

RepRisk Research Scope: Topic Tags

Topic Tags are ESG core research scope of 28 ESG Issues ([please see separate document](#)). Topic Tags are specific and thematic, and one Topic Tag can be linked to multiple ESG Issues.

Clients have the ability to research the Topic Tags within the RepRisk ESG Risk Platform, and to analyze which companies, projects, sectors, countries, and other entities are exposed to risks related to each Tag.

Topic Tags are a dynamic concept, with the list expanding over time in response to client feedback and emerging trends. Currently, RepRisk covers 73 Topic Tags.

The following table provides the list of RepRisk’s 73 ESG Topic Tags, their respective definitions, as well as the related ESG Issues:

Topic Tag	Related Issue(s)	Topic Tag Definition
Abusive/Illegal fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on communities Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity Overuse and wasting of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refers to irresponsible, illegal or excessive fishing for commercial purposes. Includes fishing techniques that deplete fish and other marine populations around the world, cause significant by-catch, or threaten already endangered species.
Access to products and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involves the accessibility and affordability of products and services, i.e. financial services, education, and health care.
Agricultural commodity speculation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often referred to as “Food Speculation.” The practice of betting on the price of key food crops. Attributed to rising food prices, as excessive market speculation means that prices for goods are no longer determined by supply and demand.
Airborne pollutants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change, GHG emissions, and global pollution and/or Local pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emissions of air pollutants from stationary, i.e. industrial sites and mobile sources, i.e. planes. Airborne pollutants include oxides of nitrogen (NOx), oxides of sulfur (SOx), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), heavy metals, particulate matter (PM), and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Alcohol

- Controversial products and services
 - Refers to any beverage based on ethanol.
 - Consumption of alcohol is banned in many religions/cultures.
 - Alcohol is addictive and may lead to alcohol abuse or alcohol poisoning.

Animal transportation

- Animal mistreatment
 - Refers to the illegal or improper transportation of animals for commercial purposes, often for use in animal testing labs.
 - Includes inhumane animal transport, regardless of purpose.

Arctic drilling

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
 - Refers to petroleum exploration in Arctic geological basins.
 - 19 Arctic geological basins located in Alaska (US), Canada, Greenland, Norway, and Russia.
 - Extreme weather conditions in the Arctic could lead to unforeseen consequences and unstable drilling conditions.
 - Potential impact on local wildlife such as endangered bird species, whales, and polar bears.
 - Climate change has led to the opening up of the arctic for drilling, and the drilling itself would emit large amounts of greenhouse gases.

Asbestos

- Controversial products and services
 - A set of fibrous minerals that were widely used in construction for much of the 20th century.
- Occupational health and safety issues
 - Use of asbestos banned in most countries due to a link between exposure and mesothelioma (cancer).

Automatic and semi-automatic weapons

- Controversial products and services
 - A firearm that automatically reloads itself until the trigger is released.
 - Sale of automatic and semi-automatic weapons is widely criticized due to their ability to fire indiscriminately into crowds, leading to mass killings.
 - Also often referred to as assault weapons.

Biological weapons

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Local pollution
- Violation of international standards
- Violation of national legislation
- Disease-generating agents such as bacteria, viruses, rickettsiae, fungi, toxins, or other biological agents that are deployed as weapons to kill or injure people.
- Also called germ weapons.
- Considered a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD).

Chemical weapons

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Local pollution
- Violation of international standards
- Violation of national legislation
- Refers to specialized munition such as grenades and artillery shells that contains chemicals designed to inflict death or harm in humans.
- Considered a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD).

Cluster munitions

- Controversial products and services
- Refers to weapons containing multiple explosive sub-munitions.
- Cluster munitions can saturate large areas of land, indiscriminately killing both civilians and military targets.
- As sub-munitions often fail to go off when a cluster bomb is dropped, huge quantities can land undetonated on the ground and remain a fatal threat long after a conflict ends.

