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| 18 November 2022 |

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| Reply form for the Consultation Paper on Guidelines for the use of ESG or sustainability-related terms in funds’ names |
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| Date: 18 November 2022 |

Responding to this paper

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) invites responses to the specific questions listed in the Consultation Paper on Guidelines for the use of ESG or sustainability-related terms in funds’ names published on the ESMA website.

*Instructions*

Please note that, in order to facilitate the analysis of the large number of responses expected, you are requested to use this file to send your response to ESMA so as to allow us to process it properly. Therefore, ESMA will only be able to consider responses which follow the instructions described below:

* use this form and send your responses in Word format (pdf documents will not be considered);
* do not remove the tags of type <ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_0> - i.e. the response to one question has to be framed by the 2 tags corresponding to the question; and
* if you do not have a response to a question, do not delete it and leave the text “TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE” between the tags.

Responses are most helpful:

* if they respond to the question stated;
* indicate the specific question to which the comment relates;
* contain a clear rationale; and
* describe any alternatives ESMA should consider.

**Naming protocol**

In order to facilitate the handling of stakeholders’ responses please save your document using the following format:

ESMA\_CP\_FUNA\_NAMEOFCOMPANY\_REPLYFORM.

e.g. if the respondent were ABCD, the name of the reply form would be:

ESMA\_CP\_FUNA\_ABCD\_REPLYFORM

***Deadline***

Responses must reach us by 20 February 2022.

All contributions should be submitted online at [www.esma.europa.eu](http://www.esma.europa.eu) under the heading ‘Your input - Consultations’.

***Publication of responses***

All contributions received will be published following the end of the consultation period, unless otherwise requested. **Please clearly indicate by ticking the appropriate checkbox in the website submission form if you do not wish your contribution to be publicly disclosed. A standard confidentiality statement in an email message will not be treated as a request for non-disclosure.** Note also that a confidential response may be requested from us in accordance with ESMA’s rules on access to documents. We may consult you if we receive such a request. Any decision we make is reviewable by ESMA’s Board of Appeal and the European Ombudsman.

***Data protection***

Information on data protection can be found at [www.esma.europa.eu](http://www.esma.europa.eu) under the headings ‘Legal notice’ and ‘Data protection’.

# General information about respondent

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| Name of the company / organisation | ANASF – Associazione nazionale consulenti finanziari |
| Activity | Investment Services |
| Are you representing an association? |  |
| Country/Region | Italy |

# Introduction

Please make your introductory comments below, if any:

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_0>

ANASF, the national Association representing financial advisors authorised to offer investment services off the premises of financial intermediaries (consulenti finanziari abilitati all’offerta fuori sede) registered in the official national register pursuant to Article 31 of the Consolidated Law on Finance (Legislative Decree no. 58/1998), would like to express a few considerations regarding the subject of the consultation paper.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_0>

1. : Do you agree with the need to introduce quantitative thresholds to assess funds’ names?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_1>

We agree with the need to introduce quantitative thresholds, but these need to be made harmonious with Articles 8 and 9 of the Regulation (UE) 2019/2088 (SFDR).

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_1>

1. : Do you agree with the proposed threshold of 80% of the minimum proportion of investments for the use of any ESG-, or impact-related words in the name of a fund? If not, please explain why and provide an alternative proposal.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_2>

Yes, we agree with the proposed threshold.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_2>

1. : Do you agree to include an additional threshold of at least 50% of minimum proportion of sustainable investments for the use of the word “sustainable” or any other sustainability-related term in the name of the fund? If not, please explain why and provide an alternative proposal.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_3>

We believe that the additional threshold should be set at 35%. Furthermore, in our opinion, if the fund refers to an additional percentage of sustainable investments equal to the provided threshold, such fund should specify in the KID that the remaining part of the investments adopts the exclusion criteria for some sectors, such as arms. Otherwise, it cannot be considered sustainable.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_3>

1. : Do you think that there are alternative ways to construct the threshold mechanism? If yes, please explain your alternative proposal.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_4>

An alternative way to construct the threshold mechanism could be include qualitative thresholds in addition to quantitative ones, particularly for virtuous firms that have begun a sustainable transition process and should be rewarded. For example, rewarding mechanism could be envisaged for sustainable investments of such firms in sustainable transition, whereby when a threshold of at least 20% is reached, a multiplier effect is applied, that allows such companies to reach the 30% threshold (the multiplier is 1,5).

