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## Evaluating ESG frameworks: A comparative analysis of global standards and their application in Kazakhstan

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**Abstract.** This article investigates the key drivers and barriers to the adoption of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in Kazakhstan. By conducting a thematic analysis of relevant documents, frameworks, and case studies, the study evaluates the current state of ESG practices in Kazakhstan and compares them with international standards set by S&P Global, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG). The findings highlight significant progress in regulatory support and investor demand but also identify critical challenges such as the lack of comprehensive ESG reporting standards, limited expertise, and infrastructure constraints. To address these issues, the article proposes a strategic framework that includes the development of a Unified ESG Reporting Standard, enhancement of corporate governance structures, investment in ESG infrastructure, and leveraging of market incentives. The proposed framework aims to align Kazakhstan's ESG practices with global standards, thereby enhancing its attractiveness to sustainable investment and improving its global standing in responsible business practices. Additionally, the article identifies gaps between Kazakhstan's ESG practices and international standards and offers targeted solutions to bridge these gaps, contributing to the country's sustainable development goals and attracting increased international investment.

**Keywords:** ESG, Corporate Governance, Sustainable Development, S&P Global, Asian Development Bank (ADB)

## **Introduction**

The concept of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) has become a cornerstone of sustainable business practices globally. As businesses and investors increasingly recognize the importance of ESG criteria, the frameworks governing these principles have evolved to reflect the diverse needs of different regions and industries. In Kazakhstan, a country characterized by its rich natural resources and strategic geographical position, the adoption of ESG principles presents both significant opportunities and challenges. This paper seeks to evaluate the key drivers and barriers to the adoption of ESG principles in Kazakhstan, comparing these with global standards such as those set by S&P Global and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) [1,2].

The global landscape of ESG standards is marked by a variety of frameworks, each designed to guide companies and investors toward more sustainable and socially responsible practices [3]. However, the implementation of these standards is not uniform across regions, often varying based on local regulatory environments, cultural factors, and economic priorities [4]. In Kazakhstan, the adoption of ESG principles is influenced by a unique set of drivers and barriers, ranging from regulatory initiatives and investor demand to challenges related to transparency and infrastructure [5,6].

Kazakhstan's financial market is increasingly aligning with global ESG standards, yet significant gaps remain in its regulatory framework and corporate practices [7]. The central research question guiding this study is: What are the key drivers and barriers to the adoption of ESG principles in Kazakhstan, and what is a roadmap for Kazakhstan to align its ESG practices with international standards such as those set by S&P Global and the ADB? [8,9].

The aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors that influence the adoption of ESG frameworks in Kazakhstan and to propose actionable strategies for improving ESG practices in the country. Specifically, the goals of this article are threefold:

- To identify and analyze the key drivers that are propelling the adoption of ESG principles in Kazakhstan.
- To explore the barriers that hinder the full implementation of ESG practices within the country's financial and corporate sectors.
- To develop a strategic roadmap that outlines how Kazakhstan can align its ESG practices with international standards, ensuring better integration into the global sustainable finance ecosystem [10,11].

Through this analysis, the article seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on ESG adoption in emerging markets, offering insights that can guide policymakers, investors, and corporate leaders in Kazakhstan and beyond.

## **Literature review**

The integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into business practices has gained substantial momentum worldwide, driven by both regulatory requirements and investor expectations. Global frameworks such as those developed by S&P Global, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and other international organizations provide a structured approach

to assessing and implementing ESG criteria. These frameworks are crucial in promoting sustainability, transparency, and social responsibility in corporate governance.

**Global ESG Frameworks.** One of the leading frameworks is the ESG scoring methodology developed by S&P Global, which offers a comprehensive evaluation of companies based on environmental, social, and governance factors. This framework emphasizes transparency and accountability, enabling investors to make informed decisions by considering the sustainability practices of companies. S&P Global's approach includes detailed metrics across various industries, providing benchmarks that are critical for aligning corporate practices with global sustainability goals [1,2].

Similarly, the ADB has developed guidelines that focus on integrating ESG principles into development projects, particularly in emerging markets. The ADB's framework prioritizes environmental sustainability, social inclusiveness, and good governance, aiming to promote long-term economic growth that is both inclusive and environmentally responsible [3]. The ADB's guidelines are particularly relevant for countries like Kazakhstan, where balancing economic development with environmental conservation is a key challenge [3].

