Formal complaint to the Science Museum Group's Board of Trustees
Adani Sponsorship

Submitted by Culture Unstained
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Formal complaint to the Science Museum Group's Board of Trustees: Adani Sponsorship

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1. Introduction

The following document sets out a formal complaint to the Science Museum Group's (SMG) Board of Trustees outlining how:

- Due to shortcomings in the SMG's Due Diligence and partnership decision-making processes, its sponsorship agreement with Adani Green Energy can not be considered legitimate.
- The Director of the SMG Sir Ian Blatchford was central to this failure of process because he acted without due impartiality and objectivity. His actions impeded the appropriate scrutiny that Adani should have been subjected to as part of the Due Diligence process. In so doing, he has potentially breached the principles set out in the SMG's 'Group Ethics Policy'.
- Throughout the process of securing the sponsorship agreement, the SMG and its Director have fallen short of, and potentially breached, the Charities Commission's standards on due diligence, the Museums Association's 'Code of Ethics' and guidelines set out by other other sector-wide bodies; and
- The conduct of both the Director and Chair of the SMG, both in negotiating and publicly defending the sponsorship agreement, have fallen short of the standards required by them as holders of public office, potentially breaching 'Nolan's 7 Principles of Public Life'.

By failing to ensure that these standards have been met, the Board of Trustees of the SMG have fallen short in their legal duty to protect the reputation of the SMG. In light of the above, the Board of Trustees of the SMG should undertake the following steps:

- Launch an internal investigation into decision-making led by the Director Ian Blatchford in relation to the sponsorship agreement that was made with the Adani Group via Adani Green Energy;
- Enforce the SMG's own Group Ethics Policy and any relevant sector-wide policies which should include, where appropriate, any proportionate remedial or disciplinary measures;
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the sponsorship agreement taking into account due diligence and other comprehensive evidence on the Adani Group available both at that time of the decision being made and that has come to light subsequently; and
- To then move to terminate the sponsorship agreement because:
  - (a) the original decision was reached through a flawed process that lacks legitimacy; and
  - (b) proceeding with it in light of the available evidence would be in breach of the SMG's own sponsorship criteria as laid out in its Sustainability Policy, as well as the ethical principles outlined in the SMG's Group Ethics Policy.

We ask that this complaint document is shared with all members of the Board of Trustees of the SMG for their consideration. A response should be made within 28 days outlining the remedial steps the Board will be taking in light of the issues raised.

If no response is provided or the SMG fails to adequately address the concerns outlined, this complaint document will then be referred to relevant regulators and sector-wide bodies for formal investigation.

2. Background

In recent years, as many major museums, galleries and other cultural institutions have phased out sponsorship deals and corporate partnerships with fossil fuel producers, the Science Museum Group has chosen to retain its relationships with firms including Shell, BP and Equinor. Today, the SMG has partnerships with BP, as the sponsor of its STEM Academy, and Equinor, which remains the title sponsor of the Science Museum's 'Wonderlab' gallery for children. While Shell does not have an active sponsorship agreement with the Science Museum according to its website, it did sponsor 'Our Future Planet', a temporary exhibition on carbon capture and storage taking place from May 2021 to September 2022.

These relationships are fundamentally transactional in nature. In return for sponsorship payments, these companies are provided with opportunities to promote their brands and associate them with culture and science, enhancing their 'social licence to operate'. Cultivating and maintaining this social legitimacy is an integral part of how fossil fuel producers maintain their influence and their capacity to pursue extraction plans that are inconsistent with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and the consensus of climate scientists. As part of these relationships, they are also able to take advantage of strategic networking opportunities. In some cases, companies such as BP have directly informed and consulted upon content at the Science Museum, helping to shape narratives on key issues around sustainability and climate change.

On several occasions, the Director of the Science Museum Group has publicly defended his stance of accepting sponsorship from major fossil fuel producers and has strongly advocated for them as companies, despite evidence of their ongoing involvement in climate delay, disinformation and investment in new exploration for oil and gas fields. In 2019, he told the Financial Times that, *'Even if the Science Museum were lavishly publicly funded I would still want to have sponsorship from the oil companies.'*

On 19th October 2021, it was announced that Adani Green Energy - a subsidiary of the Adani Group conglomerate - would be the sponsor of a new climate science gallery at the Science Museum, replacing its existing climate science gallery *Atmosphere* which had been sponsored by Shell. The sponsorship was announced and the formal agreement signed during the UK Government's 'Global Investment Summit' taking place at the Science Museum in the run-up to COP26.

Currently, the Adani Group is the world's largest private producer of coal and the third largest developer of coal mines. Far from being a standalone company, Adani Green Energy is just one branch of an integrated conglomerate, all of which are - according to a report by the Hindenburg Group earlier this year - 'intricately linked'.

The announcement of the sponsorship has been met by widespread opposition from a range of stakeholder groups, from scientists to Indigenous leaders, and the decision also led to the resignation of two SMG Trustees and a member of its Advisory Board. Subsequent investigations have raised questions about the conduct of the decision-making process that led to the sponsorship deal being made and called into question the SMG's claim that 'Adani Green Energy' is distinct and separate from the parent 'Adani Group'.

Energy Revolution: the Adani Green Energy Gallery is due to open in Spring 2024.

3. Due Diligence processes and ethical standards

(a) Conduct of initial Due Diligence process on the Adani Group

(i) The following section outlines the specific role of the Director in relation to Due Diligence processes that were in place at the SMG at the time negotiations with the Adani Group were undertaken and how he failed to act objectively and impartially in the decisions he took. It highlights how concerns raised within internal Due Diligence reports were not adequately assessed, escalated and acted upon, and therefore fell short of sector-wide standards.

Relevant policy

(ii) Section 2.2 of 'Appendix A: Due Diligence Process' in the SMG's Group Ethics Policy (March 2019) - in force at the time of the Adani Group being assessed - sets out the stages of the referral process for when concerns regarding a prospective donor or sponsor are raised:

'The [due diligence] report is reviewed by the Development Director in the first instance who will assess and decide if a referral to the SMG Director is necessary. If the SMG Director has concerns, they will refer to the Board of Trustees.'

Appendix A of the Group Ethics Policy cites the Charities Commission's guidance document 'Compliance toolkit: protecting charities from harm' which establishes that a Due Diligence process should ensure that Trustees must take reasonable steps to:

- *Identify: know who they are dealing with*
- *Verify: where reasonable, and the risks are high, verify identities*
- *Know what the organisation's or individual's business is and can be assured this is appropriate for the charity to be involved with*
- *Know what their specific business is with the charity and have confidence they will deliver what the charity wants them to*
- *Watch out for unusual or suspicious activities, conducts or requests*

(iii) The SMG is a member organisation of the Museums Association. Paragraph 3.6 of its 'Code of Ethics' states that museums should:

'Carefully consider offers of financial support from commercial organisations and other sources in the UK and internationally and seek support from organisations whose ethical values are consistent with those of the museum. Exercise due diligence in understanding the ethical standards of commercial partners with a view to maintaining public trust and integrity in all museum activities.'