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_4>

1. : Do you think that there are other ways than the proposed thresholds to achieve the supervisory aim of ensuring that ESG or sustainability-related names of funds are aligned with their investment characteristics and objectives? If yes, please explain your alternative proposal. If yes, please explain your alternative proposal.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_5>

Yes, as suggested in response to the previous question.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_5>

1. : Do you agree with the need for minimum safeguards for investment funds with an ESG- or sustainability-related term in their name? Should such safeguards be based on the exclusion criteria such as Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/1818 Article 12(1)-(2)? If not, explain why and provide an alternative proposal.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_6>

Yes, we agree. These safeguards should also be based on Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2019/2088 on sustainability-related disclosures in the financial services sector and on Taxonomy Regulation (EU) 2020/852.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_6>

1. : Do you think that, for the purpose of these Guidelines, derivatives should be subject to specific provisions for calculating thresholds?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_7>

We suggest that the notional value should be applied for calculating the minimum investment quota in general and in ordinary market situations, while we believe that in extraordinary situation, such as the current one, it is more appropriate to apply the market value.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_7>

1. Would you suggest the use of the notional value or the market value for the purpose of the calculation of the minimum proportion of investment?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_1>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_1>

1. Are there any other measures you would recommend for derivatives for the calculation of the minimum proportion of investments?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_2>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_2>

1. : Do you agree that funds designating an index as a reference benchmark should also consider the same requirements for funds’ names as any other fund? If not, explain why and provide an alternative proposal.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_8>

The question assumes that there are unambiguous indices and benchmarks, but it is not currently the case. Once standardised indices are provided for the European market, comprehensive and widespread, as well as institutionalized, such indices can be used to identify ESG funds and used alternatively to threshold.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_8>

1. : Would you make a distinction between physical and synthetic replication, for example in relation to the collateral held, of an index?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_9>

There is a distinction between physical and synthetic replication: in the physical one it is possible to change the weighting, in the synthetic one it is not. The difference can be identified with active/passive management.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_9>

1. : Do you agree of having specific provisions for “impact” or impact-related names in these Guidelines?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_10>

Yes, we agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_10>

1. : Should there be specific provisions for “transition” or transition-related names in these Guidelines? If yes, what should they be?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_11>

Yes, as indicated in answer to question n. 4.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_11>

1. : The proposals in this consultation paper relates to investment funds’ names in light of specific sectoral concerns. However, considering the SFDR disclosures apply also to other sectors, do you think that these proposals may have implications for other sectors and, if so, would you see merit in having similar guidance for other financial products?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_12>

Yes, we believe that the proposals in this regulation might be appropriate for other sectors as well.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_12>

1. : Do you agree with having a transitional period of 6 months from the date of the application of the Guidelines for existing funds? If not, please explain why and provide an alternative proposal.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_13>

We agree with transitional period, as long as the terms run from the full implementation of the taxonomy, otherwise the transition process will be absorbed in the cost to citizens.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_13>

1. : Should the naming-related provisions be extended to closed-ended funds which have terminated their subscription period before the application date of the Guidelines? If not, please explain your answer.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_14>

We believe that the principle of retroactivity is inapplicable due to the specific nature of the closed fund. Such application can lead to a proliferation of irremediable litigation.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_14>

1. : What is the anticipated impact from the introduction of the proposed Guidelines?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_15>

As highlighted, although compliance costs will apply on a one-time basis, it is clear that these costs will have to be absorbed over several years with possible impacts on final clients.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_15>

1. : What additional costs and benefits would compliance with the proposed Guidelines bring to the stakeholder(s) you represent? Please provide quantitative figures, where available.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_16>

Costs will be due for document production, training and increased transparency. These costs could also translate into a 30% increase for final clients over current costs. Consideration must also be given to the onerous impact on financial advisors in having to explain these increased costs to clients, resulting from a regulatory requirement.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_FUNA\_16>