TOOLKIT 4

User Guide

RESOLVING CORPORATE GOVERNANCE DISPUTES







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Fax: +1 202-522-2422

TOOLKIT 4

Resolving Corporate Governance Disputes

USER GUIDE





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RESOLVING CORPORATE GOVERNANCE DISPUTES

FOREWORD

Disputes over the governance of a corporation are inevitable. When disputes erupt into debilitating confrontations or end up as highly publicized court cases, they can harm the company's reputation, handicap its operations, paralyze its board from making critical decisions, and lead to a reduction in share price that potentially hastens the corporation's demise.

Case studies show that alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes and techniques can help prevent or settle corporate governance-related disputes in ways that are more efficient and effective than the more adversarial process of court litigation. The Global Corporate Governance Forum developed this toolkit to broaden the use of ADR by boards to effectively handle internal and external disputes. The toolkit draws on processes and techniques that help better align "interests" rather than engage in more contentious litigation of incompatible "positions."

This toolkit builds on the Forum's earlier work to build capacity in countries and companies for understanding, developing, and applying good corporate governance principles and practices. Providing the tools that can help institutions build capacity and promote reforms that inform board competencies and best practices is the source of our success and impact.

The guidance and observations in this toolkit draw on discussions and materials provided by a wide range of corporate governance and ADR experts, practitioners, and policymakers. Experience with how best to design, implement, and evaluate corporate governance-related dispute resolution is still at an early stage. There is little empirical data about the use of alternatives to litigation in corporate governance disputes and the role that ADR can play in improving or enforcing corporate governance practices.

The Forum recognizes that there are many valid approaches to using ADR mechanisms. This toolkit

provides users with options. Policymakers, private sector institutions, and board directors are left to choose their own approaches to mitigate disputes in ways that foster responsible business conduct and enhance a healthy, productive investment climate.

To be sure, any policy that favors alternatives to traditional litigation must be guided by the rule of law and the relevant jurisdiction's judicial system.

Many people have contributed to this toolkit, and the Forum is grateful for their work and commitment. Marie-Laurence Guy, a senior projects officer with the Forum, led this effort, building upon the expertise she gained in co-writing our FOCUS publication *Mediating Corporate Governance Conflicts and Disputes*. Her work is inspired by her commitment to finding innovative ways of ensuring the productive capacity of the business environment in countries challenged by an ineffective judicial system.

Others in the core team deserve thanks and appreciation: James Spellman who relentlessly edited and researched this toolkit; Christopher Honeyman; Mary Jo Larson; Jon Masters; Karl Mackie; Anne Molyneux; and, Alan Rudnick. Many experts, practitioners, and the Forum's Private Sector Advisory Group members are also to be commended for their extensive contributions. It is through their participation that the toolkit truly reflects global experiences and innovative thinking. Last but not least, the Forum would like to acknowledge the excellent work Mary Beth Ramsey accomplished in designing and laying out this toolkit.

Phi Annihory

Philip Armstrong
Head, Global Corporate Governance Forum

What is the purpose of this toolkit?

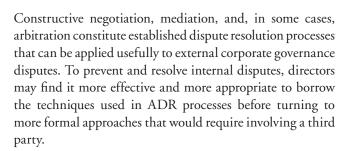
Although much has been achieved in raising awareness and implementing good corporate governance rules and procedures, disputes affecting the governance of corporations. Little has been done to develop alternative approaches for resolving disputes. Left unresolved, these disputes can paralyze the board, harm the company's performance, and deter investors. Implementing effective dispute resolution processes for preventing and resolving corporate governance disputes is thus essential if the company is to succeed over the long term.

Corporate governance disputes do not always lend themselves to court litigation. Yet even when they do, traditional adjudication is typically not the best way to resolve such disputes. Court proceedings are generally slow and costly, and they antagonize the parties. Moreover, in several developing countries and emerging markets, investors distrust the judiciary system and enforcement remains weak.

This toolkit explores how ADR processes and techniques that have been used successfully in dealing with commercial and labor disputes can help resolve and prevent corporate governance disputes.

Key to understanding this toolkit is the distinction between internal and external corporate governance disputes. Internal governance disputes mainly take place

within the boardroom while external governance disputes typically involve shareholders but may also include other stakeholders.