(iv) The Director of the SMG is a holder of public office and must therefore abide by Nolan's 7 Principles of Public Life. It includes the following requirement:

'Objectivity. Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.'

Evidence

(v) On 2nd December 2020 an email with the subject line 'Adani Group - next steps for discussion', copying in SMG Director Ian Blatchford sets out proposed 'partnership opportunities' for the Adani Group that had emerged from a discussion with the Director (FOI disclosure, p4). It reads:

> *'Ian and I had the opportunity to think hard about the additional partnership opportunities to present for your consideration.*
>
> *On reflection, we believe the proposed [Energy Revolution] gallery is still the strongest global profiling opportunity for Adani… We believe this project most closely aligns with the company's ambitions and therefore will deliver the greatest benefit.'*

(vi) The initial Due Diligence Report on the Adani Group was also requested internally on 2nd December 2020 (FOI disclosure, p1) and completed on 15th December. On 23rd December 2020 at 11:11, SMG Director Ian Blatchford received an email marked 'High importance' with that Due Diligence Report on the Adani Group attached, which read:

'Hi Ian, I think you should read this. Can we discuss before we move forward?'

This contents and importance marking indicates that the sender:

> (i) has concerns about the contents of the report; and
> (ii) that they are being explicitly referring those concerns to the SMG's Director, in accordance with the Due Diligence Process set out in the Group Ethics Policy.

32 minutes later at 11:43, Director Ian Blatchford sends an email to representatives of the Adani Group, which reads:

> *'Thank you for your kind email and I am delighted that the Adani Group is considering our proposal to associate with the Science Museum on this important new gallery that will attract a global audience of millions.'*

An internal email sent to a member of SMG staff later that day at 16:26 describes the Due Diligence Report on the Adani Group as a '*thorough and helpful piece of work'* and concludes that, *'we have taken note of the findings and are content to move ahead'*.

(vii) The referral of the Due Diligence Report to Director Ian Blatchford did not trigger 'careful review' of the proposed relationship, as required by the Group Ethics Policy (see above), prior to him continuing his correspondence with the Adani Group. Given the exceptional length and the seriousness of the concerns identified within that report, referral of the full report to the Board of Trustees, in line with the Group Ethics Policy, would have represented the proportionate response, thereby ensuring that the Trustees could discharge their legal duty to protect charitable assets i.e. the reputation and standing of the SMG.

(viii) The 12-page Due Diligence Report compiled on the Adani Group was significant in scale but in many aspects was neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, overlooking several well-documented controversies related to the proposed sponsor and its conduct. Instances of criminal investigations, fines and litigation in particular should have been examined and carefully considered. Allegations were made by the Hindenburg Group on 24th January 2023 that the Adani Group had committed 'the largest con in corporate history' and these allegations were subsequently investigated and, in part, substantiated by the Financial Times (see below). The explicit findings in the Due Diligence Report provided a clear early warning of the Adani Group's ethical conduct in this area, one that was not heeded by the Director or referred to colleagues for more in-depth scrutiny.

(ix) While the Due Diligence Report on the Adani Group covered a number of important areas, it also omits many others, including Adani's Indian and Indonesian coal operations, which have been subject to claims of environmental negligence, human rights abuses, displacement, land grabs, and workers' rights abuses, which have been the subject of lawsuits. There is no mention of the climate impact of the coal generated from Adani's business.

(x) On 11th January 2021, the Adani Green Energy Ltd. Due Diligence Report was commissioned and is 4 pages long in contrast to the 12-page report on the group. While it references the parent company, Adani Group, and their involvement in coal, allegations of corruption and cronyism relating to the parent and subsidiary companies, it omits all other areas covered in the initial Adani Group Due Diligence Report. FOI disclosures suggest that it was produced over the course of one day due to the request for 'further details on them [Adani Green]' having been made that same day.

(xi) Both reports reference the connection between the two companies: 'Adani Green Energy is part of the Adani Group.'

(xii) An update to the Board of Trustees circulated on 5th February 2021, ahead of a Board meeting on 3rd March 2021, refers to due diligence checks having been made and says 'we continue to look at Adani's forward renewables plans to assure ourselves on these points.' There is one mention of 'key coal' interests in this presentation but almost all due diligence concerns raised in the two reports regarding both the Adani Group and Adani Green Energy are omitted from the presentation at this crucial point of seeking Trustee oversight.

(xiii) The presentation to the Board of Trustees appears to have had no bearing on the decision to proceed with the sponsorship proposal. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Adani was already drafted and being discussed with the company during January, well before the proposal was brought to the Board. Minutes from the meeting describe this as an 'update' which was 'noted' by the Board.

(xiv) On the same day that the paper on the proposed Adani deal was circulated to Trustees, the Museum sent an appendix to the MOU to Adani, and then followed up to request a signature. [See Correspondence binder, p.38] On 9th February, a representative of the Museum asked 'whether we are now in a position to agree the MOU' and offered to 'prepare the document for signature' [See p.52]. By 1st March, two days before the Trustees had their first opportunity to discuss the proposal, it appears to be all but finalised with the Museum sending Adani a copy with 'a few final suggestions'. [See p.47]

Potential breaches

(xv) The Director of the SMG failed to give the internal Due Diligence Report sufficient consideration in order to have adequately performed his role in the Due Diligence process. If he had made a considered and objective assessment of the report, concerns regarding the potential ethical and reputational risks would have been raised and conflicts with the SMG's mission and values identified. Consequently, the Director did not 'carefully consider' the offer of financial support from the Adani Group. While the Science Museum Group did exercise due diligence on the Adani Group, the Director's decision not to raise concerns with, or refer the report to, the Board of Trustees actively hindered their understanding of the Adani Group's ethical standards. This directly conflicts with the Museums Association's Code of Ethics and represents a potential breach of the Code.

(xvi) A key principle of due diligence, as set out by the Charities Commission, is to 'know your donor'. The Director prevented others within the SMG, specifically the Trustees, from fully and adequately fulfilling the steps set out in the Charities Commission's compliance toolkit; he did not watch out for or raise the unusual or suspicious activities that were identified in the Due Diligence report. This is significant because fulfilling these steps is how Trustees can satisfy themselves that they have fulfilled their legal duty to protect the reputation of the SMG, as a charitable asset. The Director of the SMG did not fulfil the clear standards set out by the Charities Commission in this area.

(b) Insufficient due diligence assessment of the sponsor's corporate identity, misrepresentation of its business structure and associated risks

(i) The following section sets out how shortcomings in Due Diligence processes and decision-making, both prior to the sponsorship agreement being signed and subsequently, have meant that the SMG failed to take appropriate steps to accurately assess Adani's corporate structure and the associated risks. It outlines how the Charities Commission's 'Know Your Donor' principles were not adequately met and, where information was available, it was not reported and shared internally.