Coal-fired power plants

- Climate change, GHG emissions, and global pollution
- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Local pollution
- Power plants that generate energy by burning coal.
- A leading source of carbon-dioxide emissions.
- Associated with toxic air and water pollution, human health concerns, and global warming.

Conflict minerals

- Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
- Minerals mined in conditions of armed conflict and human rights abuses.
- Only linked in reference to minerals used in the manufacture of electronic products (cassiterite, wolframite, coltan, and gold) that are mined and/or traded in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or nine surrounding Central African countries (Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo Republic, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia).

Coral reefs

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
 - Refers to negative environmental impacts on corals and coral reefs, including coral bleaching, usually resulting from abusive fishing, deep sea drilling, and any exploitative activities conducted underwater.
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Cyberattack

- Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
 - Violation of international standards
 - Violation of national legislation
 - Refers to a premeditated infiltration of computer systems, technology-based businesses, and networks.
 - The act of which results in cybercrimes, such as identity or information theft.
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Deep sea drilling

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
 - Refers to a process of drilling for oil and gas that lies beneath the ocean floor.
 - Due to uncertain weather conditions, freezing water and crushing pressure, deep sea drilling is considered one of the most technologically challenging, and therefore riskiest, forms of oil and gas drilling.
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Depleted uranium munitions

- Controversial products and services
 - Refers to weapons and ammunition containing depleted uranium.
 - The use of depleted uranium in munitions is controversial due to questions about long-term health effects, which could affect the kidney, brain, liver, heart, and other systems.
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Diamonds

- Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
 - Commonly refers to any diamonds mined in situations involving severe human rights abuses.
 - Conflict diamonds are diamonds sold in order to fund armed conflict and civil war.
 - Common locations include Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, and Zimbabwe
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Drones

- Controversial products and services
 - Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
 - Impacts on communities
- Refers to any unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and aerial intrusion detection systems.
 - Criticism of drones are usually associated with surveillance weapon technologies, dual-use technologies, military trade use, and war crimes.

Economic impact

- Impacts on communities
- Measures the negative effect business activity has on the economy or livelihoods of a community.

Endangered species

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Any species of organism threatened with extinction. Endangered species is the second most severe conservation status under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Energy management

- Overuse and wasting of resources
- Involves the management of energy consumption during operations, including energy efficiency and intensity. Energy consumption from the product use is outside of the scope.

Epidemics/Pandemics

- Anti-competitive practices
- Corruption, bribery, extortion, and money laundering
- Fraud
- Freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Impacts on communities
- Misleading communication
- Poor employment conditions
- Products (health and environmental issues)
- Occupational health and safety issues
- An epidemic is a disease that affects a large number of people within a community, population, or region. A pandemic is an epidemic that has spread over multiple countries or continents.
- Examples of such diseases include Ebola, Bird flu, Zika, H1N1, COVID-19, SARS, HIV/AIDS, etc.
- Refers to criticism of a company's actions relating to its liability in the spread of infectious diseases.

Forest burning

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Refers to the use of uncontrolled or illegal fire for land clearance.

Fracking

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- A drilling technique designed to recover oil and gas from shale rock.
- Criticism related to the huge amounts of water used in the fracking process, fears that chemicals could contaminate nearby groundwater, and worries that fracking can cause or contribute to earth tremors.

Fur and exotic animal skins

- Animal mistreatment
 - Fur is the hair covering of mammals with extensive body hair that is thick and soft. It is used as a raw material in the fashion industry, e.g. to produce coats, hats, or shawls.
 - Exotic animal skins refer to the patterned skins of snakes, alligators, crocodiles, and other reptiles that are used as a raw material in the fashion industry, e.g. to produce shoes, belts, or handbags.
 - Controversy may exist regarding the use of fur for fashion (such as coats, hats, shawls) due to animal cruelty concerns.

Gambling

- Controversial products and services
 - Banned or highly regulated in many countries throughout the world, often for religious reasons and/or because it can be psychologically addictive.

