

# 知乎

## Zhihu Inc.

(A company controlled through weighted voting rights and incorporated in the Cayman Islands with limited liability)

**Stock Code : 2390**



# 2023

Environmental, Social and  
Governance Report

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

- **Report Overview**

This is the 2023 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Report of Zhihu. We hope that this report can convey our concepts and management practices in ESG and promote the understanding and communication among the stakeholders of the Company.

- **Reporting Scope**

Unless otherwise specified, this report covers the information and data of Zhihu and its subsidiaries from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

- **Reporting Principles**

The report is issued pursuant to Appendix C2 *Environmental, Social and Governance Reporting Guide* (the ESG Reporting Guide) as set out in the *Rules Governing the Listing of Securities on The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited*. This report is in compliance with the “comply or explain” provisions set out in the *ESG Reporting Guide*, and is prepared following the reporting principles of materiality, quantitative, balance, and consistency, in a bid to fully reflect the Company’s ESG management and performance during the year under review.

**“Materiality”**: This report has comprehensively identified key stakeholders and ESG issues of their concern, and made disclosures according to the relative importance thereof. The reporting is based on the results of the materiality assessment, which is described in more detail in the subsequent sections titled “Stakeholder Engagement” and “Material Issue Analysis.”

**“Quantitative”**: This report presents key performance indicators (KPIs) in respect of ESG in quantitative terms. The measurement criteria, methodology, assumptions and/or calculation tools for KPIs, as well as the sources of the conversion factors used, have been described where appropriate.

**“Balance”**: This report objectively discloses both positive and negative information to present the Company’s ESG performance during the Reporting Period in an unbiased way.

**“Consistency”**: Unless otherwise indicated, the statistical methods used in this report are consistent with those used in the previous years.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

- **Contact Us**

We attach great importance to the views of our stakeholders. This report is available in both English and Chinese for readers' reference. You may also obtain its electronic version on the Company's website <https://ir.zhihu.com> or the website of the Stock Exchange. For any comments or suggestions regarding our ESG management, please contact us via e-mail. We look forward to your valuable input.

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## STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD

The Board supervises and manages ESG affairs within the Company, embodying a steadfast commitment to the establishment of a robust ESG governance framework. To this end, the Board has instituted the Corporate Governance Committee alongside the ESG Working Group. These entities are charged with the orchestration and enhancement of ESG initiatives throughout the Company's diverse business units, ensuring the seamless integration of these practices into everyday operations.

We value the expectations and demands of our stakeholders, ensuring active communication. By aligning with the external macro environment and our strategic goals, we assess and ascertain risks and opportunities within the environmental, social, and governance realms. We systematically sort, identify, prioritize, and manage critical ESG issues, and conduct regular reviews of our annual ESG management objectives. Moreover, the implementation of our ESG initiatives is guided and supported by the Corporate Governance Committee, ensuring effective execution.

The Board reviewed the summary of Zhihu's environmental, social and governance report in March 2024.

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## RESPONSIBLE ESG MANAGEMENT

Zhihu spares consistent efforts to improve its ESG governance structure and system, reinforce its ESG governance, and integrate ESG concepts into its overall corporate strategy and daily operations, so as to enhance the Company's ESG management and sustainability across the Board.

## ESG GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Committed to ESG governance, Zhihu has bolstered its capabilities by implementing a three-tier ESG governance structure that consists of the Board of Directors, the Corporate Governance Committee and the ESG Working Group. This structure is complemented by a standardized mechanism for ESG management and accountability, ensuring continuous enhancement of our ESG governance proficiency.



# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

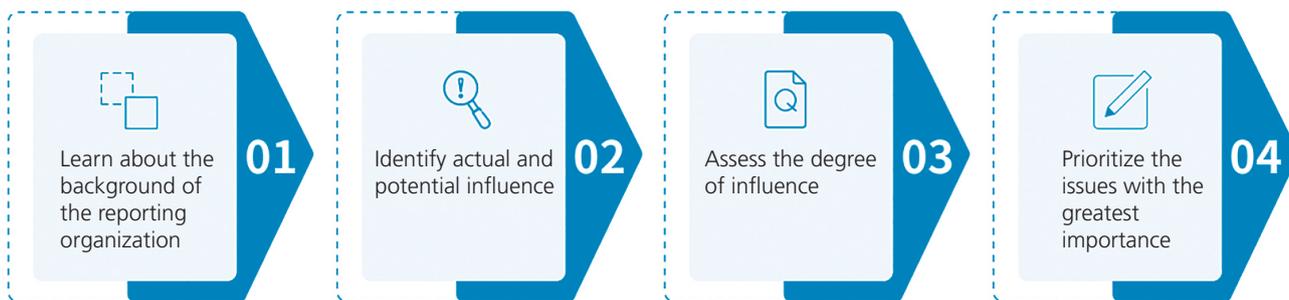
Zhihu pays full attention to the concerns and expectations of various stakeholders, continually improves its communication mechanism and channels, and responds to all stakeholders' concerns and expectations through proactive communication.

Key stakeholders	Concerns and expectations	Key communication channels and responses
 Government and regulators	Compliance with laws and regulations Healthy competition in the industry Emphasis on environmental protection and information security	Compliance with the code of business conduct Optimizing internal control and compliance management Enhancing anti-corruption management Promoting environmental concepts
 Shareholders and investors	Timely and accurate disclosure Sustained and robust business development Corporate governance and risk management	Reporting on a regularly basis Holding the general meeting of stockholders Setting up the investor relation website Communicating with investors via email and conferences Improving internal audit and internal control capabilities
 Users	Premium products and services Data and information security Privacy protection Intellectual property protection	Providing platform services, feedback and communication Interactions on social media Optimizing product experience and service technology Standard copyright protection and information security management
 Employees	Employee rights and benefits Employee training and development Employee health and safety Equality and diversity	Carrying out abundant team building and employee care activities Establishing of an online employee communication platform Setting up regular employee training Strengthening occupational health and safety management
 Suppliers and partners	Steady and efficient supply Long-term, win-win cooperation Fair competition	Implementing high-standard supplier management regulations Establishing the supplier performance management system Launching a well-established, efficient procurement system
 Communities and non-governmental organizations	Corporate social responsibility Community security Promotion of economic and social development Industrial collaboration and empowerment	Collaborating on public service programs Contributing to inclusive and equitable education and rural revitalization Supporting community construction and cybersecurity publicity Fostering functional innovations in technological and teaching products

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## MATERIAL ISSUE ANALYSIS

In order to identify the material ESG concerns in a more scientific and accurate manner and respond to internal and external changes proactively, Zhihu gathered, analyzed and prioritized its issues with materiality during the Reporting Period with reference to globally recognized ESG reporting standards, domestic and international policies, and industry best practices. Specific steps to prioritize ESG issues and the ESG materiality matrix are presented below:



Upon communication with key stakeholders, the Company has selected 4 environmental issues, 14 social topics, and 4 governance topics, totaling 22 material ESG issues, and sorted them by importance.



# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 1. A VIBRANT SPACE BUILT ON ROBUST GOVERNANCE

Zhihu is committed to providing users with better products and platform services. We improve the experience of users and content creators and foster a vibrant and flourishing community ecosystem through initiatives which includes creating a healthy atmosphere within the community, encouraging content innovation, and upgrading technology infrastructure. Through our efforts to enhance advertising compliance and assume platform responsibility, we strive to build a dynamic and interactive online community with high quality discussions.