Relevant policy

(ii) The SMG's current Group Ethics Policy states that:

'All representatives of SMG are expected to follow the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice and the Charity Commission's Protecting Charities from Harm: Compliance Toolkit as well as relevant internal policies and procedures… SMG will take reasonable and appropriate steps to know who its donors are, particularly where significant sums are being donated or the circumstances of the donation give rise to notable risk.'

(iii) Paragraph 7.1.1 of the 'Code of Fundraising Practice' states that:

'Before entering into an agreement with a professional fundraiser or a commercial partner you must carry out appropriate checks on them (including on their financial standing and reputation) to make sure you can be confident that they are able to do what you expect them to do and that your relationship with them will not damage your reputation. This is especially important when working with organisations that are not based in the UK.'

(iv) The Charities Commission's 'Compliance Toolkit: Protecting Charities from Harm' states that:

'To satisfy the core elements of due diligence trustees must take reasonable steps to ensure they:

- *'identify' - know who you are dealing with*
- *'verify' - where reasonable and the risks are high, verify identities*
- *'know what the organisation's or individual's business is' and can be assured this is appropriate for the charity to be involved with*
- *'know what their specific business is with your charity' and have confidence they will deliver what you want them to*
- *'watch out' for unusual or suspicious activities, conduct or requests'*

It also sets out how some donors:

'...Give significant grants to charity and the charity may have a close working relationship with them. It is for significant donors like these that trustees are <u>likely to need to carry out further due diligence and take steps to identify and verify the identity of the donor so they can assess any risks.</u> For example, if you know that the donor you are familiar with is from a country or operates a business, perhaps outside of the UK, <u>about which public concerns have been raised, then the trustees should take more steps to verify the provenance of the funds.</u> If there is a significant donor which is an organisation, the charity 'should know what its business is' and be assured that the organisation is appropriate for the charity to be involved or linked with.'

[Underline added]

Evidence

(v) Despite claims made publicly by the SMG, there is little meaningful distinction between Adani Green Energy and the parent Adani Group. Evidence has also identified direct porosity between Adani Green Energy and Adani Enterprises, tangibly linking the former to the latter's coal projects. Due Diligence criteria and assessment should therefore extend to the business activity of the Adani Group as a whole.

(vi) At the time the agreement was negotiated:

- Key figures in the Adani Group and Adani Green Energy were named and concerns about them recorded in the SMG's Due Diligence reports. It was therefore on record that the Chairman of Adani Green Energy is Gautam Adani who is also the Chairman of the Adani Group; the Director of Adani Green Energy is Rajesh Adani, who is also Managing Director of the Adani Group; and that the Adani Group and Adani Green Energy are registered at the same address.
- As highlighted above, the SMG's initial due diligence was conducted into the Adani *Group* and it was only after this report detailed numerous concerns about the Group's operations that a decision was made to

proceed with a partnership with Adani Green Energy. As part of that initial Due Diligence process, it was identified that the only part of the Adani Group assessed by the Transition Pathway Initiative did *not* meet the requirements set out in the SMG's newly published Sustainability Policy (see next section). As noted in the previous section, an edited report into Adani Green Energy was subsequently produced, with the majority of the material detailing serious concerns now removed.

- Documents disclosed by the SMG following FOI requests indicate that there was, and continues to be, little distinction being made internally between Adani Green Energy and the Adani Group, with correspondence continuing to take place with staff at the Adani Group. This has included providing a briefing on aspects of the wider Adani Group's business, such as the Carmichael Mine which falls under Adani Enterprises and its 'Bravus' brand [See Correspondence Binder, p3]. FOI disclosures show that the Director has corresponded with the Adani Group over the course of 2022-23, specifically inquiring about 'the [Adani] Group's net zero plans and receiving emails from those with Adani Group email footers [see FOI disclosure].
- In the days before the official signing ceremony for the sponsorship agreement, emails show it still needed to be established by the Adani Group that Gautam Adani had the official capacity to sign the agreement on behalf of Adani Green Energy [see Correspondence Binder, p68]. Despite the agreement having been finalised and a Memorandum of Understanding having already been signed, the question of whether he had the capacity to sign the agreement was not known by the SMG either.
- Other sponsorship agreements at the SMG have primarily been made at the level of the parent group and not with individual subsidiaries involved in specific industries, for example BP and *not* Lightsource BP. The SMG's pivot from sponsorship from the Adani Group to Adani Green Energy would appear inconsistent with this approach.

Further details of the FOI disclosures referred to above and copies of the relevant documents can be found here.

(vii) On 24th January 2023, a report by the Hindenburg Group concluded that the Adani Group companies are:

> *'Intricately and distinctly linked and dependent upon one another'.*

This conclusion has been further substantiated by:

- On 9th February 2023, Norway's sovereign wealth fund sold its stocks in three Adani Group companies, including Adani Green Energy, in order to end its exposure to Adani's handling of environmental risks and the porosity between Adani Green Energy and the Adani Group's coal projects.

- On 20th February 2023, a public filing from the State Bank of India showed that Adani used shares from Adani Green Energy and other companies as collateral in a $300 million credit facility for the Carmichael coal mine in Australia, via Adani Enterprises.
- On 9th May 2023, three Adani Group companies, including Adani Green Energy, were omitted from the UN-backed 'Science Based Targets Initiative' list due to them being judged to not be in conformity with the SBTi's goals for corporate climate action.
- On 31st August 2023, investigations undertaken by the Financial Times based upon documents shared by by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project revealed two associates of Vinod Adani, brother of the Adani Group's founder Gautam, as the most significant investors in the Global Opportunities Fund in Bermuda and 'using the fund for a specific purpose — to amass and trade large positions in shares of the Adani Group'.
- On 19th October 2023, research organisation Urgewald published the 'Global Coal Exit List 2023' identifying that Adani is the world's largest private developer of coal mines and the third largest developer of new coal mines overall. At the time of publication, Urgewald's Director observed that, *'While one of the Adani Group's 9 listed subsidiaries – Adani Green Energy – develops solar projects, the Group's renewable investments are dwarfed by its enormous coal portfolio'.* Crucially, they highlight that, *'Adani is a stark example of why responsible investors need to divest all subsidiaries of coal developers. It's an illusion to believe that investments in the green arm of a company aren't cross-subsidizing its other activities.'*

Potential breaches

(viii) At the time of the initial Due Diligence process being undertaken, when the sponsorship agreement was signed and subsequently, substantial evidence was available and in the public domain demonstrating the lack of any meaningful distinction (in the context of agreeing a sponsorship agreement) between Adani Green Energy and the parent Adani Group, as well as the associated risks. By failing to both identify and adequately assess the available evidence pertaining to Adani Green Energy, the SMG did not undertake appropriate checks or steps in order to fulfil the 'Know Your Donor' principles set out by the Charities Commission.

(ix) The SMG has therefore fallen short of expected standards of due diligence in adequately establishing the identity of the donor and the associated risks. This represents a potential breach of the SMG's Group Ethics Policy and the Code of Fundraising Practice.