In addition to these frameworks, the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG) provides an extensive ESG database, covering over 90% of the global market capitalization. The LSEG's scoring system is designed to measure a company's ESG performance relative to its peers, incorporating industry-specific materiality and controversy adjustments. This approach ensures that the ESG scores are not only reflective of a company's current practices but also consider the broader industry and geographical context in which the company operates [4].

**ESG Adoption in Kazakhstan.** Kazakhstan's adoption of ESG principles has been influenced by both global trends and local regulatory initiatives. The country's financial sector, in particular, has made significant strides in integrating ESG factors into investment decisions. Marro [5] notes that Kazakhstan's alignment with global ESG standards is still in its early stages, with a need for more robust regulatory frameworks to support this transition. The development of ESG transparency in Kazakhstan's financial market is a critical step towards achieving this alignment [6].

However, despite these advancements, several barriers hinder the full adoption of ESG practices in Kazakhstan. The lack of comprehensive ESG reporting standards, limited investor awareness, and insufficient regulatory enforcement are among the key challenges identified in the literature [7]. According to the ESG Disclosure 2023 report, there is a significant gap between Kazakhstan's current practices and the expectations set by international frameworks [8]. This gap underscores the need for a more strategic approach to ESG adoption, one that is tailored to the specific context of Kazakhstan's economy and corporate culture.

Recent studies have also highlighted the role of local financial institutions in promoting ESG practices. For example, the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange (KASE) has introduced guidelines to encourage listed companies to improve their ESG disclosures [9]. These efforts are part of a broader movement within Kazakhstan to align with international sustainability standards, although there is still much work to be done in terms of implementation and enforcement.

When comparing Kazakhstan's ESG practices with global standards, it becomes evident that while there is a growing awareness of the importance of ESG, the implementation is uneven.

The S&P Global and ADB frameworks provide a comprehensive set of guidelines that, if adopted, could significantly enhance Kazakhstan's ESG performance [1,3]. However, as noted by various authors, the application of these frameworks requires substantial adjustments to fit the local context [5,10].

## **Methodology**

This study employs a thematic analysis to identify the key drivers and barriers to the adoption of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in Kazakhstan. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that allows for the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns (themes) within data. It is particularly well-suited for this research, given the exploratory nature of the study and the qualitative data available from various sources.

The data for this study was collected from a range of documents and case studies, including reports from global organizations such as S&P Global and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), as well as local reports and studies from Kazakhstan. The data sources include published reports, ESG frameworks, regulatory guidelines, and case studies relevant to the implementation of ESG practices in Kazakhstan.

The thematic analysis was conducted in the following steps:

The first step involved a thorough review of all collected documents and case studies. This initial stage was crucial for understanding the content, context, and key messages conveyed in each source. During this phase, the review included reading and re-reading the materials to ensure a deep understanding of the data [11,13].

Once familiarization with the data was completed, the next step involved generating initial codes based on recurring topics, ideas, and patterns found within the documents. These initial codes served as labels for significant features of the data that related to the research question. Coding was conducted manually, and each code was associated with specific segments of text that captured important aspects of the ESG adoption process in Kazakhstan [12,14].

Following the coding process, the next step was to collate the codes into potential themes. Themes are broader patterns that encompass multiple codes and provide meaningful insights into the data. In this study, themes were identified around the drivers (e.g., regulatory support, investor demand) and barriers (e.g., lack of transparency, infrastructure challenges) to ESG adoption in Kazakhstan [15].

Subsequently, the identified themes were reviewed to ensure they accurately represented the data and were distinct from one another. This critical step involved refining the themes, merging similar ones, and discarding those that were not supported by sufficient data. The aim here was to ensure that each theme was coherent, consistent, and directly relevant to the research question.

Once the themes were reviewed, each theme was then defined and named based on its content and scope. At this stage, this step involved summarizing what each theme represents and how it relates to the research question. The themes were named in a way that reflects their essence and facilitates understanding by the reader [7,14].

Writing the Analysis: Finally, the themes were woven into a narrative that addresses the research question. In this final step, the analysis presents a detailed account of the key drivers and barriers to ESG adoption in Kazakhstan.

ESG adoption in Kazakhstan, supported by evidence from the reviewed documents and case studies. The findings are structured around the identified themes, providing a clear and organized presentation of the results [11,13].