### 1.1. Healthy Community Environment with High-quality Contents

As a high-quality online Q&A platform where users and content creators gather, Zhihu always believes that a high-quality content ecosystem lies at the heart of the Company. Through standardizing community governance, the Company encourages the “high-quality” and “fulfilling” content creation, and guides users and content creators to build a healthy community environment. We advocate for discussions on the basis of mutual respect, openness and inclusivity, to foster the community culture of “sincerity”, “expertise” and “respect”, and elevate the content community to the next level.

#### *Optimizing community governance for a clean environment*

Zhihu enforces compliance auditing and management of information published by users and user behavior under the *Community Guidelines of Zhihu*, the *Zhihu Agreement* and other community regulations in strict compliance with laws and regulations such as the *Cybersecurity Law of the People’s Republic of China*, the *Anti-Telecommunications Network Fraud Law of the People’s Republic of China*, the *Administrative Measures on Internet Information Services*, the *Provisions on the Governance of the Online Information Content Ecosystem*, the *Provisions on the Management of Internet User Accounts’ Information*, and the *Provisions on the Management of Network Audio and Video Information Services*. The Company regularly updates and maintains its community management regulations, and endeavors to establish a complete community lifecycle management system with more transparent and explicit provisions. In 2023, Zhihu amended its regulations to comprehensively prevent illegal information and behavior and to pave the way for a high-quality, compliant community.

Along with continued efforts to innovate technical means and optimize assessment strategies, the Company has also set up a professional community management team and developed scientific content assessment algorithms. Through both manual and system monitoring model, we ensure that illegal content is promptly found and removed, contributing to a healthy and safe community for users.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

- **Transparent feedback mechanisms**

As a good community requires proactive user feedback, we have set up online feedback channels such as “Zhihu Bulter” to guarantee that user feedback is addressed in a timely manner. “Zhihu Bulter”, as a spokesperson for users and a mediator in the community committee, closely connects Zhihu with users and helps establish a healthy and orderly community. In 2023, we refined our mechanism for handling complaints about malicious information, which closed the communication loop of “online acceptance – manual judgment – layered disposal – reply to users.” Now Zhihu users are allowed to file complaints and give feedback on community content through various channels, thus playing a positive role in optimizing the community ecosystem.

- **User engagement in community governance**

Well aware that active user participation is the cornerstone for a sound community ecosystem, we provide users with the opportunity to participate in community content governance, encourage shared governance by the platform and users, and maximize users’ engagement and ownership in managing community affairs. Users can not only initiate and participate in a dispute review procedure, but also act as “jurors” in the resolution of community disputes. Moreover, we welcome users to take part in constructive discussions and other activities that benefit the community, bringing diversified vitality into our superior content ecosystem.

*Strengthening content review to ensure content quality*

Zhihu regards good content as the source of the community’s sustainable development. We continuously optimize our content review mechanisms and eliminate inaccurate information, online violence and online fraud to guarantee content quality. Model recognition, manual inspection, complaint handling, and public opinion monitoring, which are based on image, text and video detection technologies, are leveraged to audit and govern diverse content scenarios. “Wally Bodyguard”, as a 24/7 online AI community management robot, monitors and removes spam in real time, reduces undesirable information, and offers complete user protection. Our anti-spam robot Wukong detects and intercepts spam, unlawful content and false information in real time, combats false traffic, and improves user access to useful information. By doing so, it helps the community establish a fair order and embrace benign development.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

### Case: “Wally Bodyguard” upgraded for better handling of unwanted information

In January 2023, Zhihu announced the comprehensive upgrade of its algorithm-driven community governance function “Wally Bodyguard”. With this upgrade, “Wally Bodyguard” is enabled to actively identify false content in addition to providing more precise and thorough coverage, detection and processing of illegal content in comment sections, private messages and other scenarios. It can also notify users of potential risks to help the community lessen and prevent fraud and speech attacks on users. “Wally Bodyguard”’s real-time blocking and processing efficiency of malicious information increased by 260% and the number of user complaints over fraudulent content across the platform decreased by 95% after the upgrade.