Applying ADR processes and techniques to corporate governance disputes provides for innovative approaches to implement and enforce good corporate governance practices in the best interests of the company, shareholders, and stakeholders.



Who will find this toolkit useful?

Corporate Governance and ADR institutions and experts

This toolkit is targeted at those organizations and institutions that are helping companies implement good corporate governance practices and/or seeking ways to manage and prevent disputes. The following constituencies will especially find this toolkit useful in helping them to better understand corporate governance disputes and offer training, advisory, and mediation services that can help companies avoid the time, costs, and risks associated with litigation:

- Institutes of directors and corporate governance centers
- Corporate law firms and corporate governance consulting firms
- Mediation and arbitration centers
- Universities, law schools, and research centers

Board members, senior executives, corporate secretaries, and company lawyers

Listed and non-listed companies — including family firms, banks, and state-owned enterprises — are the ultimate beneficiaries of this toolkit. Board members, senior executives, corporate secretaries, and company lawyers are encouraged to consult this toolkit to learn about and then implement new approaches to prevent and resolve corporate governance disputes.

Policymakers, regulators, and judges

This toolkit will interest policymakers who are concerned with enforcing good corporate governance practices and building investor confidence. It will also appeal to those who are designing good governance standards and regulations. Through this toolkit, the judiciary can also learn more about corporate governance dispute resolution and understand the benefits of ADR mechanisms — including formal mediation. This is especially important for jurisdictions where court-referred/annexed mediation has been institutionalized.

Development agencies and technical assistance programs

Although this toolkit has been designed as a self-help tool, the support of development agencies may be required to implement best practices and provide guidance. Therefore, this toolkit should also be used as a knowledge management product through multilateral and bilateral funded corporate governance reform and ADR programs in developing and emerging market countries.

What is in this toolkit?

This toolkit provides practical guidance on how consensus-based alternatives to adjudication can help prevent, resolve, and reduce the negative impact of corporate

Consensus-based alternatives to adjudication can help prevent, resolve, and reduce the negative impact of corporate governance disputes.

governance disputes and, consequently, contribute to improving corporate governance practices, strengthening investor confidence, and supporting business continuity.

The toolkit breaks down the common types of governance disputes and provides techniques for effective resolution. It also offers practical suggestions and training resources for corporate governance institutions and dispute resolution experts who wish to offer corporate governance dispute resolution services.

This toolkit is divided into three volumes. The first explores the rationale for applying ADR mechanisms to corporate governance disputes. The

second focuses on the implementation and use of corporate governance dispute resolution mechanisms and services. The third reviews the skills required for effectively resolving corporate governance disputes and addresses the training needs of both directors and dispute resolution professionals.



QUOTE

"Countries seeking to create a capital market (and companies seeking to attract local or global capital) must develop a framework that assures investors of two things: first, the assets they provide will be protected and, second, the disputes related to the company's governance can be addressed effectively."

CHRISTIAN STRENGER

PSAG DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

MEMBER OF THE GERMAN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMISSION DIRECTOR, DWS INVESTMENT ADVISORY GROUP

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What tools does this toolkit provide?

This toolkit is user-friendly. It shares worldwide experiences and existing best practices while providing new avenues for better managing corporate governance disputes. The following items will help users navigate the toolkit's contents and tools:



Module Tabs

Each module is introduced by a color tab presenting the rationale and the module's contents.



Examples

The toolkit includes examples and anecdotal evidence worldwide to illustrate the content and impact of corporate governance disputes and possible approaches to resolving such disputes.



Quote Boxes

Users can find quotes from experts and professionals that provide insights into topics.



Focus Boxes

Boxes containing practical and targeted information provide users with a brief overview of studies and state-of-the-art thinking.



Glossary Boxes

Users can consult the section for key terms used throughout the toolkit.



Graphs

Graphics provide users with a snapshot of existing data and visual representations to enhance conceptual understandings of the toolkit's contents.



Further Reading

Volume 1 provides readings that further discuss practical and academic issues.



Cross References

Each module includes cross references to the toolkit's other modules and annexes. Users can easily locate related topics, guidelines, and documentation.