Gender inequality

- Discrimination in employment
 - Relates to unfair benefits or treatment in the workplace of individuals wholly or partly due to their gender.
- Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
 - Includes limited access to resources and opportunities depending on the person's declared gender.
- Poor employment conditions
- Social discrimination

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

- Controversial products and services
 - Organisms, usually food crops, whose genomes have been altered in order to foster certain desirable traits such as pesticide-resistance.
 - No official consensus about the environmental and health impacts of GMOs, but critics argue that could pose future, unforeseen, risks.
 - GMO seeds have had significant adverse impacts on traditional farmers, many of whom have accrued significant debts as the prices of GM seeds increased.
 - Large agricultural companies have also been accused of driving traditional farmers out of business through aggressive patent lawsuits.

Genocide/Ethnic cleansing

- Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
 - Refers to the crime of destroying, or conspiring to destroy, an entire national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.
 - Ethnic cleansing refers to mass expulsion or killing of members of one ethnic or religious group by those of another.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

- Climate change, GHG emissions, and global pollution
 - Greenhouse gases covered under the Kyoto Protocol are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆), and nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃).
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Health impact

- Impacts on communities
 - Measures the negative effect business activity has on the health and wellbeing of a community.
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High conservation value forests

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
 - Refers to a forest management designation under the Forest Stewardship Council. The term is used to refer to forests that have an especially high ecological or social value.
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Human trafficking

- Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
 - Refers to trade of humans most commonly for the purpose of forced labor, slavery, and/or sexual trafficking.
 - Impacts on communities
 - Most commonly trafficked individuals are migrants, women, and children.
 - Forced labor
 - Child labor
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Hydropower (dams)

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
 - Refers to power derived from the energy of moving water.
 - Impacts on communities
 - Conventional hydropower, or hydropower derived from dams, is often blamed for massive environmental destruction or the forced relocation of nearby communities.
 - Local participation issues
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Illegal logging

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
 - Refers to the harvesting, transporting, processing, buying, or selling of timber in violation of national laws.
 - May occur in protected areas or areas with especially rich biodiversity.
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Indigenous people

- Impacts on communities
- People who live within geographically distinct ancestral territories and who identify themselves as being part of a distinct cultural group descended from groups present in the area before the creation of modern states.
- Local participation issues
- Indigenous people are often defined under international and national legislation as having distinct rights based on their cultural or historical distinctiveness from the politically dominant population.

Involuntary resettlement

- Impacts on communities
- Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
- Local participation issues
- Refers to forcibly relocating a community, usually illegally and without consent.
- Compared to land grabbing, forced resettlement involves physical removal, usually by a government authority or company, from a habitation or home.

Land ecosystems

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Refers to criticism of a company or a project as it relates to the destruction of land-based ecosystems.
- Land ecosystems, or terrestrial ecosystem, is the land-based community of organisms and their physical environment on a particular piece of land.

Land grabbing

- Impacts on communities
- Refers to the seizing of large areas of land, usually illegally or without the consent of local communities.
- Often associated with agriculture and biofuel acquisitions in the Global South and linked to concerns over water or food security.

Land mines

- Controversial products and services
- Ground munitions that detonate automatically upon contact with a person or vehicle.
- Undetonated landmines often remain hidden in the ground long after a conflict ends, posing a lethal threat to both combatants and civilians.

Lobbying

- Corruption, bribery, extortion and money laundering
- Attempt to persuade regulators into supporting actions that are favorable to a company and/or a project while potentially causing adverse direct or indirect environmental, social, and/or governance impacts.

Marijuana/Cannabis

- Controversial products and services
- Refers to the psychoactive drug from the Cannabis plant intended for medical purposes. It may be smoked like a cigarette or mixed with a food or beverage.
- The use and sale is heavily controlled and is considered illegal in many countries.

Marine/Coastal ecosystems

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Refers to the criticism of a company or project as it relates to the destruction or contamination of marine or coastal ecosystems.
- Marine/Coastal ecosystems are considered the habitats from the coastal shorelines to the dark sea floor. The marine ecosystem includes marshes, tidal zones, estuaries, mangrove forests, beaches, lagoons, sea grass beds, the sea floor, and coral reefs.