### Case: Zhihu uses combined approaches to ensure strict control of content quality

- Control of inaccurate information:** To prevent online rumors, we have introduced a tool called “Content Source,” which requires authors to indicate the source of information, the time and location of the event, and other details when posting content. This helps to increase the trustworthiness of the content. Also, Zhihu has created an official account dedicated to dispelling rumors, which works with other online rumor refuting platforms to promptly disseminate credible information from government agencies and recognize and flag rumors and false information. The purpose is to help readers determine the authenticity and timeliness of content and provide a reliable and trustworthy reading experience.
- Prevention of online violence:** Zhihu has provided a number of functions to protect against online violence, including “One Click Protection”. Real-time interception, information blocking, risk alerting, complaint submission and other methods are used to strengthen proactive security in private messaging and other scenarios and maximize the protection of users from undesirable information. In 2023, the Company introduced a new channel for handling “Cyberviolence” cases to provide users with timely support. Also, we released the *Anti-Cyberviolence Guideline* and made public the outcomes of our campaign against online violence, as a way of encouraging civilized and friendly speech and providing a healthy and safe online environment for each and every user.
- Monitoring of cyber fraud:** For the personal and property safety of users susceptible to cyber fraud, the Company has introduced a real-time monitoring and altering procedure that spans the entire process of user registration, login, search, conversation, and content release. This procedure is intended to continuously increase users’ awareness of anti-fraud. As required by the *Anti-Telecommunications Network Fraud Law of the People’s Republic of China*, in 2023 we created an official anti-fraud account and introduced a cyber fraud complaint and feedback channel to provide timely assistance in addressing various fraud-related challenges for users.

For physical products, Zhihu has established a traceability and recall mechanism to ensure that there is a reliable way of tracing non-conforming products. The Company had no products recalled for safety or health reasons during the Reporting Period.

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## 1.2. Vibrant Community with Diversified Innovation

Diversified creations are essential to building a “fulfilling” content ecosystem. Harnessing innovation in content, technology and business, Zhihu constantly enhances the experience of creators and users and fosters the sustainable and high-quality growth of the content ecosystem.

### *Encouraging diverse content for better shared value*

Committed to fostering a diverse array of high-quality content, Zhihu constantly broadens the scope of content and optimize its composition and form to meet various needs from our users. We initiate abundant thematic activities on popular topics across different disciplines to further the depth, breadth and diversity of content.

Ongoing efforts are made to penetrate verticals, encourage more specialized content creation by professional users, and stimulate innovations in content and discipline. We have launched diversified content scenarios such as “Firsthand Answer,” “Zhihu Roundtable” and “Insight & Dialogue,” where answerers, industry professionals, top experts and celebrities are invited for dialogues and sharing on a wide range of topics such as science and technology, employment, and entertainment, presenting keen insights in the community brainstorm. And to meet users’ demand for fragmented reading, we have upgraded our short-form content creation tools and optimized the operation of “fulfilling” content using technological innovation. We also introduced the Yanyan Story APP in May 2023, with the goal of giving users a concentrated, immersive experience when reading short stories and keeping them supplied with “high-quality, “fulfilling” content.

In addition, we continue to incentivize content creation through a diversity of events, including the “Content Creation Challenge,” a low-threshold creation activity covering all categories. It is designed to foster a culture of constant creation among users, promote their production and engagement, and increase the volume of ideas and answers generated and exchanged. With eighteen sessions organized by the end of 2023, it has been the longest-running event across the platform. Users are rewarded in different amounts depending on their creation behavior. The “Interesting Comment Challenge” is intended to inspire users to post friendly and useful comments and repost them to the Ideas section, fostering a friendly and engaging community atmosphere. “Zhihu 2023” is an online campaign of “My Annual Ideas” launched by Zhihu at the end of 2023. It uses a low threshold and short content to guide users to review and share their work, study and life over the past year, while writing down their hopes and dreams for the new year.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

### *Inspiring original creators for innovation and growth*

We firmly believe that content creators are the primary source of quality content, and that training, support and incentives for content creators are key to content innovation. We consistently optimize our creator service system, committed to providing creators with better services, so that they can showcase their skills, obtain assistance for growth, economic returns and a sense of fulfillment, and stimulate their creation through the platform.