Practice Boxes

The use of ADR processes and techniques to help prevent and resolve corporate governance disputes is still at an early stage. Practice boxes offer users options and actions to consider in dealing better with boardroom and shareholder disputes or any other disputes, involving stakeholders challenging a company's governance.



Role Plays

The toolkit's training volume includes role plays, which can be used by organizations' training directors and/or mediators. Participants are given situational facts and then assume roles of those involved in making a decision about the issue that divides the board. In these exercises, the participants master the content while developing leadership skills, particularly the ability to prevent or defuse potentially damaging conflicts within a corporate board.



Annexes

These are at the end of each volume, providing background documentation and samples that can help users with practical step-by-step approaches to implementing corporate governance dispute resolution services and practices.



PowerPoint

Volume 3 includes two standard Powerpoint Presentations to be used and adapted for training directors and dispute resolution experts.

CONTRIBUTORS

To develop this toolkit and gather the "lessons learned" and best practices from developing, emerging market, and developed countries, the Forum invited representatives from mediation centers, law firms, consultants, institutes of directors, and corporate governance centers worldwide to share their experiences and discuss milestones and challenges in implementing corporate governance ADR.

The Forum would like to thank everyone who actively supported this initiative including the following experts, practitioners, and Private Sector Advisory Group members for providing materials, examples, and extensive comments.

COUNTRY CONTRIBUTORS

BANGLADESH

Lopa Rahman

Project Director (former)
Bangladesh Enterprise
Institute

BULGARIA

Bistra Boeva

Professor
University for National
and World Economic
Studies
Member PSAG

Silvi Cherney

Chairman
Arbitration Court,
Bulgarian Chamber of
Commerce and Industry

Zoya Gerasimova

Chairman
Bulgarian Association
for Alternative Dispute
Resolution (BAADR)

Vassya Prokopieva

Managing Partner EU&BG Legal Consultants

Tsvetan Simeonov

Deputy Chairman
Bulgarian Chamber of
Commerce and Industry

Simeon Semov

Head of the Legal Department Bulgarian Stock Exchange (BSE)

Oleg Stoilov

Chairman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Stara Zagora

BELGIUM

Jozef Lievens

Partner
Eubelius — Attorneys
at Law
Member PSAG

BRAZIL

Leonardo Viegas

Chairman of the Education Committee Brazilian Institute of Corporate Directors (IBGC)

Member PSAG

Nora Rachman

Chief Counsel BM&FBovespa

COLOMBIA

Raphael Bernal Gutiérrez

Director
Center of Arbitration
and Conciliation,
Confecamaras

FINLAND

Olli Virtanen

Secretary General
The Finnish Association
of Professional
Board Members
Member PSAG

GERMANY

Christian Strenger *Deputy Chairman*

PSAG

Director

DWS Investment

Member

German Corporate

Governance Commission

GUATEMALA

Michelle Secaira Melville De Arrivillaga

Lawyer
Arbitration and
Conciliation Center —
Chamber of Commerce
(CENAC)

ITALY

Giuseppe De Palo

Chairman of the Board ADR Center S.p.A

PAKISTAN

Samina Noman

Case Administrator and Advocate Karachi Centre for Dispute Resolution

Atiga Lateef Qazilbash

Associate Partner
Awanraza Law Firm

Rai Muhammad Saleh Azam

Managing Partner Azam & Rai Law Firm

PHILIPPINES

Atty Adelita Vergel de Dios

President and CEO Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD)

Jesus Estanislao

Chairman
Institute of Corporate
Directors (ICD)
Member PSAG

RUSSIA

Igor Belikov

CEO Russian Institute of Directors

SLOVENIA

Alenka Podbevek

CEO Socius

SOUTH AFRICA

Tony Dixon

Director (retired)
Institute of Directors in
Southern Africa

Mervyn King SC

Non-Executive Chairman Brait SA — Luxembourg First Vice President Institute of Directors in Southern Africa Member PSAG

SWITZERLAND

Andre Baladi

Chairman
International Arbitration
and Dispute Resolution
Organization (ARICI)
Member PSAG

UGANDA

Geoffrey Kiryabwire

Judge High Court Commercial Division

UNITED KINGDOM

Chris Pierce

CEO Global Governance Services Ltd.