(x) There are also questions as to whether statements made by the SMG and its representatives which directly contradict the evidence available at the time on the relationship between Adani Green Energy and the Adani Group were made with the intent to mislead (see section 4(b). Regardless, such statements either undermined, or had the potential to undermine, the appropriate and proportionate scrutiny that Adani and the sponsorship agreement should have been subject to.

(c) Non-alignment with the SMG's criteria for corporate partners

(i) The following section sets out how an accurate assessment of Adani Green Energy, which takes into account the reality of the Adani Group's integrated corporate structure, would conclude that the sponsorship agreement that has been made is in breach of the criteria set out in the SMG's own Sustainability Policy. It outlines how measuring prospective and current partners such as Adani against Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) criteria, without taking into account wider research and benchmarking, is insufficient for adequately assessing their climate-related goals and commitments and whether their values, mission and ethical standards are consistent with those of the SMG.

Relevant policy

(ii) The SMG Sustainability Policy, as updated in July 2022, states that:

'We are committed to working with funders who are also on a journey to decarbonise.

We will do this by assessing prospective and current partners using the independent Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) tool and asking them to: Achieve Level 4 on the TPI Management Quality index link (TPI rates companies from 0 – 4) by the end of March 2023; Achieve alignment with the Paris 1.5 degree pathway on TPI's Carbon Performance index by the end of March 2024.'*

The updated policy was publicised in a blog by Chair of Trustees, Dame Mary Archer, on 8th July 2022, after being approved by the Board in June 2022 following a recommendation of the SMG Partnership Panel.

(iii) The Sustainability Policy, first announced in November 2020, and in place until June 2022, had previously asked partners:

'To work towards level three or better on the TPI [Management Quality Index].'

Evidence

(iv) As established in the previous section, at the time of the sponsorship agreement being made, there was sufficient available evidence to demonstrate that there was little meaningful distinction between Adani Green Energy and the parent Adani Group. Disclosures made by the SMG in response to FOI requests appear to reflect that this was the working understanding within the SMG at the time of the decision being made.

(v) As set out in the previous section, new investigations have further substantiated how there is little meaningful distinction between Adani Green Energy and the parent Adani Group. Furthermore, developments and investigations subsequent to the agreement being signed have established that there is also specific porosity between Adani Green Energy and Adani Enterprises. Adani Green Energy Ltd only ceased to be an official subsidiary of Adani *Enterprises*, the coal-producing branch of the Adani Group, in June 2017, when Adani Enterprises' stake in Adani Green Energy fell below 50%. Disclosures made by the SMG in response to FOI requests appear to reflect that this continues to be the working understanding within the SMG. Specifically, the Director has continued to correspond with staff at the Adani Group, on issues relating to the Adani Group as a whole, over 2022-23.

(vi) As part of the SMG's initial Due Diligence process, it was identified that the only *part* of the Adani Group that had been assessed by the Transition Pathway Initiative was Adani Enterprises. Adani Enterprises did not meet the requirements set out in the SMG's newly published Sustainability Policy. Since 4th February 2020, Adani Enterprises has been assessed by TPI on an annual basis, reaching level 1, the lowest level, on its Management Quality Index in 2020, 2021 and 2022, well below the SMG's TPI Criteria on the Management Quality Index. These criteria were announced on the 18th November 2020, just as the Science Museum Group began negotiating with the Adani Group.

The Museum officially broke off sponsorship discussions with another potential partner on the 24th November 2020 - the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI) - because one of its members did not meet *'the necessary levels on the TPI'* [See FOI disclosure, p.26]. The Director of the SMG was sent the rankings showing Saudi Aramco rated at level 2 on the Management Quality Index on 11th November 2020. [See FOI disclosure, p.27]

(vii) In July 2022, the SMG updated its Sustainability Policy, to ask partners to "*Achieve Level 4 on the TPI Management Quality index link (TPI rates companies from 0 – 4*) by the end of March 2023; Achieve alignment with the Paris 1.5 degree pathway on TPI's Carbon Performance index by the end of March 2024.'* In November 2023, Adani Enterprises' TPI Management Quality score was updated to level 3 (based on a June 2023 assessment), still well below the SMG Criteria. Notably, Adani Enterprises has reached Level 3 on the Management Quality Index on the basis of meeting just four of the three required criteria, with it still failing to 'support domestic and international efforts to mitigate climate change', have 'a process to manage climate-related risks', and to disclose 'Scope 3 use of product emissions'.

(viii) Crucially, Adani Enterprises has had *no* assessment made of its Carbon Performance by TPI nor does it engage with the widely recognised Climate Action 100+ benchmark. Based upon the available information on Adani Enterprises' involvement in coal production, it would not reach alignment with the Paris 1.5 degree pathway on TPI's Carbon Performance index: Adani is the world's largest private producer of coal and third largest developer of coal mines, according to the 2023 Global Coal Exit List.

(ix) In May 2023, the UN-backed Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi) removed Adani Green and other Adani companies from their list of companies that are 'taking action on climate change'. It also makes the clear recommendation that:

'Companies should submit [emissions reduction] targets only at the parent-or group level, not the subsidiary level.'

The approach adopted by the SMG for assessing the climate action and performance of the Adani Green Energy/the Adani Group is not consistent with the approach recommended by the SBTi benchmark, which has been a well-established convention in corporate target setting of this kind. The SMG itself has signed up to the SBTi benchmark and, in line with this approach, undertaken target setting at the Group level, as opposed to just submitting targets for its individual museums.

Potential breaches

(x) As established in the previous section, there is little meaningful distinction between Adani Green Energy and the parent Adani Group. There is also evidence of a specific financial relationship between Adani Green Energy and coal-related projects undertaken by Adani Enterprises. Principles adopted by the Science Based Targets Initiative, and the SMG itself in its own target setting, assess performance on climate change and emissions reduction at the parent company or group level.

(xi) For the reasons set out above, appropriate due diligence assessment of Adani Green Energy should therefore be conducted at the group level and take into account the business activity of the conglomerate as a whole. Consequently, sponsorship from any part of the Adani Group would represent a breach of the

TPI criteria set out by the SMG in its Sustainability Policy, given the score achieved by Adani Enterprises. This was the case at the time initial due diligence was undertaken and the agreement signed, and continues to be the case since the SMG has strengthened its TPI criteria in July 2022.

(xii) Assessment on the basis of TPI criteria alone does not provide an adequate threshold for assessing climate action and emissions reduction of corporate sponsors. Benchmarking by the SBTi and Climate Action 100+ should also be formally considered in order to provide a full, complete and meaningful picture of Adani's performance. Had the SBTi formed part of the SMG's formal criteria, the *removal* of Adani Green Energy from ithe SBTi list would have therefore represented a clear breach. Unlike its use of the TPI tool, the SMG uses the SBTi benchmark for its own performance but does not extend the principles adopted to its own assessment of its corporate partners.

