

CANDIDATE STATEMENT, BIOGRAPHY, SIGNATORY, AND COMPARATIVE INFORMATION FORM

Full legal name: **Catharina Helena Wessels**

Job title: **Executive: Governance, Legal, Compliance and
Sustainability**

Signatory organisation name: **Alexforbes**

Signatory organisation(s) seconding your candidacy: **Visio Fund
Management Proprietary Limited**



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

I would feel honoured to be considered for the PRI Board. It is with great enthusiasm and commitment that I accept Alexforbes' nomination to serve as a steward of responsible investment practices within our global community.

Having dedicated the majority of my career to governance and later to sustainability more broadly, I have a deep understanding of and passion to address the complex challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. During my period on the Board and later as President of both the Chartered Governance Institute of Southern Africa and the Corporate Secretaries International Association, I gained invaluable experience collaborating with the International Finance Corporation, World Trade Organisation and several global associations and membership bodies in the furtherance of global governance aspirations, to enable global thought leadership and governance developments generally. These also included often collaborating with less developed countries. In addition to my professional and extensive boardroom experience, I believe this experience and exposure would be particularly well aligned with the requirements placed on the PRI Board.

Supplementing my technical expertise, I am deeply committed to collaborative leadership, transparency and inclusivity. I understand the importance of fostering dialogue, building consensus and encouraging diverse perspectives to create meaningful change. If elected, I will actively engage with stakeholders, seeking input and feedback to ensure our collective efforts align with the evolving needs and aspirations of our community.

I am supported by Alexforbes, its deep insights and broad resources, as the largest investments multi-manager and leading employee benefits administrator in South Africa. Alexforbes is committed to being a force for good in the financial services industry, South Africa and beyond.

By leveraging my own knowledge and experience and that of Alexforbes I believe I am well positioned to serve as a PRI Board Director.

I am deeply committed to amplifying the voice and impact of the PRI across the globe. I am excited about the potential opportunity to serve on the PRI Board, especially the opportunity to represent Africa and to contribute to the ongoing transformation of the investment industry. Thank you for considering me.

BIOGRAPHY

Carina Wessels holds an LLB and two LLM degrees: Labour Law and Extractive industry law in Africa (*cum laude*), a Certificate in Advanced Labour Law (*cum laude*), Programme for Management Development (*cum laude*) and an Advanced Management Programme (Harvard Business School). She is an admitted Advocate of the High Court of South Africa, a fellow and past president of the Chartered Governance Institute of Southern Africa, as well as past president of the Corporate Secretaries International Association (CSIA), a global federation of trade bodies representing in excess of 100 000 governance professionals globally.

Carina is a seasoned and highly effective executive. After spending a significant portion of her career in the mining industry, she joined Alexforbes in 2017 and serves as the Executive: Governance, Legal, Compliance and Sustainability. In this role she is accountable for Governance within the Group as well as the Group's sustainability strategy.

She is driven by excellence, exemplified by the varied recognition she has achieved personally and led her teams to achieve. In 2019 she was chosen as a country winner in the CEO Global Pan African Awards for Africa's most influential women in business and government within Financial Services. In 2020 she was recognised as the overall National positive role model in the 8th Gender Mainstreaming Awards, was selected as General Counsel of the Year and her legal team as Legal team of the year in the 2020 African Legal Awards.

Carina has served as a non-executive director, audit committee chair and member and social, ethics, transformation and remuneration committee member in both public service organisations, non-profit and private companies over two decades.

She is a respected thought leader within the Governance field especially, with a broad range of publications and a regular speaker locally and internationally.

SIGNATORY ORGANISATION INFORMATION

Alexforbes is a diversified financial services group, headquartered in South Africa, providing a broad range of employee benefit solutions, retirement and healthcare consulting as well as investment and wealth management solutions to both corporate clients and individual customers. The group is dedicated to delivering impactful services and solutions for our clients and members, underpinned by integrated advice.

Since its founding in 1935 Alexforbes has played an integral role in South Africa's financial services industry, having built a leading brand synonymous with insight, advice and impact. The company has been listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) since 2014. Alexforbes' principal geographic focus is South Africa which contributes 93% of total group revenue, The group also has business operations outside of South Africa comprising Botswana, Channel Islands, Namibia and a representative office in Nigeria.