James South

Mediator Training Director Center for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR)

Joe Tirado

Partner, Head of International Arbitration and ADR Norton Rose LLP

UNITED STATES

James Groton

Partner (retired)
Sutherland, Asbill &
Brennan LLP

Richard Ruben

Professor of Law University of Missouri -Columbia School of Law

WORLD BANK GROUP CONTRIBUTORS

Alejandro Alvarez de la Campa

Private Sector
Development Specialist

Khawar Ansari

Operations Officer IFC

Philip Armstrong

Head GCGF

Lada Busevac

Sr. Operations Officer IFC

Mohsin Ali Chaudhry

Legal Specialist

Hassan El Shabrawishi

Consultant GCGF

Ralitza Germanova

Project Coordinator GCGF

Patricia Jungreis-Sulser

Principal Counsel IFC

Min Li

Consultant GCGF

Motria Onyschuk-Morozov

Principal Operations Officer IFC

Vladislava Ryabota

Corporate Governance Officer IFC

AUTHORS

Marie-Laurence Guy is a Senior Projects Officer at the IFC Global Corporate Governance Forum and this project's team leader. She is in charge of the Forum's corporate governance dispute resolution activities and oversees the Forum's activities in the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Europe. Over the years, she has continuously worked on developing global corporate governance reform tools to help implement good corporate governance practices. Ms. Guy has coauthored and coordinated the production of two other toolkits: Building Director Training Organizations and Developing Corporate Governance Codes of Best Practice. Ms. Guy previously worked with the Corporate Affairs Division of the OECD and the French Ministry of Finance, Economy, and Industry. She recently coauthored a Forum Focus publication on Mediating Corporate Governance Conflicts and Disputes and is a CEDR accredited Mediator.

Christopher Honeyman is Managing Partner of Convenor Conflict Management, a consulting firm based in Washington, DC and Madison, Wisconsin. Mr. Honeyman is the lead external consultant to the ADR Center (Rome), the largest neutral dispute resolution firm in continental Europe. He has served as mediator, arbitrator, or in other neutral capacities in more than 2,000 disputes since the 1970s, and as a consultant to numerous academic and practical conflict resolution programs in the United States and other countries. He also directed a 15-year series of Hewlett Foundationfunded research and development programs in ADR, of national or international scale. Mr. Honeyman is coeditor of The Negotiator's Fieldbook (ABA 2006), which is widely regarded as the most thorough reference work in the field, co-editor of Rethinking Negotiation Teaching, (DRI Press 2009), and author or co-author of more than 50 published articles, book chapters, and monographs on dispute resolution ethics, quality control, and infrastructure development. He co-chairs the ABA Dispute Resolution Section's Committee on Negotiation.

Mary Jo Larson is the Principal in FlexAbility International LLC. She provides consulting services to international, multilateral, and private sector organizations. She co-authored the Forum's Corporate Governance Board Leadership Training Resources Kit, conducts corporate governance board leadership faculty training, and addresses corporate governance conflicts and disputes. Her areas of expertise include leadership, active adult learning, negotiation, mediation, stakeholder engagement, multi-stakeholder program development, and sustainability. Dr. Larson earned her Doctorate of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University. She is a Senior Fellow, University for Peace established by the United Nations in Costa Rica, Adjunct Faculty member at the American University, and author of publications on leadership, adult learning, negotiations, mediation, conservation, gender, peace building, and multilateral diplomacy.

Jon Masters is a Principal in Masters-Rudnick & Associates, LLC and a trusted advisor to CEOs and boards of both business and non-profit organizations. He has been a managing principal of a corporate governance consulting firm, a senior partner in a law firm, a vice chairman of a securities firm, and a director of both business and non-profit corporations. He has also served as the Legal Advisor to the Blue Ribbon Commission established by the National Association of Corporate Directors on Performance Evaluation of Chief Executive Officers, Boards and Directors. His public service includes being an advisor to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, work on the redevelopment of Bedford-Stuyvesant, and service in the U.S. Defense Department, and on the Special Political Research Staff of President Lyndon Johnson. These experiences enable him to bring to his work a uniquely comprehensive view of corporate governance. He is a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School.

