

IJGlobal ESG Lifetime Achievement – Gwenola Chambon

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Gwenola Chambon – chief executive and founding partner at Vauban Infrastructure Partners – was voted by the panel to win the IJGlobal ESG Lifetime Achievement Award with one describing her as “a truly impressive individual who has pioneered in this space”.

She was described as an “excellent and dedicated leader” with an “enduring commitment to ESG and leadership of Vauban”.

One of the judges said: “Gwenola's contributions to the industry encompass the full value chain approach of ESG, striving to service those most in need while creating innovative infrastructure investment solutions to create long-lasting impact for varying stakeholders. Her transactional, organisational and public-facing efforts speak to true partnership for the goals.”



Another of the judges added: “Gwenola seems to have sustainability and ESG close to her heart and mind and that has been key to her success, as much as a keen eye on the diversity agenda and supporting young entrepreneurs.”

At Vauban IP, Gwenola has created a product offering that integrates ESG at its core, and that has achieved success alongside sustainable results.

Gwenola said: “As infrastructure investors, our mission is to deliver essential services to communities, while ensuring their total satisfaction, meaning meeting their expectations and maximizing their benefits.

“The vital essence of our investments – delivering clean water, electricity and heat, safe transportation, communications, education, healthcare, and other services that underpin economic development – their scale and breadth, how many people they touch and how they impact their lives daily, imply that they are all the more closely observed by all stakeholders.

“Maintaining this social partnership built on trust is a critical success factor for every investment Vauban is involved in, as stakeholder engagement and social license to operate are key to managing these essential infrastructures.”

Gwenola has led Vauban to be highly committed to global initiatives, and has spearheaded open research studies with major stakeholders that develop ESG best practices.

Vauban is a signatory of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI). According to 2020 PRI assessment results, it has received the highest score in each applicable category (A+) for infrastructure and governance and strategy. In January 2022, Gwenola joined the UNPRI Infrastructure Advisory Committee and signed the

international Climate Initiative recognized by UN PRI for the fight against climate change.

Gwenola spearheaded the design of Vauban's dedicated ESG policy. The investment teams are directly involved in screening, analysing, and monitoring ESG issues, as ESG monitoring is part of the KPIs for employees' individual annual evaluation and variable compensation. In addition, sustainability is considered at all stages of the investment cycle, including the investment decision making process.

This entire ESG process (at the asset and company level) is supported by a dedicated ESG team and monitored by an internal ESG committee, on which Gwenola sits.

Finally, Vauban's proprietary sustainability assessment methodology is based on a combination of the most recognised international framework: the UN SDGs framework) as way to identify and monitor material ESG issues in its portfolios.

Vauban conducts an annual climate impact assessment on each of its infrastructure assets with a leading external consultant (Carbone 4) and discloses results considering the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.

Gwenola is a front-runner in advocating for sustainable industry development. Her engagement in sustainability starts from implementing strong ESG practices at the corporate level: from gender equality in Vauban, to strong engagement of the team in environmental and social aspects of life (i.e. Vauban provides mentorship to young female entrepreneurs).

Most importantly, Gwenola believes that infrastructure provides us with a unique opportunity to make a positive impact on the environment and society. As a result, she has shaped Vauban's investment practices in such a way that their positive impact on local communities has been recognised by the PRI ranking in 2020 receiving the highest possible score in all the applicable categories.

As Gwenola says: "At Vauban Infrastructure Partners, we are convinced that because of the scale and breadth of our infrastructures, how many people they touch and how they impact daily their lives, they are key to the fabric of communities, generally providing vital amenities: clean water, safe and efficient transportation, communication, education, health or services that underpin economic development and therefore our responsibility is as significant as our passion."

All the work Gwenola has done, and the work she has inspired, can hardly be summarised in a few paragraphs.

However, the submission states: "We highlight a select few examples that demonstrate the positive impact that Gwenola has had on communities: Vauban invests in managing and refurbishing social buildings with key purposes, to serve local communities. As an example, 2,000 hospital beds have been equipped at each unit to provide vital medical services to the patients in need; Vauban has been investing in various mobility solutions, enabling a total distance of 9,000,000km travelled through public transportation in the past year.

"Successful investments in the digital network support the rollout of 15,000km of optic fibre networks in France, enabling connectivity for those in even remote communities; and the public utilities investments ensure not only essential energy access, but also help to achieve a more sustainable energy supply in the region.

"As an example, Gwenola led a transaction where 250km of district heating network was put in place to deliver heating and cooling services to the community looking to utilize a greener source of energy."

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