Zhihu attaches great importance to developing content creators, igniting users' creative potential, and promoting their conversion into content creators. On the one hand, using artificial intelligence technology for content management, we identify users who have created content or shown interest in related areas and precisely send them questions to stimulate their creation desire. On the other hand, we keep providing support and instructions to content creators and optimizing the Creation Center and the Creators Academy and launched "Haiyan Plan 5.0", which offers a full suite of services for creators, including content operation support, creation rights protection and a creation training system, so as to make users more confident and motivated to create continually and generate more exceptional and diversified content.

#### **Case: "Haiyan Plan 5.0" helps creators make money via a variety of channels**

"Haiyan Plan" is Zhihu's long-term support program for content creators. Built on a creation system, traffic and income, it aims to incentivize in-depth content creation in vertical fields. Participating users can benefit from traffic support, accelerated realization via the "Cheese Platform" and increased followers and interactions, among others. The upgraded program targets professional creators, or those who have expertise in a certain field. Through a variety of channels, it helps professional creators make money, while constantly encouraging professional discussions.

- **Content operation support:** With "Zhihu Creation Center", which provides an array of content creation management tools, including those for content and follower analysis, creators may effectively create and operate their content while analyzing data on readership, interaction and so on.
- **Creation rights protection:** Creation rights are based on the Creation Score system<sup>1</sup>. Zhihu divides creators into several levels according to their Creation Score, with appropriate creation rights granted upon completion of each level.
- **Creation training system:** The creation training system includes the Creators Academy and the Creation Training Camp. Through teaching courses, traffic support and community coaching, Zhihu helps content creators learn how to produce content, operate accounts and make money, choose suitable vertical fields and improve content quality.

<sup>1</sup> The Creation Score is a score calculated based on a combination of parameters, including the quality of the content created, its impact, and the interaction with followers.

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### **Case: Tiered, refined training strategy for creators**

The Creation Training Camp is a refined training strategy designed for creators of varying levels. Through a closed loop of incubation from introductory to advanced training and finally graduation, it offers general and specialized courses encompassing more than ten verticals to train content creators from zero. Since January 2023 when the Camp went fully live, over 600,000 users have signed up and more than 450,000 creators have taken the training.

To provide financial incentives for content creators, Zhihu has developed a revenue model that consists of the “Zhizhi Plan,” the “Cheese Platform” and the “Yan Selection Collaboration.” It offers multiple revenue-generating channels to assist different types of content creators in earning money. Creators may directly receive earnings through the “Cheese Platform” and the “Yan Selection Collaboration,” or apply to the “Zhizhi Plan” to get financial rewards.

“Zhizhi Plan” is an ongoing incentive program launched to encourage creators to enhance their expertise in vertical fields. It incentivizes creators who make consistent and insightful sharing in their areas of expertise through a fund of hundreds of millions of RMB and targeted, personalized tasks. As of December 2023, the program had inspired more than 22,000 creators in total.

### **Case: Beacon Prize for specialized creators in vertical disciplines**

The Beacon Prize is a top creation incentive program for exceptional creators under the “Zhizhi Plan.” It awards iconic creators with expertise in vertical disciplines who produce content with broad social value and influence, in order to communicate our community values of “tribute to knowledge, tribute to creation.” In April 2023, Zhihu announced the ten winning projects of the first Beacon Prize, covering subjects like science, the humanities, and community spirits, with an incentive of up to RMB1 million per project.