Karl Mackie is founding Chief Executive of CEDR (Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution), one of the first ADR organizations in Europe and now the largest outside the United States, delivering ADR services, training, and consultancy in ADR, negotiation, and conflict management. He has been a barrister, psychologist, educator, and business strategy consultant, and has mediated regularly for more than 20 years, in addition to his strategic direction of CEDR. He specializes in general commercial mediation, and has worked with parties from over thirty countries. He has been Special Professor in ADR at the Universities of Birmingham and Westminster, author or co-author of a number of leading texts on ADR, and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. Dr. Mackie is on the Panel of Distinguished Neutrals of the Singapore International Commercial Mediation Centre and the International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR). Dr. Mackie was a founding member of the European Business Ethics Network.

Anne Molyneux is a Director with CS International. She provides consulting services to international, multilateral, and private sector organizations in financial market regulation, corporate governance, financial reporting, accounting, and audit regulation and practice. Mrs. Molyneux co-authored the Forum's Corporate Governance Board Leadership Resources and contributed to the Forum's Building Director Training Organizations Toolkit. She is a Member and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Directors (AICD). She has led program development in corporate governance and director training courses in many countries and she was an author and trainer for the AICD's Company Directors Course. She was a member of the Australian Investment and Securities Commission's (ASIC) Corporate Governance Roundtable. She contributed to the revision of the OECD's Corporate Governance Principles and its Corporate Governance Guidelines for State-Owned Entities.

Alan Rudnick is a Principal in Masters-Rudnick & Associates, LLC, providing a full range of governance assessment and advisory services to corporate boards and executives. He co-founded Masters-Rudnick after his retirement from the CSX Corporation where, after holding various finance and law positions, he was Vice President-General Counsel and Corporate Secretary. Mr. Rudnick served as Counsel to The Conference Board's Commission on Public Trust and Private Enterprise. He is Program Chair for The Conference Board's Directors' Institute and other corporate governance programs. He is an Adjunct Professor at the College of William and Mary Law School. He holds a B.A. from the University of Chicago, and a J.D. from Case Western Reserve University.

Editor: James D. Spellman, a Principal in Strategic Communications LLC, provides communications and corporate governance consulting services to a variety of public and private-sector clients, including the Global Corporate Governance Forum, hedge funds, and securities firms. He co-authored and edited the Forum's Corporate Governance Board Leadership *Training Resources* and participated in training the heads of Institutes of Directors from more than 10 countries. He also writes about the financial services sector for the Financial Times Financial Adviser and other publications. Mr. Spellman is an Adjunct Professor at George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs, teaching public relations strategy. He holds an M.Phil. in International Relations from Oxford University (UK).

Design: Mary Beth Ramsey | Creative Alchemy 3100 Connecticut Avenue, NW #437 | Washington, DC 20008

Printer: Westland Printers

14880 Switzer Lane | Laurel, MD 20707

This publication was printed on recycled paper.

AUTHORS

Marie-Laurence Guy

Christopher Honeyma

Mary Jo Larson

Karl Mackie

Jon Masters

Anne Molyneux

Alan Rudnick

EDITOR

James Spellman

DESIGN

Mary Beth Ramsey



SECRETARIAT

GLOBAL CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FORUM

2121 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20433 U.S.A.

T +1.202.458.8097 F +1.202.522.7588

cgsecretariat@ifc.org www.gcgf.org The Global Corporate Governance Forum is a leading knowledge and capacity-building platform dedicated to corporate governance reform in emerging markets and developing countries. The Forum offers a unique collection of expertise, experiences, and solutions to key corporate governance issues from developed and developing countries.

The Forum's mandate is to promote the private sector as an engine of growth, reduce the vulnerability of developing and emerging markets to financial crisis, and provide incentives for corporations to invest and perform efficiently in a transparent, sustainable, and socially responsible manner. In doing so, the Forum partners with international, regional, and local institutions, drawing on its network of global private-sector leaders.

The Forum is a multi-donor trust fund facility located within the IFC, co-founded in 1999 by the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).