(xiii) None of the benchmarks highlighted above adequately account for the human rights and direct impacts of the Adani Group's business activity on communities on the ground. While these instances do not readily lend themselves to quantifiable criteria in the same way, there should be clear ethical thresholds in place in relation to these issues. Testimony from communities directly impacted by the Adani Group is widely available.

(d) Ongoing due diligence assessment and procedural changes

(i) The following section sets out how ongoing Due Diligence reporting and processes relating to Adani Green Energy and the Adani Group have fallen short by not adequately reflecting, and responding, to major controversies and directly relevant evidence that has emerged since the sponsorship agreement was signed. It highlights how, despite the founding of a new 'Partnership Panel', which revises the role of the Director in Due Diligence processes, he has continued to play a central role in the relationship with the Adani Group and continues to lack objectivity in that role.

Relevant policy

(ii) The SMG's Group Ethics Policy (March 2019) stated that a Due Diligence report:

'...is reviewed by the Development Director in the first instance who will assess and decide if a referral to the SMG Director is necessary. If the SMG Director has concerns, they will refer to the Board of Trustees.'

The SMG's Group Ethics Policy was then updated in March 2022, approved by the Board in April 2022, and now states that a Due Diligence report:

'...is reviewed by the Development Director in the first instance who will assess and decide if they will refer to the SMG Partnership Panel, a subcommittee and advisory body of the Board of Trustees, which may then refer the matter to the Board.'

(iii) 'Appendix A: Due Diligence Process' in the SMG's Group Ethics Policy (March 2022) sets out that:

'Relationships with funders should be subject to prior and continuing consideration in order to assess any legal or reputational risks arising from association with an individual or organisation, and to confirm that partnering with the funder would be consistent with SMG's overall objectives… Careful review of proposed and on-going relationships is required firstly to allow us to be alert to potential illegal activity including fraud and money laundering, and secondly to mitigate the risk of ethical issues causing damage to SMG's reputation, reducing ability to secure funding and capacity to develop beneficial relationships in the future.'

[Underline added]

(iv) Section 5 of the SMG's Group Ethics Policy states that:

'In general, any sponsor, donor or grantor should appreciate and support SMG's values, mission and objectives.'

Evidence

(v) The SMG Partnership Panel was established in January 2022 to provide advice and recommendations to the Board of Trustees and Executive on the SMG's Development activities within the framework of the SMG Ethics Policy. As part of its role it reviews Due Diligence reports about potential funders who could be controversial 'to stress-test any strategic and reputational issues.' [See FOI disclosure, Terms of Reference]. This shift in policy and process followed opposition to, and negative media attention around, the announcement of the sponsorship deal with Adani Green Energy, as well as scrutiny of how the decision was reached. The revision to the Group Ethics Policy effectively removes the Director from the Due Diligence process and, to some extent, subsequent decisions and engagement with potential sponsors.

(vi) While he no longer plays a direct formal role in the Due Diligence process, the Director of the SMG does continue to hold a direct relationship with staff at the Adani Group. Correspondence between the Director and the Adani Group suggests that his downplaying and dismissal of concerns about the Adani Group, which was exhibited during the initial Due Diligence process, is ongoing.

(vii) On 17th January 2023, the SMG Director emails [see p5] a member of staff at Adani:

> *'My museum is making excellent progress on the Energy Revolution: The Adani Green Energy Gallery. The presentation of the energy challenges and solutions ahead is more vital than ever. I think the content team have created a robust and fascinating narrative for the gallery and the objects and stories being displayed.*
>
> *I will make sure that my team is in touch shortly with an update and we should start planning some imaginative ideas around the opening events.'*

(viii) On 24th January 2023, the Hindenburg Group's report outlining allegations of stock manipulation and accounting fraud was published, including conclusions about the structure of the company and the 'intricate' relationship between the Adani companies.

(ix) On 29th January 2023, an email [see p1] is sent to the Director, which reads:

> *'Dear Sir Ian, Please see the enclosed report on Adani response to Hindenburg. Best always…'*

While the sender's email and name is redacted, the email was disclosed in response to an FOI request asking for correspondence between Adani and the SMG. The email is marked as originating from outside the SMG, and we can reasonably infer it originated from a member of staff at the Adani Group.

(x) On 20th February 2023, the Director of the SMG emailed a member of staff at Adani [see p2], merely referring to the significant controversy arising from the Hindenburg Report as a 'rather torrid' few weeks, before immediately moving ahead to discussing the opening of the *Energy Revolution* gallery:

> *'Dear [name redacted],*
>
> *Hope you are well. I am sure the past few weeks have been rather torrid.*
>
> *Might we catch up on a few issues around the gallery opening later this year, and the Group's progress on its net zero pathway?*
>
> *Yours*
> *Ian'*

(xi) On 23rd February 2023, the correspondence continued, seemingly unaffected by the Hindenburg Report allegations, as a member of staff at the Adani Group then sends the Director of the SMG highlights of a speech by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which resonates with the Adani Group's own narrative on energy issues in India.

(xii) On 9th January 2023, just prior to the publication of the Hindenburg Report, an email appears to have been sent from a member of staff at Adani to the Director of the SMG, prior to this exchange, with the subject 'Request'. It reads:

> *'Dear Ian,*
>
> *At your convenience, may we speak briefly?*
>
> *Best always,*
>
> *[Name redacted]'*

No further information about this exchange was provided.

(xiii) Appendix A of the SMG's Group Ethics Policy sets out how Due Diligence is a process which is applied to both proposed and ongoing relationships with sponsors and donors. While Due Diligence at the SMG is regularly reviewed and updated, in the context of Adani, these updates appear to have been selective, patchy or incomplete. Often, crucial and well-documented findings related to Adani Green Energy and the Adani Group have not been shared and, in some cases, overlooked entirely. Evidence-based interventions made by external organisations which could have informed this ongoing process of Due Diligence have not been given due credibility and recognition.

The following list outlines several examples of where ongoing Due Diligence monitoring has fallen short of providing a necessary and complete picture of Adani Green Energy and its relationship to the wider Adani Group:

- As part of its Due Diligence monitoring, the Museum's Prospect Development Team logged media coverage of the Hindenburg Group's report and the subsequent controversy arising from it in a five page document, *Adani Group News tracker - Jan 24th-Feb 28th 2023*. [FOI response, October 2023, pp 11-15].

  Among its findings, the document notes that:

- The Hindenburg report produces allegations of stock price manipulation and accounting fraud spanning decades;
- Newer businesses, such as Adani Green, have large amounts of debt;
- Rating Agency Moody's cut its outlook on Adani Green Energy and three other companies from "stable" to "negative"; and
- The Securities and Exchange board of India (SEBI) would be investigating the allegations.

It is unclear from the SMG's disclosure if, and how widely, this report was shared.