Alexforbes is the largest investment multi-manager in South Africa with total assets under management and administration of R454 billion as at 31 March 2023. The largest standalone fund administrator and the second largest in the umbrella fund market, with a total number of active members (in both standalone and umbrella funds) equating to 1 088 050.

Alexforbes is on a journey to build a future for clients that delivers growth, inclusivity and sustainability. The group aims to do this by pioneering insight to deliver advice and solutions that positively impact people's lives and wider society. This means orientating their actions, decisions and intent to build a future that we can all connect with. Alexforbes is driven by the following sustainability beliefs:

- A purposeful strategic focus on sustainability and its own ESG performance as a corporate, right from the board and throughout the company, ensures its relevance as an impactful corporate citizen and protects its ability to sustainably deliver on its objectives to all stakeholders.
- Incorporating sustainability (including ESG considerations) into advice, intermediary services, intermediated discretionary financial solutions ensure better risk-adjusted returns for its clients and members.
- Incorporating sustainability (including material ESG considerations) into investment advice and its multi-managed portfolios ensures improved risk and returns to clients in the long run.

SPECIFIC EXPERTISE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE

Carina has been a leader in the Governance space since completing her Chartered Secretary Board exams in 2008. Not only excelling academically, appointed to the Chartered Governance Institute of Southern Africa (CGISA) Board in 2009, shortly thereafter in 2010 elected as junior vice-president, then senior vice-president before succeeding as president, one of the youngest in CGISA's history, in 2012.

In 2011 Carina was one of the youngest executives appointed to a Top 40 listed company, responsible for governance as Group Secretary, later as Group Secretary and Legal (including ESG oversight, integrated thinking and reporting) at Exxaro Resources Limited. Several governance related accolades were achieved during this time, including the top award in the Nkonki Integrated Reporting awards and the Ethical Boardroom Magazine's Best Corporate Governance Award – mining category in the Africa region for 2015.

In 2013, representing Southern Africa, Carina was elected as vice-president of the Corporate Secretaries International Association (a global federation of trade bodies representing in excess of 100 000 governance professionals globally) and in 2014 succeeded as president.

Post Exxaro, Carina has continued her leadership and governance career, for the last six years at Alexforbes, once again with several individual and team accolades and awards over this period.

She has also continued serving as non-executive director and has in excess of 20 years' experience serving as director, audit committee chair and board committee member, in addition to her advisory and governance expert role.

She has co-authored several academic governance related publications, lectured part-time and several of her articles and thought leadership papers on governance have been published. She is a regular speaker at Corporate Governance, Legal and Sustainability seminars both locally and internationally and has, *inter alia*, spoken in Bangkok, Dubai, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, London, Mumbai, New York, New Delhi and Sao Paulo.

GENERAL

DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP WITHIN RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT, ESG EXPERTISE AND OTHER EXPERIENCE RELEVANT TO THE LONG-TERM SUCCESS OF THE PRI

As part of her Governance role, Carina has also been involved in the broader ESG performance and sustainability of the corporates she has served as executive for the past 12 years.

Since June 2022 sustainability was specifically added to her portfolio, including accountability for the group's sustainability strategy (which includes the activities within the group's multi-manager). Prior to this addition to her portfolio, she championed Alexforbes becoming a signatory to the United Nations Women Empowerment Principles, in support of SDG five.

She leads the recently established Alexforbes Impact centre of excellence, bringing together responsible investing and other ESG expert resources in developing best advice and solutions for clients, as well as maturing the group's sustainability practices.

Some recent highlights include:

- As part of executing the sustainability strategy, revision of the Alexforbes proxy advisory guidelines and publication of the first Stewardship report.
- Speaking on the role of asset managers at Africa's drive towards sustainability: ESG GPS Mauritius launch in 2022.
- Speaking on ESG and reshaping of the role of the board at the 15th Corporate Governance Africa Conference in 2022.
- Speaking at Alexforbes Hot Topics on the Retirement fund of the future: advocating a new approach to be employed by retirement funds to respond to changing ESG expectations and ensure they remain future-fit in 2023.

- Article published in the Pensions World South Africa June 2023 magazine on, *inter alia*, what retirement funds can learn from corporates, specifically taking increased cognisance if the incorporation of ESG.