

Putting the S in ESG:

Social Issues in Socially Responsible Investment Portfolios

The following is a list of the social issues included in socially responsible investment (SRI) portfolios in 2017, based on a Canadian scan. It includes the topics SRI investors consider when integrating “social” sustainability issues in their investment portfolios. It does not include negative screening or impact investing topics, but focuses on topics used in ESG Integration and Shareholder Engagement. Please contact the author, Coro Strandberg, if you would like to add a social issue to the list.

Human rights

- Forced labour
- Child labour
- Modern slavery

Labour standards

- Exploitative and dangerous working practices

Employee welfare

- Fair wages and benefits
- Living wage
- Health and safety
- Psychological health and safety
- Equal employment opportunities
- Non-discrimination (gender discrimination)
- Education and training to expand availability of domestic skilled employees
- Employee engagement

Diversity

- Board and workforce diversity (women and minorities)

Customer relations

- Product and customer safety
- Product affordability and access
- Ethical / fair marketing and product labeling

- Data privacy and security

- GMOs
- Chemicals used in products
- Healthy products

Stakeholder relations

- Community rights; positive impact on community; community relations
- Aboriginal relations, Indigenous rights: Free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples
- Supplier relations
- Other stakeholders

Animal welfare / testing

Oppressive regimes

Military connections

- Companies involved in the manufacture of controversial weapons
- Conflict free material sourcing
- Elimination of cluster munitions

Compensation philosophy

- Equal pay – pay gap
- Equitable compensation; pay ratio

Business ethics

- Bribery and corruption
- Corporate political contributions and lobbying activities
- Tax avoidance