The thematic analysis was chosen for this study due to its flexibility and effectiveness in handling qualitative data. It allows for a detailed exploration of the complex factors influencing ESG adoption in Kazakhstan, enabling the identification of both explicit and implicit themes. Given the qualitative nature of the available data and the exploratory aims of this research, thematic analysis is the most appropriate method to uncover the patterns and relationships within the data.

## Findings

The adoption of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in Kazakhstan is influenced by a complex interplay of factors. The thematic analysis conducted in this study reveals both significant drivers and barriers to ESG integration across various sectors. These findings are supported by qualitative data obtained from key reports, frameworks, and case studies, which have been systematically coded and categorized to identify recurring themes.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of ESG compliance in Kazakhstan versus international standards

ESG elements	Kazakhstan	S&P Global	ADB	LSEG	Compliance Status
Environmental	Limited adoption of renewable energy; focus on resource extraction industries	Comprehensive evaluation of energy use and climate impact, strong emphasis on renewable sources	Emphasis on sustainable development in emerging markets, with focus on resource efficiency	High materiality weighting for energy use and emissions management	Needs Significant Improvement
	Weak regulatory enforcement of environmental laws	Strong guidelines for compliance with environmental regulations	Focus on policy frameworks supporting environmental protection	Detailed criteria for environmental protection and impact assessment	Partially Compliant
	Low transparency in reporting environmental impact	Transparent and standardized environmental reporting	Encourages detailed reporting, particularly in infrastructure projects	Robust reporting standards with industry-specific materiality adjustments	Needs Improvement

Social	Basic adherence to labor rights, focus on workplace safety in key industries (mining, oil and gas)	Strong focus on labor rights, diversity, and community impact	Emphasis on social inclusiveness and human rights in development projects	Social impact scores heavily influenced by industry-specific risks	Partially Compliant
	Limited progress on gender diversity and inclusion in corporate boards	Diversity and inclusion metrics are critical in scoring	Strong focus on gender equality and social development	Social responsibility and ethical behavior are heavily weighted in overall scoring	Needs Significant Improvement
	Education and workforce development linked to specific sectors, not broadly applied	Broader educational and workforce development programs recognized	Workforce training and education are central to achieving inclusive growth	Education and training initiatives critical for long-term social impact assessment	Needs Improvement
Governance	Corporate governance improvements in large companies, but weaker in SMEs	Rigorous evaluation of corporate governance structures and board independence	Good governance as a pillar for sustainable growth, with guidelines for transparency and accountability	Governance standards include detailed criteria for board practices, transparency, and stakeholder engagement	Partially Compliant
	Inconsistent reporting and lack of standardized governance frameworks across sectors	High standards for transparency and accountability in corporate governance	Strong emphasis on transparency, especially in public-private partnerships	Emphasis on governance practices that ensure competitive behavior and reduce corruption	Needs Improvement

	Slow adoption of anti-corruption measures and stakeholder engagement	Anti-corruption measures are integral to governance scores	Encourages robust anti-corruption policies and practices	Corruption and bribery heavily penalized, with high expectations for stakeholder engagement	Needs Significant Improvement
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Note: compiled based on data from [3]

Table 1 provides a comparative analysis of the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices in Kazakhstan against the benchmarks set by leading international frameworks such as S&P Global, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG). The table categorizes Kazakhstan's compliance into three statuses: "Partially Compliant," "Needs Improvement," and "Needs Significant Improvement," reflecting the current state of ESG integration across different sectors.

In the Environmental block, Kazakhstan exhibits significant gaps in aligning with global standards, particularly in the adoption of renewable energy and the enforcement of environmental regulations. While global frameworks emphasize robust regulatory compliance and transparency in environmental reporting, Kazakhstan's efforts are still in the nascent stages, with a strong focus on resource extraction industries and limited progress in renewable energy adoption [5,6]. The country's transparency in reporting environmental impact is also inadequate, necessitating considerable development to meet the detailed criteria set by international standards [1,3].

The Social block shows that Kazakhstan is only partially compliant in areas such as labor rights and workplace safety, especially within high-risk sectors like mining and oil and gas [4]. However, significant improvements are needed in gender diversity, inclusion in corporate governance, and broad-based educational initiatives [7]. International standards place a high emphasis on diversity and social inclusiveness, areas in which Kazakhstan lags considerably, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to close these gaps [8].