Besides financial incentives, Zhihu also grants content creators honor and a sense of community attachment. We have established an honor system comprised of “Rising Answerers” “Outstanding Answerers”, and “Lists of Top Answerers”. Top-notch creators, excellent creators, and emerging creators in each profession are selected on an annual, quarterly, and monthly basis, respectively. The honor system is expected to attract consumers to find and follow content creators, while helping creators improve their interactions and inspiring their creation and led to a spike in the number of creations in 2023. In particular, the number of creations by “excellent answerers” increased by nearly 60% at most.

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In the meantime, Zhihu organizes a wide range of events to increase the visibility of content creators. We invite leading creators across all fields to the Roundtable, the Xinzhi Youth Conference and many other events. In July 2023, Zhihu hosted the Xinzhi Youth Conference, an annual award ceremony for remarkable answerers, in Beijing and Xinzhi answerers for 2022, among other guests, were present. The content creators who had been dedicated to share their knowledge, experience and insights were awarded on the occasion. These events have not only enhanced the involvement of content creators, but also strengthened the bond between content creators and users, inspiring more users to take part in creation.

### *Exploring technological innovations for a more intelligent community*

Seeing technological development as the foundation of services, Zhihu continues to provide users with more intelligent, efficient and reliable services through the innovative application of technology. We are firmly convinced that artificial intelligence (AI) augments human capabilities, and that it can act as a technological driver that helps us serve our users and the broader community.

Leveraging its unique advantages as a community, Zhihu has started developing large language models, hoping to become a developer of new productivity and a creator of new scenarios in the AI age. In April 2023, we unveiled our first Chinese large language model with hundred billion parameters, "Zhihaitu AI," aiming to create an intelligent community that empowers human beings. Then the Company accelerated the model's application and launched a new feature called "Intelligent Title" in November 2023, which aids in the prompt generation of titles during the editing process of "Ideas" and comprehensively improves the precision of content distribution. Furthermore, human-computer co-creativity helps creators better unleash their creativity and improve the efficiency and quality of content creation, enabling a greater number of users to get assistance and broaden their horizons.

In addition, we have been utilizing AI technology in paid membership, vocational training and other scenarios. Our vocational training business has innovated the functions of its intelligent teaching products such as "AI-Driven Essay Review and Correction," "Intelligent Assignment Correction," and "AI Teaching Pilot." By means of persistent endeavors to expedite AI application in various scenarios within Zhihu's ecosystem, we strive to improve the efficiency of the search function and empower content creation to expand our content library. With AI-based large models inspiring the vision for content innovation, we will insist on technology development and product innovation in order to help users find the content they need more efficiently, improve reading efficiency in more enjoyable ways, and assist content creators in generating better content. By expanding human capabilities and pushing community boundaries through technology, we hope the Zhihu platform to show new brilliance and vitality.

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## 1.3. Upgrading Advertising Review Mechanism for Better Business Operations

Zhihu commits itself to a healthy business ecosystem. We engage in responsible marketing and build consumer trust through measures such as stringent advertising censorship mechanisms and compliance management. While abiding by the *Advertisement Law of the People's Republic of China*, the *Administrative Measures for Internet Advertising* and other laws and regulations, we have established advertising clearance criteria and review procedures that are stricter than industry standards. We stick to rigorous evaluation, review and management across the three stages of client registration, material gathering and advertising to maintain a healthy and sustainable business ecosystem for the community.