Migrant labor

- Poor employment conditions
- Typically refers to someone who works outside of their home country, but may also refer to someone who migrates within a country.
- Migrant workers often endure less social or legal protection than domestic workers, and are therefore more vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking.

Monocultures

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Refers to the practice of growing a single plant or crop variety intensively over a wide area of land, often for a number of consecutive years.
- Because uniform crops are more susceptible to pathogens and deplete nutrients in soil, monocultures are often linked to food security concerns.
- Common monoculture crops include maize, rapeseed, soybean and cotton.

Mountaintop removal mining

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Refers to a controversial form of surface mining for coal that involves removing the summit of a mountain.
- Widely practiced in the Appalachian Mountains in the eastern United States.

Negligence

- Violation of national legislation
- A legal term for when a company or individual is deemed legally liable for failing to take necessary precautions to prevent harm.

Nuclear power

- Controversial products and services
- Often criticized in relation to health and environmental risks associated with uranium mining, processing, and transport.
- Critics contend that nuclear reactors pose serious safety and environmental concerns, including the risk of nuclear accidents and the improper disposal of nuclear waste.

Nuclear weapons

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- A military weapon in the form of a missile or a bomb that derives its destructive force from an explosion through nuclear reaction.
- Local pollution
- The ethical and environmental impact is long-term and is certain to affect a large population.
- Violation of international standards
- Considered a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD).
- Violation of national legislation

Offshore drilling

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- A type of oil drilling process where drilling is done in the rock formations beneath the seabed.
- Oil spill incidents from offshore drilling are fatal to marine life and difficult to contain.

Oil sands

- Climate change, GHG emissions, and global pollution
- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Local pollution
- Waste issues
- Refers to unconventional petroleum deposits in sand or sandstone that involves a complex and energy-intensive process.
- Criticized by environmentalists due to pollution concerns and use of large quantities of water.
- Found in 23 countries worldwide, with the largest deposits in Canada, Kazakhstan, and Russia.

Opioids

- Impacts on communities
- Products (health and environmental issues)
- Controversial products and services
- Misleading communication
- Fraud
- Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, morphine, and many others.
- Refers to criticism of a company or project as it relates to the public health crisis with severe consequences including increases in opioid misuse and related overdoses.

Palm oil

- Controversial products and services
- The most largely produced edible oil in the world.
- Palm oil plantations are concentrated primarily in Indonesia and Malaysia, where lax environmental regulation has led to the indiscriminate clearing of forests for palm oil plantations.

Plastics

- Impacts on communities
- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Local pollution
- Overuse and wasting of resources
- Products (health and environmental issues)
- Waste issues
- Improper disposal of plastic waste (landfill issues, diversion of waste to developing countries).
- The production of plastics which contain harmful chemicals (e.g. BPA, Parabens, PVCs).
- The manufacture and sale of products lacking recyclable materials.
- Overuse of plastic packaging material in production, including single use plastics (e.g. straws, lids, cups, plastic bags).
- The implied threat to marine life through plastic marine debris.
- Generation of micro-plastics.

Pornography

- Controversial products and services
 - Refers to the explicit portrayal of sexual matter.
 - Banned in many countries, often for religious reasons.
 - Criticized for its negative portrayal of women.
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Predatory lending

- Controversial products and services
 - Refers to the practice of issuing loans to borrowers with the expectation that they will default.
 - Typical examples include equity grabbing, in which the lender hopes to profit from the default by taking over equity, and price gouging, which involves charging excessive interest rates or fees. For more examples please consult financial glossary.
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Privacy violations

- Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
 - Refers to actions by a company that result in the unauthorized access or distribution of an individual's personal information without his or her permission of knowledge.
 - Commonly occurs through indirectly failing to protect privacy, i.e. outside data hacking and loss of client info, or directly violating privacy, i.e. phone/account hacking by company or sale/release of confidential client info.
 - Does not include corporate espionage.
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Protected areas

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Impacts on communities
 - Refers to regions that are set aside for special protection due to their natural, ecological, or cultural value.
 - Often protected by national governments or international organizations in order to limit human occupation or the exploitation of natural resources.