In the Governance block, Kazakhstan demonstrates partial compliance in improving corporate governance among large enterprises but struggles with consistency across sectors, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The lack of standardized governance frameworks and slow adoption of anti-corruption measures indicate a need for more rigorous implementation of global governance standards [5]. While international frameworks like those from S&P Global and LSEG stress the importance of transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption practices, Kazakhstan's current governance practices require significant enhancement to achieve full compliance [9,10].

This analysis underscores the critical areas where Kazakhstan's ESG practices diverge from global standards, suggesting that comprehensive reforms are essential to align with international expectations. The status of compliance across the three ESG blocks indicates

that while there is some progress, particularly in corporate governance, substantial efforts are needed to address the environmental and social deficiencies. These findings emphasize the urgency for Kazakhstan to enhance its ESG framework to attract sustainable investments and improve its global standing in responsible business practices [7].

Kazakhstan's efforts to adopt Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles are shaped by a combination of strong drivers and significant barriers. The drivers include regulatory support and global commitments, investor demand and market incentives, and improvements in corporate governance and transparency. However, these advancements are offset by barriers such as the lack of comprehensive ESG reporting standards, limited awareness and expertise, and infrastructure and resource constraints.

**Key drivers.** A primary driver of ESG adoption in Kazakhstan is the robust regulatory support provided by the government. This support is exemplified by recent initiatives such as the introduction of the Environmental Code and the Strategy for achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. These initiatives align Kazakhstan with its international commitments, including the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, thereby positioning the country as an active participant in the global ESG movement. This regulatory backing is essential for fostering an environment conducive to the widespread adoption of ESG principles across various sectors [9,10].

Investor demand is another critical factor influencing the adoption of ESG practices in Kazakhstan. The increasing availability of green finance mechanisms, such as green bonds and loans, has created strong financial incentives for companies to align their operations with ESG standards. Institutions like the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange (KASE) have played a pivotal role in promoting ESG disclosures, making sustainable investments more attractive to both local and international investors. This growing interest underscores the significant impact that market forces have on advancing ESG practices in Kazakhstan [7,10].

Furthermore, reforms in corporate governance have contributed to the adoption of ESG principles, particularly among leading companies in the telecommunications and financial sectors, such as Kazakhtelecom and Kcell. These companies have made notable progress in implementing governance structures that emphasize transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior. These reforms not only enhance investor confidence but also help to foster a corporate culture that prioritizes long-term sustainability [8].

**Key barriers.** Despite these positive developments, several barriers continue to impede the full adoption of ESG practices in Kazakhstan. A major challenge identified through thematic analysis is the lack of comprehensive ESG reporting standards. While some leading companies have adopted international frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and ISO standards, there remains a lack of a universally applied standard across all sectors. This inconsistency in reporting practices limits the comparability and reliability of ESG data, making it difficult for stakeholders to accurately assess corporate performance [3,5].

Another significant barrier is the limited awareness and expertise in ESG principles, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Many companies are still in the early stages of understanding how ESG factors impact their operations and financial performance. This knowledge gap is particularly pronounced in sectors such as mining and oil and gas, which



are central to Kazakhstan's economy but have traditionally been slow to adopt sustainable practices. The lack of expertise in ESG further exacerbates the challenges these companies face in aligning with global standards [4,7].

Infrastructure and resource constraints also present considerable challenges. The successful implementation of ESG practices requires substantial investment in technology, infrastructure, and human resources. For many companies, particularly those in resource-intensive industries, the costs associated with ESG compliance can be prohibitive. Additionally, existing infrastructure challenges, such as outdated systems and limited access to advanced technologies, further complicate the adoption of sustainable practices in Kazakhstan [6].

Evidence from thematic analysis. The findings discussed above are derived from a rigorous thematic analysis, wherein qualitative data from various documents and reports were systematically coded to identify recurring themes. For example, in the "IGTIC Report," the theme of "regulatory support" emerged as a key driver of ESG adoption, reflecting the government's role in advancing sustainable practices [5]. Similarly, "investor demand" was identified as a prominent driver, supported by the increasing issuance of green bonds and loans, as documented in reports from the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange [7].

Conversely, the barriers to ESG adoption, such as the lack of standardized reporting and limited expertise, were also prominent in the thematic analysis. These challenges were particularly evident in reports highlighting the inconsistencies in ESG reporting practices and the difficulties SMEs face in implementing ESG principles [3,4].

To address the inconsistency in ESG reporting, it is recommended that Kazakhstan develop a unified reporting standard that aligns with international frameworks such as GRI and ISO. This standard should be mandatory for all publicly listed companies and encouraged for SMEs, with support provided in the form of training and resources [2,3].