- **Client account registration stage:** We require clients to present their business licenses and qualifications in accordance with laws, regulations and administrative rules. Clients in varied industries are subject to specific industrial regulations and distinct assessments and access mechanisms. Brands and products that compromise national dignity and sovereignty interests, threaten social security, are prohibited by law, impede the growth of minors, and have negative social impacts are strictly prohibited to safeguard the healthy business ecosystem as well as the rights and interests of users.
- **Material collection stage:** We strictly fulfill our obligation of censoring advertisements by mandating all clients to provide legal and compliant advertising materials, their qualification documents and proof of the truthfulness and effectiveness of the advertising content. And all advertisements are archived for subsequent review.
- **Advertising release stage:** A combination of manual and technological inspections is used to guarantee proper advertising activities. Our professionally trained manual inspection team is responsible for inspecting the advertisement placement process, retaining historical advertisements, and performing regular online examination to ensure that the advertising materials are lawful and compliant. Depending on the severity of the violation, we may take a variety of punitive actions in response to a user's complaint of undesirable advertising content, including instant rejection of the material, notification of the violation, blocking of the client account, and cooperation prohibition. In addition, user complaints made via the mobile APP about inappropriate or illegal advertisements found on the platform are handled by our community management team. We have also developed AI-powered, proprietary technology solutions such as content filtering systems and anti-spam systems.

As part of our ongoing efforts to optimize the community ecosystem, we continue to improve our advertisement review mechanisms. In 2023, we published monthly analysis reports about client account registration and material examination and rejection as well as rule amendments on the Zhihu Marketing Platform, so that our clients could keep updated with the latest audit rules and make adjustments accordingly.

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## 1.4. Protecting Intellectual Property to Stimulate Creative Vitality

Zhihu is a platform for information access, sharing and dissemination that prioritizes the protection of intellectual property rights as a fundamental tenet of its operations. Concrete efforts are made to safeguard the fruits of innovation. We comply with the *Patent Law of the People's Republic of China*, the *Trademark Law of the People's Republic of China*, and the *Copyright Law of the People's Republic of China*, among other laws and regulations, with our measures for intellectual property protection and related users' code of conduct set out in the *Zhihu Agreement* and the *Community Guidelines of Zhihu*. Also, we have established regulations such as the *Instructions for Trademark Application* and the *Regulations on Intellectual Property Management* to regulate the management of intellectual property rights and to encourage employees and creators to stay active in creation.

For the compliance of internal intellectual property rights, Zhihu has constructed a four-tier management procedure and appointed specialists to manage intellectual property matters at different levels. Through active registration, filing and application, we prevent the squatting of trademarks, patents and other intellectual property rights. Meanwhile, Zhihu has commissioned an agency for "dynamic monitoring of trademark infringement," and cracks down on infringements upon comprehensive judgment.

- **Employee training on intellectual property**

To raise employees' awareness of intellectual property protection, we deliver themed training that helps them understand the importance of intellectual property and ways to protect. In 2023, Zhihu organized trainings on the copyright law and trademark law to expound on copyright laws and regulations, copyright protection, risk prevention and rights protection, basic principles and content of trademark review, trademark management, maintenance and standardized use,. Long-term consulting services are also made available for users. Championing an environment that inspires innovation, we encourage employees to involve in research and development and apply for patents. A patent incentive policy is in place to reward employees who have made outstanding contributions to R&D and innovation.

- **Creators' copyright protection**

Regarding content creators as the community's lifeblood, Zhihu has taken a number of measures to safeguard their copyrights. Apart from an anti-piracy team, we also have our own anti-piracy system, which offers a wide range of functions such as anti-crawler, content monitoring, and creators' rights protection. Coupled with protective measures powered by products, technologies, and laws, we enable platform-wide piracy prevention and content protection.

To better defend the legitimate rights and interests of users, Zhihu has set up the Yan Selection Member Plagiarism Reporting Platform. It allows creators to file complaints against plagiarism while encouraging creators and users to provide clues of off-site piracy or on-site plagiarism. A public guideline for reporting infringements has also been compiled to help users protect their intellectual property rights.

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### **Case: Truth Protector campaign**

Zhihu has initiated the Truth Protector campaign to intensify the fight against piracy and protect the legitimate rights and interests of content creators and member users. The campaign collects reports on suspected piracy from users and readers and executes targeted crackdowns. So far, it has eliminated hundreds of incompliant communities. The Truth Protector campaign allows Zhihu to collaborate with users in the fight against piracy and infringement, uphold the healthy and orderly development of the content ecosystem, and properly safeguard the interests of both creators and the platform.

