and storing fundamental internal research, IRN helped to integrate other workflows such as proxy voting and sustainability-related research into the investment process.

"Being comfortable with the process, timelines, and 100% accuracy of the data migration was non-negotiable—FactSet delivered at every stage. Reporting has become an ever-increasing area of focus for our clients and thanks to FactSet, we can deliver in a flexible manner."

- Miranda Beacham, Head of UK Responsible Investment

THE RESULTS

Speaking of increased efficiency, what else has IRN done for Aegon? Given the interconnected nature of this spectrum of internal content—now that both RI teams are aligned on a single platform—their collaboration, research, and decision-making have grown exponentially. IRN's easy interface has helped the team minimize time spent inputting and retrieving research, and since that research is more organized, it leads to improved reporting. Plus, the fund managers and analysts now have real-time access to the work that's being done.

Alongside streamlining the entire ESG engagement research process, FactSet's manual work transitioning a substantial amount of historical notes provided vital data continuity to the RI team's workflow. Shifting out of Excel and into a rich research management solution enabled seamless tracking of engagement progress over time, as well as efficiency gains via configurable task automation and defined reporting processes.

"In terms of servicing, FactSet's RMS is unrivaled in the market", Beacham remarks. "FactSet's Client Solutions team is professional, detail-focused, and a pleasure to work with. The templates and reports are invaluable to our global business, and the support has been second to none."

Once the RI team improved their research process, they felt confident providing more comprehensive supporting documents to Aegon's portfolio managers, helping them better manage their compliant investment strategies.

DISCOVER SOLUTIONS

FactSet creates data and technology solutions for investment professionals around the world, providing instant access to financial data and analytics that investors use to make crucial decisions.

Internal Research Notes

Gain a centralized repository for your globe-spanning research.

GET STARTED

ESG Investing Solutions

Power your ESG journey with extensive data and best-in-class analytics.

GET STARTED