ENVIRONMENT		SOCIAL			GOVERNANCE	
Environmental protection	Climate Change	Human Capital	Labor Rights	Consumer & Market	Corporate Conduct	Management & Operations
Sourcing	Air Pollution	Human Rights & Children Rights	Workplace health, Safety & Welfare	Product safety, Information & Responsibility	Corruption & bribery	Transparency & Operations
Product/Production impact & Innovation	Energy	Communities	Education & Development	Privacy & Data protection	Competitive behavior	Supply Chain Management
	Waste management		Diversity, Equity & Inclusion			Taxation & Reporting
	Land & terrestrial ecosystems					Stakeholder engagement
	Water & marine ecosystems					

Figure 1 Description of the constituents of ESG

Note: compiled based on data from [4]

Building on the progress made by leading companies, the framework emphasizes the need for stronger corporate governance structures that prioritize ESG factors. This includes the establishment of sustainability committees within boards of directors and the integration of ESG metrics into executive compensation schemes [8].

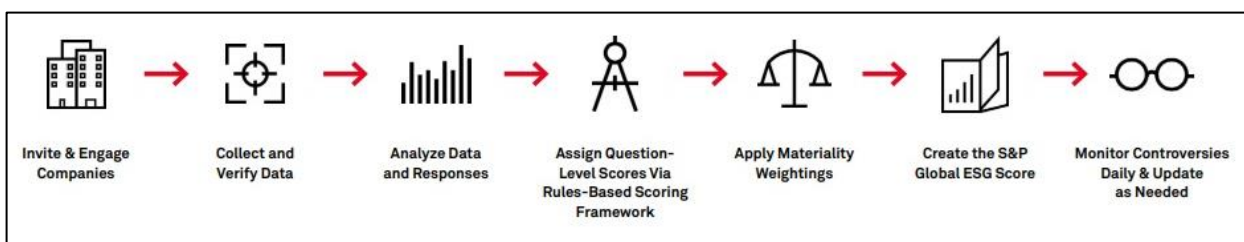


Figure 2 Multi-step process of scoring ESG by S&P Global

Note: compiled based on data from [7]

To overcome resource constraints, the framework advocates for increased investment in ESG infrastructure, including technology and human capital. This could be supported by government incentives, such as tax breaks or grants, for companies that invest in sustainable practices. Additionally, capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing ESG expertise across industries should be prioritized [4,6].

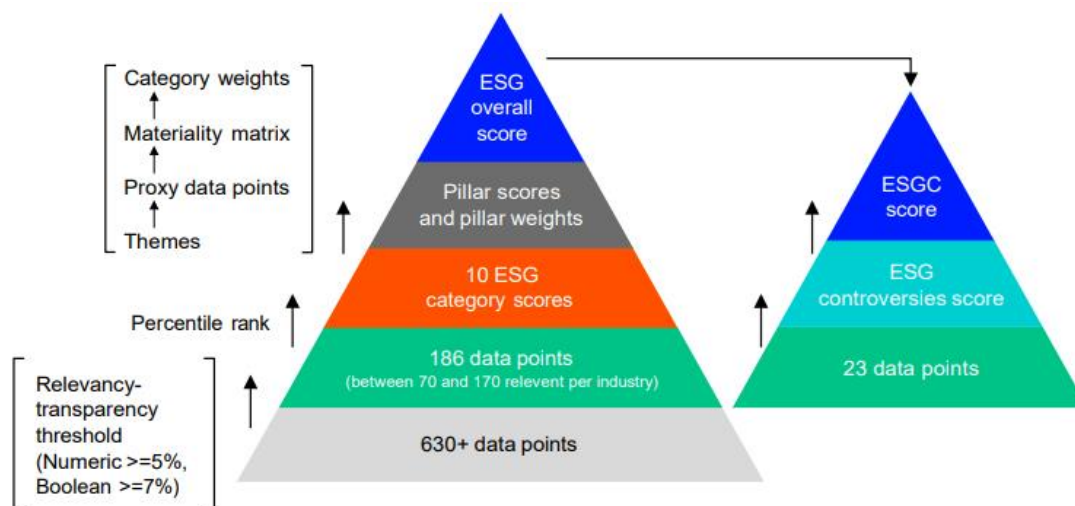


Figure 3 LSEG framework to evaluate ESG score in the companies

Note: compiled based on data from [7]

The framework also suggests leveraging market incentives to drive ESG adoption. This includes expanding the green finance market and encouraging investor engagement in ESG issues. By creating a favorable market environment, companies will be more likely to adopt and maintain ESG practices [7].

