

# Pertinent questions on carbon are getting answers

As the issue of climate change remains in the public eye, an increasing number of companies are turning to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), which gathers information from leading companies, for assistance with improving their sustainability. The CDP makes the information it gathers from corporations publicly available, which helps to catalyse the activities of policymakers, consultants, accountants and marketers.

## Questions asked

Its latest initiative was to send out a questionnaire to thousands of companies in February this year. The final results of the survey are due in September and are expected to give significant visibility and accountability to all those taking part, as well as important information for investors. Response rates are already high, which indicate that an increasing number of companies are feeling the growing pressure to treat

climate reporting as part of their normal business practices.

Collating information for the CDP questionnaire provides newcomers to this kind of reporting with a good starting point to make the initial assessment and to begin the process of collecting relevant data on the carbon emissions. For those already participating, it enables them to take a step further and consider the strategic implications. The questionnaire contains quantitative as well as qualitative information, and so enables companies to take a holistic look at climate-related risks, opportunities and management strategies.

## Pressure won't let up

'We can expect the pressure for more, and better, disclosure by businesses to continue,' said PwC sustainability partner Thomas Scheiwiller. 'The political

and media focus on this topic is not going to let up.' This pressure is increasingly being applied in emerging markets – this year, for example, the CDP's request for information has gone for the first time to China's 100 largest companies. There are also plans for the CDP to launch new operations in South Korea and Latin America.

The fact that Merrill Lynch has recently agreed a three-year global partnership with the CDP to support its development in China and elsewhere, indicates that investors want this kind of information and are taking it seriously. CDP CEO Paul Dickinson said: 'This global partnership will help the CDP to build on its current success in creating a unified business response to climate change. As regulations on greenhouse gas emissions tighten, CDP data will become increasingly useful to help guide investment models.'

## What is the Carbon Disclosure Project?

The CDP is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that aims to create a lasting relationship between shareholders and corporations around the implications of climate change for shareholder value and commercial operations. Its activities help give insight into areas where there is scope for reducing emissions. Companies also use the process of responding to

its questionnaires as a tool for benchmarking themselves against their competitors.

On behalf of institutional investors such as AXA, ANZ and HSBC, CDP seeks information from the world's largest companies on the business risks and opportunities associated with climate change and greenhouse

gas emissions. It has collected data from over 3,000 companies and is seen by some as the 'gold standard' for carbon disclosure methodology and process. Its website is the world's largest repository of corporate greenhouse gas emissions data.

**For further information see:**  
[www.cdproject.net](http://www.cdproject.net)