- On 24th March 2023, the 'Fossil Free Science Museum' coalition sent each of the Science Museum's Trustees and Advisors a hardback photo-book presenting the findings and full content of the Museum's December 2020 Due Diligence report into the Adani Group, which the Museum had confirmed had not been shared with the Board of Trustees. The book included details of the Due Diligence process, strengthened by the addition of direct testimony on Adani's negative impacts on communities and the environment. The Fossil Free Science Museum' coalition subsequently wrote to Trustees on 17 April 2023 and on 15 June 2023 about the additional due diligence research they had provided, and the pertinent links between Adani Green Energy and the wider Adani Group. In both cases, Dame Mary Archer responded as Chair of the Board of Trustees (on 24 April 2023, and 7 July 2023), but failed to adequately address the questions raised.

- In April 2023, the Toxic Bonds coalition wrote to the Chair of the Science Museum Group Dame Mary Archer and the Deputy Chair and Chair of the Museum's Partnership Panel David Phoenix. The letter was sent in order to:

  '*Make the Science Museum Group fully aware of the interdependent relationship between Adani Group companies and highlight recent pertinent information which indicate investments in Adani Green Energy have been used to fund the company's coal expansion plans.*'

  It highlighted the Hindenburg Group's findings that:

  'The Adani Group companies are intricately and distinctly linked and dependent upon one another. None of the listed entities are isolated from the performance, or failure, of the other group companies.'

  It further substantiated this conclusion by the Hindenburg Group and detailed evidence relating to Adani Green Energy's material support for other parts of the Adani Group's businesses, notably the Group's coal projects.

- On 5th September 2023, the Partnership Panel considered an updated Due Diligence report on Adani Green Energy, dated 1st September 2023. The updated report included a short section on the allegations made in the Hindenburg Report, including the decision by Norwegian's KLP pension fund to disinvest from Adani Green Energy because of 'the close links alleged between the constituent business in the Group' and concerns that Adani Green Energy could be funding other parts of the business, including coal mining. It also noted that Adani Green Energy was not rated by the Transition Pathway Initiative and that, at the time of the report, Adani Enterprises scored just one on the TPI Management Quality Index. This is well below the minimum score of four set out as a minimum standard in the Museum's Sustainability Policy. It does not make reference to:

    - reports in May 2023 that Adani Green Energy had lost its endorsement by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi);
    - the public filing on 10th February 2023 from the State Bank of India showing that Adani used shares from Adani Green Energy and other companies as collateral in a $300 million credit facility for the Carmichael coal mine in Australia, via Adani Enterprises.

For further details of relevant issues, see section 3(b).

Potential breaches

(xiv) The removal of the Director from the Due Diligence referral process suggests that concerns may have been raised internally about Ian Blatchford's conduct in decision-making with sponsors or a loss in confidence. At the very least, it suggests that the existing process failed to protect the integrity of, and public trust in, the SMG's approach to corporate sponsorship. An investigation would shed important light on any such internal concerns and the extent to which they may have led to the Partnerships Panel being established. If the Director's handling of the decision to accept sponsorship from the Adani Group was judged to have fallen short of expected standards, this further undermines the legitimacy of the decision that was reached.

(xv) Despite the founding of the Partnership Panel and the change made to the formal Due Diligence process, the SMG has still not undertaken a comprehensive or adequate assessment of Adani Green Energy that fulfils the Charity Commission's 'Know Your Donor' principles. Without this accurate assessment of Adani Green Energy and its relationship to the wider Adani Group's business activity, it is not possible for the Partnership Panel and Board of Trustees to exercise effective ethical judgement as to whether the sponsor adequately supports the SMG's mission, objectives and values.

(xvi) Comprehensive due diligence reporting that takes into account an adequate range of sources would logically lead to the conclusion that Adani Green Energy is inseparable from the business activity of the wider Adani Group. Consequently, its involvement in coal mining and coal power, which would clearly constitute a breach of the TPI criteria set out by the SMG, would mean that the SMG should move to terminate the partnership.

(xvii) The extensive human rights concerns associated with the Adani Group, as well as the allegations raised in the Hindenburg Group, in addition to pre-existing instances of corruption and fraud identified in the SMG's Due Diligence reporting, have not been adequately assessed and weighted within both the initial and ongoing Due Diligence processes. Had they been, then a clear conflict with the SMG's values, mission and objectives would have been identified. Consequently, a sponsorship deal with Adani Green Energy and/or the Adani Group would have been identified as being in breach of the SMG's Group Ethics Policy and the principles set out therein.

4. Conditions undermining the decision-making process and accountability

(a) Inclusion of non-disparagement clause

(i) This section sets out how the SMG's past use of non-disparagement clauses, specifically in its agreement with Adani, was in conflict with its own Group Ethics Policy. It highlights how the inclusion of the clause limited the SMG's ability to subject Adani to appropriate scrutiny and to be accountable in doing so.

Relevant policy

(ii) Paragraph 6.2 of the UK Government's 'Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies June 2019' states that:

'You will not ask or encourage employees to act in any way which would conflict with their own Code of Conduct.'

(iii) The SMG's 'Group Ethics Policy - February 2021' sets out expectations of all representatives of the SMG, and states that the SMG:

'*Has a duty to be transparent, accountable and to always act in the public interest. SMG depends on the trust and confidence of all those with whom SMG and its subsidiaries come into contact with in order to fulfil its purpose.'*

And that:

'All representatives of SMG, paid or otherwise, are expected to act in accordance with the following behaviours:

- *Honesty (not to mislead)*
- *Integrity*
- *Impartiality*
- *Mutual respect*
- *Avoids personal gain*
- *Avoids conflict of interest'*

Evidence

(iv) The sponsorship agreement with Adani Green Energy when originally drafted and signed incorporated the following non-disparagement clause:

> *'SCMG [the SMG's commercial entity], the Trustees, and each of them shall take reasonable care not at any time during the Term to make any statement or issue any publicity or otherwise be involved in any conduct*

or matter that may reasonably be foreseen as discrediting or damaging the goodwill or reputation of the sponsor.'

Such clauses are not proposed as a standard clause in the Charities Commission's 'Outline Partnership Agreement', as part of its toolkits on fundraising.

(v) In an article in *The Guardian* published on 16th February 2023, since the agreement with Adani Green Energy was made, a spokesperson for the SMG is quoted as saying that the SMG had decided to no longer use such non-disparagement clauses 'in new agreements'. This indicates that the clause *is* still included within the SMG's agreement with Adani and, by extension, that the ethical conflict set out above still exists.

(vi) Subsequent decisions around the public communication of the sponsorship agreement, the relationship with the Adani Group and subsequent review stages about the development of the *Energy Revolution* Gallery, including assessment of negative responses to the sponsor, have all presumably taken place with this non-disparagement clause in place.

Potential breaches

(vii) Signing an agreement which includes this non-disparagement clause is in direct conflict with 'Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies June 2019' as doing so places an obligation upon the SMG's representatives to act in a way that is inconsistent with the behaviours specified in the 'Group Ethics Policy'. Given the correlation between the content of the *Energy Revolution* gallery and the Adani Group's own business interests, the sponsorship agreement - and the non-disparagement clause specifically - creates a clear conflict of interests. For example, any explicit criticism or critique of unsustainable coal production within the gallery could be construed as damaging the goodwill or reputation of the sponsor, given that the Adani Group is the world's largest private producer of coal.