Based on these findings, a tailored framework for advancing ESG practices in Kazakhstan is proposed. This framework draws from global best practices while addressing the unique challenges faced by Kazakhstan.

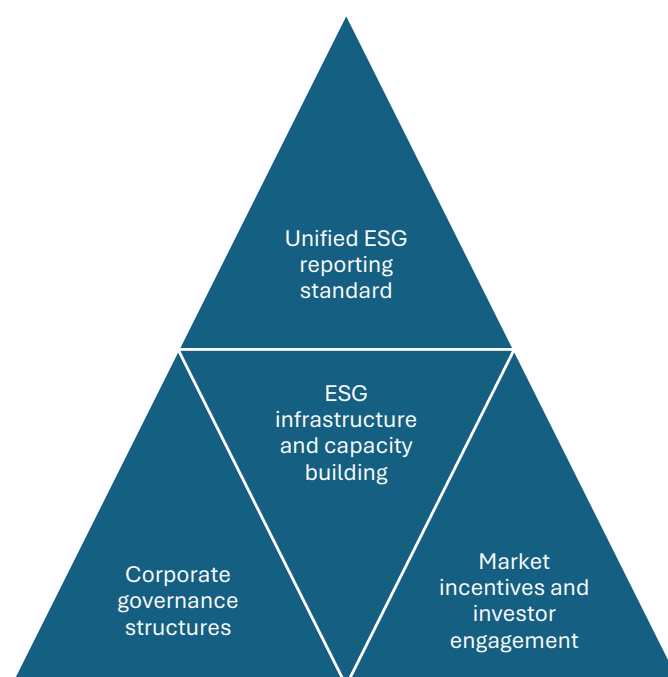


Figure 4 Advancing ESG practices in Kazakhstan

Note: compiled based on data from [7]

The findings from the thematic analysis are encapsulated in Picture 4, which presents a structured framework for advancing ESG practices in Kazakhstan. This triangular diagram illustrates the four essential components required to enhance ESG integration: a Unified ESG Reporting Standard, Corporate Governance Structures, ESG Infrastructure and Capacity Building, and Market Incentives and Investor Engagement. Each component supports the others, creating a cohesive strategy for driving sustainable development. The Unified ESG Reporting Standard sits at the apex, signifying its foundational role in establishing transparency and consistency across all sectors. Meanwhile, Corporate Governance Structures and Market Incentives ensure that ethical practices and financial motivations are aligned with sustainability goals. At the core, ESG Infrastructure and Capacity Building act as the engine that powers the framework, providing the necessary resources and expertise to implement these initiatives effectively. Together, these elements create a robust and interconnected system that can propel Kazakhstan toward greater compliance with international ESG standards, thereby enhancing its global standing and attracting sustainable investment.

## Discussion

The integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in Kazakhstan presents a nuanced picture characterized by both progress and significant challenges. The thematic analysis conducted in this study highlights the complex interplay between the drivers and barriers of ESG adoption in the country, offering insights into how Kazakhstan's current

practices align with, or diverge from, international standards such as those set by S&P Global, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG).

Kazakhstan has demonstrated a commitment to adopting ESG principles, as evidenced by regulatory initiatives such as the Environmental Code and the Strategy for achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. These efforts are in line with global commitments, such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and reflect a growing recognition of the importance of sustainable development. However, as depicted in Table 1 and summarized in Picture 4, the current state of ESG practices in Kazakhstan reveals a mixed level of compliance with international standards.

The development of a Unified ESG Reporting Standard, as proposed in the findings, is critical to bridging the gap between Kazakhstan's practices and those outlined by global frameworks. Currently, the lack of comprehensive and standardized reporting remains a significant barrier to ESG integration. This inconsistency not only hampers transparency but also undermines the comparability and reliability of ESG data, making it challenging for investors and stakeholders to assess corporate performance accurately. Adopting a unified reporting standard that aligns with frameworks like GRI and ISO could enhance Kazakhstan's ESG transparency and facilitate more meaningful comparisons with global peers [1,3].