Racism/Racial inequality

- Discrimination in employment
- Human rights abuses
- Poor employment conditions
- Social discrimination
- Refers to a company's prejudicial treatment of individuals/employees for their perceived connection to a racial group, as well as companies benefiting from systemic racism.
- Includes criticism based on physical appearance, skin color, or racially-motivated hate or violence.
- Refers to a company:
 - perpetuating or allowing a culture of white supremacy amongst employees,
 - violating any international/national law which protects individuals against racial inequality (Civil Rights Act, Race Relations Act, etc.),
 - disqualifying a candidate for hire or promotion based on perceived race or ethnicity,
 - illegally firing an employee based on perceived race or ethnicity,
 - or targeting ethnic groups through discriminatory policies.

Rare earths

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Impacts on communities
- Local pollution
- Waste issues
- Refers to several chemical elements found in the Earth's crust that are commonly used in modern technologies.
- Includes yttrium, scandium, lanthanum, cerium, praseodymium, neodymium, promethium, samarium, europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, holmium, erbium, thulium, ytterbium, and lutetium.

Salaries and benefits

- Poor employment conditions
- Refers to criticism of a company or a project as it relates to the negative impact their activities have on the salaries and benefits of their employees, specifically as it relates to whether they are above or below the living wage requirements.

Sand mining and dredging

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Local pollution
- Refers to the extraction of sand through open pits, from beaches, inland dunes, or dredged from ocean and river beds.
- Sand mining or dredging causes undue erosion and degradation to the surrounding flora and fauna and may also severely affect the stability of the foundation of nearby infrastructures.

Seabed mining

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Local pollution
- Refers to the commercial recovery of minerals at the surface or below the seabed.
- Often used to refer to all ocean-based mining activities.
- Conservationists warn that it could have disastrous long-term consequences for marine life.

Security services

- Human rights abuses and corporate complicity
- Occupational health and safety issues
- Violation of international standards
- Violation of national legislation
- Service providers who specialize in providing trained manpower (commonly with military background) for information gathering, body guard services, and other general security services.
- Also refers to government institutions (KGB, MI5, NSA, etc.) that serve as a national security agency.

Ship breaking and scrapping

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Local pollution
- Waste issues
- Occupational health and safety issues
- Poor employment conditions
- Type of ship dismantling involving the breaking up of ships to recycle their parts or for the extraction of raw materials.
- Issues are primarily environmental when the disposable materials and refuse from the ship breaking process get mixed in the beach soil and sea water.

Soy

- Controversial products and services
- Climate change, GHG emissions, and global pollution
- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Products (health and environmental issues)
- Refers to large-scale plantations of soybeans, which can lead to deforestation and contribute to climate change.
- Due to massive crop planting (see monoculture), soybean seeds are commonly genetically-modified to resist plant pests and diseases.

Tax havens

- Corruption, bribery, extortion, money laundering
- Fraud
- Tax evasion
- Tax optimization
- Violation of international standards
- Violation of national legislation
- Refers to a jurisdiction that implements a lower than market tax rate or does not impose tax.
- Such countries are preferred banking areas for criminal elements due to the tax haven's secretive nature where little to no financial information is shared with foreign authorities.

Tobacco

- Controversial products and services
 - Refers to any product manufactured from dried tobacco leaves, including cigars, cigarettes, snuff, and shisha.
 - Known to cause numerous health problems, making the marketing of tobacco products, especially to young adults, extremely controversial.
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Wastewater management

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity and/or Waste Issues
 - Involves the management of wastewater generation, treatment, and discharge, which includes groundwater and aquifer pollution.
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Water management

- Overuse and wasting of resources
 - Involves the management of water consumption during operations, including water efficiency, intensity, recycling, and impact on water resources.
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Water scarcity

- Impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Impacts on communities
- Overuse and wasting of resources
- Refers to creating or contributing to a lack of water, commonly as a result of overuse, pollution, or privatization.