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PRESS RELEASE: NAC improves ESG rating based on Sustainalytics report

Listed natural resources development firm Nickel Asia Corporation (NAC) was able to improve its Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance this month based on the latest assessment by its external ESG rating partner Sustainalytics.

According to the report, NAC was able to earn an ESG risk score of 33.6 during the assessment period from December 2022 to February 2023. This is an improvement on its previous rating of 43.7.

The latest report covered more than 70 management ESG performance indicators while NAC's previous rating, released in July last year, was assessed through publicly available disclosures and followed Sustainalytics' core framework that included nearly 30 ESG indicators.

Sustainalytics, a Morningstar company, is one of the leading independent ESG and corporate governance research, ratings, and analytics firms in the world, known for its development and implementation of responsible investment strategies.

Following the latest result, NAC was able to improve its risk score by 10.1 points, and now ranks 54th out of 210 firms assessed by Sustainalytics under the Diversified Metals category and 37th out of 174 firms under the Diversified Metals Mining sub-industry.

This also puts NAC under the "High Risk" category from a "Severe Risk" category. A "High Risk" rating is garnered by a company with risk scores between 30 and 40 while a "Severe Risk" rating is for firms with risk scores of 40 above.

"The improvement in our score confirms that our sustainability strategies, practices, and policies as a company have put us on the right track on our journey to achieving our ambitious goal of becoming the premier ESG investment in the Philippines and among the top 25 in market capitalization of the listed companies in the Philippine Stock Exchange," said Jose Bayani Baylon, Senior Vice President for Sustainability, Risk, Corporate Affairs, and Communications.

"Along the way, we will encounter incidents and controversies, but our vision and our strategy, values, and policies will serve to keep us focused on what we have to do because it is the right thing to do," he added.

The rating agency especially recognized the strong performance of NAC in Occupational Health and Safety. NAC was also deemed "above industry average" in terms of Business Ethics indicators that included Whistleblower Programs and Transparency on Government Payments.

NAC was also given an ESG risk management score of 51.2 – higher than the Diversified Metals industry average management score of 39.4. This means that the firm's overall management of material ESG issues is strong.

It was only in August last year when NAC created its Board-level Sustainability Committee as it formalizes its ESG processes. The committee is in charge of overseeing, identifying, and assessing the economic, environmental, ethical, and social impact of NAC operations.

These are in line with the firm's vision of becoming the premier ESG investment in the country and to be counted among the top 25 Philippine Stock Exchange-listed companies in terms of market capitalization by 2025.

About Nickel Asia Corp.

Nickel Asia Corp. (PSE: NIKL) is a diversified natural resources development company in the Philippines, comprising five operating and three exploratory mines with interests in the country's only two high-pressure acid leach plants and in a renewable energy subsidiary. Here at NAC, our aim is to contribute to sustainable national development by adopting our ESG roadmap in order to achieve the highest standards in the responsible utilization of our country's natural resources. Our mines produce two types of saprolite ore: high-grade and mid-grade. Most of our high-grade saprolite ore is used as feed for ferronickel smelters while our mid-grade saprolite ore is used as feed for electric furnaces to produce high- and medium-grade nickel pig iron. Our renewable energy subsidiary aims to engage in power generation exclusively from renewable sources. In a short period of time, we have built up through acquisitions a portfolio of renewable energy service contracts across solar, onshore wind, and geothermal which are at various stages of development. Through our operations and along with our partners of over 1,000 employees across communities, we aim to help bring products that would move the world towards a progressive and sustainable future, always conscious of being stewards of the environment where we operate. Learn more at www.nickelasia.com and follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.