The role of corporate governance in advancing ESG practices cannot be overstated. Companies such as Kazakhtelecom and Kcell have made notable strides in enhancing governance structures, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior. These efforts align with international best practices, which prioritize strong governance as a pillar of sustainable business. However, the findings suggest that while large companies are making progress, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) lag behind in adopting these practices. This disparity indicates a need for more targeted interventions, such as capacity-building programs and government incentives, to support SMEs in implementing robust governance frameworks [8,9].

Market incentives also play a crucial role in driving ESG adoption. The rise of green finance mechanisms, including green bonds and loans, has created financial incentives for companies to align with ESG standards. Institutions like the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange (KASE) have been instrumental in promoting ESG disclosures, thereby increasing the attractiveness of sustainable investments. However, to fully leverage these market incentives, it is essential to ensure that companies have the necessary infrastructure and expertise to meet ESG criteria. This includes investing in technology, human capital, and other resources required to support sustainable practices [7].

Despite these advancements, significant challenges remain. The limited awareness and expertise in ESG principles, particularly among SMEs and resource-intensive industries like mining and oil and gas, pose a substantial barrier to broader ESG adoption. This knowledge gap is exacerbated by infrastructure and resource constraints, which make it difficult for companies to implement and maintain ESG practices. The proposed framework for ESG development in Kazakhstan, as illustrated in Picture 4, addresses these challenges by advocating for increased investment in ESG infrastructure and capacity building. By providing the necessary resources and support, Kazakhstan can create a more enabling environment for companies to adopt and sustain ESG practices [4,6].

Moreover, the slow adoption of anti-corruption measures and inconsistent governance frameworks across sectors highlight the need for more rigorous enforcement of international governance standards. Strengthening corporate governance structures, particularly in SMEs, and promoting greater stakeholder engagement are essential steps toward achieving full compliance with global ESG frameworks. These efforts would not only enhance Kazakhstan's ESG performance but also improve its attractiveness to foreign investors and its standing in the global market [5,10].

The findings of this study have important implications for both policymakers and practitioners in Kazakhstan. To advance ESG practices, it is crucial to address the identified barriers through comprehensive policy reforms and targeted interventions. Future research should explore the specific challenges faced by different sectors in adopting ESG principles and identify strategies for overcoming these obstacles. Additionally, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of ESG practices in Kazakhstan are necessary to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with international standards.

In conclusion, while Kazakhstan has made commendable progress in adopting ESG principles, significant work remains to be done. The proposed framework provides a roadmap for addressing the current gaps and enhancing Kazakhstan's compliance with global ESG standards. By prioritizing transparency, corporate governance, and market incentives, and by investing in infrastructure and capacity building, Kazakhstan can position itself as a leader in sustainable development and attract greater investment in its future.

## **Conclusion**

This study set out to explore the key drivers and barriers to the adoption of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in Kazakhstan, with the central research question being: What are the key drivers and barriers to the adoption of ESG principles in Kazakhstan, and what is a roadmap for Kazakhstan to align its ESG practices with international standards such as those set by S&P Global and the ADB? Through a comprehensive thematic analysis of relevant documents, frameworks, and case studies, the article aimed to evaluate Kazakhstan's current ESG landscape and propose a strategic framework for enhancing ESG practices in the country.

The findings of this study indicate that while Kazakhstan has made significant strides in integrating ESG principles, particularly through strong regulatory support and growing investor interest, several critical barriers remain. The lack of comprehensive ESG reporting standards, limited awareness and expertise, and infrastructure constraints are key challenges that hinder the full adoption of ESG practices across all sectors. These challenges, however, present opportunities for targeted reforms and investments that could significantly enhance Kazakhstan's ESG compliance and its alignment with global standards.

The proposed framework, which emphasizes the establishment of a Unified ESG Reporting Standard, the enhancement of corporate governance structures, investment in ESG infrastructure and capacity building, and the leveraging of market incentives, provides a clear roadmap for addressing these barriers. If implemented effectively, this framework could position Kazakhstan as a leader in sustainable development within the region, attracting greater foreign investment and improving its global standing.

In evaluating whether the article has achieved its goals, it is clear that the study has successfully identified and analyzed the key drivers and barriers to ESG adoption in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, the strategic framework proposed in this article offers actionable recommendations that are tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities within Kazakhstan. However, the article also highlights the need for ongoing research and policy efforts to ensure the continuous improvement and alignment of Kazakhstan's ESG practices with international standards.