(viii) Such clauses are widely known for their potential to create a "chilling effect" around controversial topics. In policy terms, its inclusion in the sponsorship agreement directly undermined the SMG's own requirement for its representatives to act impartially. This should have been identified and addressed by the SMG at the time that conflict arose and the agreement was drafted.

(ix) For the avoidance of doubt, the inclusion of the non-disparagement clause may not have been explicitly enforced upon specific decisions by staff or curators at the SMG. However, its inclusion has, at the very least, potentially hampered and/or limited the discursive space in which the sponsor should have been subjected to robust scrutiny, notably in the aftermath of the publication of the Hindenburg Group's report in January 2023. Due to the presence of the clause, representatives of the SMG may not have been in a position to publicly acknowledge the seriousness of the allegations and controversies surrounding the Adani Group, as doing so would undoubtedly damage its goodwill and reputation.

(b) Conduct of SMG leadership and Nolan's 7 Principles - honesty

(i) The following section sets out how the Director and Chair have made several statements in relation to Adani Green Energy, the Adani Group and the sponsorship agreement which have been, at best, misleading. Given the information available to them at the time of those statements being made, it raises the question of whether any such statements were knowingly made.

Relevant policy

(ii) The Director and Chair of the SMG are holders of public office and must therefore abide by Nolan's 7 Principles of Public Life. It includes the following requirement:

'Honesty. Holders of public office should be truthful.'

(iii) The SMG's '[Group Ethics Policy - February 2021]' sets out expectations of all representatives of the SMG:

'...Paid or otherwise, are expected to act in accordance with the following behaviours:

- *Honesty (not to mislead)*
- *Integrity*
- *Impartiality*
- *Mutual respect*
- *Avoids personal gain*
- *Avoids conflict of interest'*

Evidence

(iv) Since the signing ceremony of the SMG's sponsorship agreement with Gautam Adani, CEO of the Adani Group, there has been sustained opposition to the decision as well as scrutiny of the Director and Chair's' public defence of the agreement. The Director and Chair have made comments that were either misleading or, to some degree, factually incorrect. Given the information in the public domain and made available to them as part of the Due Diligence process, there are legitimate questions as to whether such statements were made with the intent to mislead or deflect scrutiny.

(v) On 19th October 2021, in response to the announcement that 'Adani Green Energy' would be the sponsor of the Science Museum's new *Energy Revolution* gallery, Ian Blatchford commented in the media that:

> *'Trustees of the Science Museum Group are not convinced by the argument from some who say we should sever all ties with organisations that are 'tainted' by association, direct or indirect, with fossil fuels.'*

His comment was, at the least, misleading. On 30th October 2021, both Dr Hannah Fry and Dr Jo Foster resigned from the SMG's Board of Trustees over the museum's stance on fossil fuel sponsorship and specifically the new agreement with Adani. On social media Dr Sarah Dry, a former trustee of the SMG highlighted how she had argued against the acceptance of sponsorship from Adani during her time on the Board. It was also confirmed in October 2021 that Professor Chris Rapley, a former Director of the Science Museum, had resigned as a member of the Advisory Board due to the SMG's '*ongoing willingness to accept oil and gas company sponsorship*'.

(vi) On 12th November 2021, the SMG published a blog by Gallery Advisor Bob Ward, clearly acting in his capacity as a representative of the museum. The SMG will have been in a position to approve the comments and statements made in that blog. He states that:

> *'I have been very disappointed to see false claims about the sponsors which have been circulating through the traditional and social media. Even the Museums Association has published a blog that wrongly suggests "Coal giant Adani to sponsor Science Museum's green energy gallery". This claim is not true.'*

He continues:

> *'It appears that many campaigners who have criticised the sponsorship of the Museum's new exhibition have confused Adani Green Energy Ltd with Adani Mining Pty Ltd, an Australian mining company that is developing the controversial Carmichael coal mine in Queensland. Although Adani Green Energy Ltd and Adani Mining Pty Ltd both belong to the Adani Group, they are separate companies.'*

As set out in previous sections, evidence was publicly available at the time this blog was published which clearly demonstrated that there was little meaningful separation between Adani Green Energy and the Adani Group. New reports have further substantiated this point since and that there is a direct financial relationship between Adani Green Energy and Adani Enterprises. This blog remains on the SMG website.

(vii) On 19th November 2021, 60 leading scientists and contributors to the Science Museum Group, published an open letter to the SMG informing it that they will not work with the organisation until it commits to ending its partnerships with fossil fuel companies.

In response, Chair Mary Archer selectively replied to only four of the signatories and misleadingly claimed that:

- The SMG has been subject to 'false claims' that a non-disparagement clause contained within its sponsorship agreement had 'gagged' the group's curatorial teams. The signatories had made no such accusations.

- The SMG has been subject to 'incorrect claims' about Adani Green Energy and that it is an independent company from the parent 'Adani Group'. Evidence in the public domain at that time, and subsequently, makes clear that this is an inaccurate characterisation of the Adani Group and that the companies are 'intricately and distinctly linked and dependent upon one another'. [Hindenburg Group Report, 24th January 2023]

(viii) On 1st December 2021, representatives of Indigenous communities in Australia, India and Indonesia wrote to the SMG in response to Director Ian Blatchford's apparent dismissal of Indigenous concerns and experiences on BBC Radio 4's Front Row on 26th October 2021. In response to their letter in a report in *the Guardian*, Chair Mary Archer repeated her claim that Adani Green Energy was one part of the Adani Group:

> *'Which includes five other businesses with interests spanning ports, airports and coal mining… Each of the businesses is an independent, publicly traded entity <u>with its own board of directors… This clear distinction is important…</u>'*
>
> *[Underline added]*

(ix) As established earlier in this complaint, the lack of any clear distinction between Adani Green Energy and the Adani Group would have been known to Mary Archer at the time of making this statement. Evidence that has been made public subsequently further reinforces that lack of a clear distinction.

(x) On 15th July 2022, over 400 teachers and educators signed an open letter pledging not to bring their students to the new *Energy Revolution* Gallery due to its sponsorship by the Adani Group, via Adani Green Energy. In response, Ian Blatchford appears to contradict Mary Archer, commenting in *The Guardian* that:

> *'We agree that climate change is the most urgent challenge facing humanity but we don't agree with the argument from some who say we should sever ties with all energy companies with an association, direct or indirect, with fossil fuels. We believe the right approach is to engage and challenge companies and other partners to do more to make the global economy less carbon intensive.'*

In his comment, the Director makes an implicit acknowledgment that Adani Green Energy *has* a direct or indirect association with fossil fuels. This comment was made prior to the publication of the Hindenburg Report and its conclusion that the Adani Group companies are 'intricately and distinctly linked and dependent upon one another'.

Potential Breaches

(xi) On a series of occasions, the Director, Chair and other representatives of the SMG have made public comments regarding the Adani Group, Adani Green Energy and the sponsorship agreement which were, at best, misleading, and at worst, dishonest.