In conclusion, while Kazakhstan has made commendable progress in adopting ESG principles, achieving full alignment with global standards will require sustained efforts and strategic investments. The insights and recommendations provided in this article lay the groundwork for future initiatives aimed at advancing ESG practices in Kazakhstan, contributing to the broader goal of sustainable development and responsible corporate governance.

Conflict of interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### **Authors' contributions.**

**Mukhiyayeva D.** – approval of the final version of the article for publication; consent to be responsible for all aspects of the work, properly studying and resolving issues related to the reliability of data or the integrity of all parts of the article.

**Sembiyeva L.** – collection, analysis and interpretation of work results; writing a text and critically reviewing its content;

**Zhagyparova A.** – significant contribution to the concept of work.

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### **ESG шеңберін бағалау: әлемдік стандарттарды салыстырмалы талдау және олардың Қазақстанда қолданылуы**

**Аннотация.** Бұл мақалада Қазақстандағы экологиялық, әлеуметтік және басқару (ESG) қағидаттарын қабылдаудың негізгі қозғаушы күштері мен кедергілері зерттеледі. Құжаттарды, негіздемелерді және мысалдарды тақырыптық талдау арқылы зерттеу Қазақстандағы ESG тәжірибесінің қазіргі жағдайын бағалап, оларды S&P Global, Азия Даму Банкі (АДБ) және Лондон Қор Биржасы (LSEG) сияқты халықаралық стандарттармен салыстырады. Нәтижелер реттеушілік қолдау мен инвесторлардың сұранысындағы елеулі ілгерілеуді көрсетеді, сонымен қатар ESG есеп беру стандарттарының жоқтығы, шектеулі сараптама және инфрақұрылымның жеткіліксіздігі сияқты маңызды проблемаларды анықтайды. Осы мәселелерді шешу үшін мақалада Біртұтас ESG есеп беру стандартын әзірлеу, корпоративтік басқару құрылымдарын жетілдіру, ESG инфрақұрылымына инвестиция салу және нарықтық ынталандыруды пайдалану

сияқты стратегиялық негіз ұсынылады. Ұсынылған фреймуорк Қазақстанның ESG тәжірибесін жаһандық стандарттарға сәйкестендіруді, осылайша тұрақты инвестицияларға тартымдылығын арттыруды және жаһандық деңгейде жауапты бизнес тәжірибесінде оның орнын жақсартуды мақсат етеді. Сонымен қатар, мақалада Қазақстанның ESG тәжірибесі мен халықаралық стандарттар арасындағы сәйкессіздіктер анықталып, оларды жоюға бағытталған нақты шаралар ұсынылады. Ұсынылған шешімдер елдің тұрақты даму мақсаттарына қол жеткізуіне және халықаралық инвестициялардың ағынын арттыруына ықпал етеді деп күтілуде.

**Түйін сөздер:** ESG, корпоративтік басқару, тұрақты даму, S&P Global, Азия Даму Банкі (АДБ)

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### **Оценка систем ESG: сравнительный анализ мировых стандартов и их применения в Казахстане**

**Аннотация.** В данной статье исследуются основные движущие силы и барьеры для внедрения принципов экологического, социального и корпоративного управления (ESG) в Казахстане. Путем проведения тематического анализа соответствующих документов, стандартов и примеров из практики, исследование оценивает текущее состояние ESG-практик в Казахстане и сравнивает их с международными стандартами, установленными S&P Global, Азиатским банком развития (АБР) и Лондонской фондовой биржей (LSEG). Результаты показывают значительный прогресс в области регулирования и спроса со стороны инвесторов, но также выявляют критические проблемы, такие как отсутствие комплексных стандартов ESG-отчетности, недостаток экспертизы и инфраструктурные ограничения. Для решения этих проблем в статье предлагается стратегическая основа, включающая разработку Единого стандарта ESG-отчетности, улучшение структуры корпоративного управления, инвестиции в ESG-инфраструктуру и использование рыночных стимулов. Предлагаемая основа направлена на приведение ESG-практик Казахстана в соответствие с мировыми стандартами, что повысит его привлекательность для устойчивых инвестиций и улучшит его позиции на глобальном уровне в области ответственного ведения бизнеса. Дополнительно в статье анализируются недостатки текущих ESG-практик Казахстана и предлагаются конкретные меры по их устранению, что способствует достижению устойчивого развития страны и привлечению международных инвесторов.

**Ключевые слова:** ESG, корпоративное управление, устойчивое развитие, S&P Global, Азиатский банк развития (АБР).

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