(xii) Taking into account the evidence and Due Diligence reports that had been available to the Director, Chair and others at the SMG at the time, there are legitimate questions as to whether these public statements were *knowingly* dishonest and with the *intent* to mislead. In the interests of maintaining the public trust in the SMG's leadership, these questions should be investigated.

(xiii) However, neither Nolan's 7 Principles nor the SMG's own Group Ethics Policy make a distinction around *intent* to mislead or act in a way that is dishonest. If dishonest or misleading statements were made unwittingly, they should be retracted and corrected in a way that is commensurate with the scale and prominence of those original statements. If statements were made intentionally or as a consequence of bias, appropriate investigations and disciplinary measures should be undertaken.

(c) Conduct of SMG leadership and Nolan's 7 Principles - objectivity, accountability and openness

(i) The following section provides several further examples, taken in combination with the evidence provided in preceding sections, of where the Director and Chair have fallen short in their obligations as holders of public office. In particular, it provides additional evidence that they have not acted impartially or objectively, often demonstrating a clear bias in support of Adani.

Relevant policy

(ii) The Director and Chair of the SMG are holders of public office and must therefore abide by Nolan's 7 Principles of Public Life. It includes the following requirement:

'Objectivity. Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability. Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness. Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.'

Evidence

(iii) Since the signing ceremony of the SMG's sponsorship agreement with Gautam Adani, CEO of the Adani Group, there has been sustained opposition to the decision as well as scrutiny of the Director and Chair's' public defence of the agreement. The Director and Chair have not submitted themselves to reasonable scrutiny nor engaged with that opposition in a meaningful way.

(iv) On 1st December 2021, representatives of Indigenous communities in Australia, India and Indonesia wrote to the SMG in response to Director Ian Blatchford's apparent dismissal of Indigenous concerns and experiences on BBC Radio 4's Front Row on 26th October 2021. When comments made by Adrian Burragubba, a Traditional Owner who has been targeted by the Adani Group in Australia, that *'by putting this company on a pedestal, the Science Museum is complicit in Adani's violation of our Human Rights and destruction of our ancestral lands'*, were put to the Director, he defended Adani's coal business by dismissing Burragubba's comments, questioning their validity and suggesting that his comments and those of his allies were exaggerated.

(v) In an opinion article in *The Telegraph* on the 28th October 2021, Chair Mary Archer wrote that:

> *'Adani Green Energy is part of the Adani Group, which includes five other businesses with interests spanning ports, airports and coal mining. As a result, some activists have derided our sponsorship deal as greenwashing. We reject this dismissive description, and not only because it ignores the reality that this partnership will intensify, not quell, the noisy complaints from Adani's opponents, but also because only by engaging with energy giants can the world develop better energy solutions.'*

There is clear inconsistency in the Chair's characterisation of the relationship between Adani Green Energy and the Adani Group but, crucially, whether this is consistent with the criteria set out in the SMG's Group Ethics Policy. Rather than reassuring the public that the sponsorship has been subjected to proper scrutiny, the article mounts a direct defence of Adani Green Energy as a business and a particular form of response to the energy transition that would further the Adani Group's own business interests.

(vi) She continues:

> *'The International Energy Agency's roadmap for net zero calls for "massive deployment" of all available clean energy technologies and says solar power needs to be fundamental to India's future. So we should be encouraging companies such as Adani Green Energy to go further, faster, just as we should encourage governments to drive forward regulatory frameworks that help green tech to prosper and make fossil fuels less attractive options. How can India fund the transition away from coal, while also meeting the economic aspirations of millions? It is going to need companies like Adani Green Energy to do the heavy lifting, with a commitment to making a historical green shift at the same time.'*

By omitting explicit reference to the scale of the Adani Group's scaling up of production of coal, she presents an incomplete picture of Adani Green Energy's capacity to meaningfully contribute to the IEA's roadmap to net zero. As noted earlier in this complaint, direct porosity between Adani Green Energy and the Group's coal production via Adani Enterprises has now been identified. Archer also omits any reference to on-the-ground opposition to Adani Green Energy and the wider Adani Group by Indigenous communities, despite this being clearly identified in the SMG's own Due Diligence reporting. Consequently, she has consciously promoted in a national newspaper a partial, rather than objective assessment, of the Adani Group and Adani Green Energy.

Potential breaches

(vii) Taken in combination with the previous section, as well as evidence cited earlier in this complaint, the instances set out above clearly suggest that the Director and Chair have, at best, undermined the spirit of Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life and, at worst, clearly breached one or more of the Principles.

(viii) Potential breaches have occurred in the following instances:

- *Objectivity. Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.*

Through his interactions with the Adani Group, his engagement with Due Diligence reporting and processes and public statements regarding the Adani sponsorship, the Director has not taken decisions impartially, fairly and on merit. Where evidence was provided to him, even in a limited form or with clear omissions, he engaged with that evidence with clear bias demonstrated through a dismissiveness towards serious controversies relating to the Adani Group. Through her own public statements, the Chair of the SMG has also demonstrated a lack of impartiality, setting out arguments and narratives that strengthen and support those of the Adani Group, as opposed to providing assurances that the sponsorship agreement had been subjected to appropriate scrutiny.

- *Accountability. Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.*

Where external individuals, groups and organisations have sought to raise concerns about the sponsorship, the Director and Chair have regularly responded by dismissing the concerns raised or, in some cases, seeking to discredit those raising concerns. Often, legitimate concerns citing clear evidence have been left unaddressed.

- *Openness. Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.*

While the SMG has responded to FOI requests and made some information relating to the sponsorship publicly available, there continues to be a lack of clarity around the role of the Director in such decisions and how decision-making processes unfolded. Information around key developments and decisions remains unclear.

5. Remedies

By failing to ensure that these standards have been met, the Board of Trustees of the SMG have fallen short in their legal duty to protect the reputation of the SMG, as a charitable asset. In light of the above, the Board of Trustees of the SMG should undertake the following steps:

- Undertake an internal investigation into decision-making led by the Director Ian Blatchford in relation to the sponsorship agreement that was made with the Adani Group via Adani Green Energy;
- Enforce the SMG's own Group Ethics Policy and any relevant sector-wide policies which should include, where appropriate, launching any proportionate disciplinary measures;
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the sponsorship agreement taking into account due diligence and other evidence on the Adani Group available both at that time of the decision being made and that has come to light subsequently; and
- To move to terminate the sponsorship agreement because (a) the original decision was reached following a process that lacked legitimacy and (b) proceeding with it would be in breach of the SMG's own sponsorship criteria.

We ask that this complaint document is shared with all members of the Board of Trustees of the SMG for their consideration. A response should be made within 28 days outlining the remedial steps the Board will be taking in light of the issues raised.

If no response is provided or the SMG fails to adequately address the concerns outlined, this complaint document will then be referred to relevant regulators and sector-wide bodies with a request for formal investigation.