### **Case: Resolute fight against piracy at Zhihu**

As a platform that aggregates a large number of premium, paid articles, Zhihu has long been engaged in the resolute fight against piracy. It has continued to increase its investment in the protection of paid content in response to the Sword Net 2023 special action against online copyright infringement and piracy, which was jointly launched by the National Copyright Administration and other departments in August 2023. By means of proactive collaboration with regulatory authorities, we have secured a phased victory in the anti-piracy operation.

### **1.5. Robust Supply Chain Management to Ensure Procurement Compliance**

Zhihu is committed to mutually beneficial and win-win partnerships with suppliers. While optimizing supply chain management, we incorporate ESG concepts into the registration, approval and performance evaluation of suppliers. Through responsible sourcing and ongoing supervision, we ensure compliance in supply chain management and seek to build a responsible ecosystem together with suppliers.

Zhihu observes the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Bid Invitation and Bidding*, the *Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Bid Invitation and Bidding* and other laws and regulations, and also enacts an array of high-standard supplier management regulations, such as the *Supplier Management Specifications of Zhihu*, the *Procurement Management Regulations of Zhihu*, and the *Management Specifications for Sourcing, Procurement and Contract Fulfillment of Zhihu*. This guarantees all-around control over purchases from theory to practice and contributes to a sound supplier services system.

- **Compliance in procurement**

As part of a standard procurement procedure, our procurement employees seek suppliers according to purchase requirements, to ensure compliant, transparent and responsible procurement. After going through registration, inspection and other steps, qualified and suitable suppliers are selected. In the meantime, key procurement projects are subject to full-process tracking and monitoring by supervision departments, and the results of general procurement bidding are randomly examined to identify potential risks and comprehensively improve the traceability of supplier selection and procurement. Additionally, all of our procurement employees participated in integrity and anti-corruption training in 2023 to further improve their professional ethics, establish the awareness of learning about and abiding by the law, and assist with compliant and legal procurement.

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- **Supplier admission**

At the stage of supplier registration and admission, Zhihu takes candidates' environmental and social performance into consideration, requiring them to fill out a basic information form and sign documents such as the *Commitment to Fair Trade*, the *Commitment to Confidentiality* and the *Outsourced Employee Services Management Regulations*. To manage risks in business ethics, we have also developed regulations such as the *Code of Conduct for Procurement Employees of Zhihu* and the *Code of Conduct for Procurement Employees of the Group*. And suppliers are requested to sign the *Commitment to Fair Trade* and the *Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery Agreement* to minimize non-compliance incidents. 100% of new suppliers that had procurement transactions with us in 2023 have complied with Zhihu's supplier management regulations.

Furthermore, during the supplier admission process, qualification review criteria and inspection standards are also tailored for different procurement categories. For example, cloud server vendors are required to provide qualifications such as cybersecurity registration and protection certificates, energy-saving review certificates, and environmental impact assessment levels; catering service providers should submit certificates for the ISO9001 quality management systems, the ISO14001 environmental management systems and other systems. Zhihu also conducts on-site inspections of suppliers' operating environment and work quality and gives preference to those with environmental certifications and qualifications. We have strict control over the admission of suppliers, as part of our efforts to practice responsible purchasing.

- **Supplier evaluation**

In the stage of cooperation management and performance evaluation, Zhihu continuously tracks and assesses the performance of suppliers throughout contract fulfillment under the *Supplier Performance Management Regulations*. Our suppliers of varied products or services should also undergo corresponding monthly, quarterly or annual assessments. The assessment results are shown in scores and ratings. And positive and negative incentives are set up to motivate suppliers to continue improving management. In addition, our employees responsible for supplier management as well as procurement specialists check the supplier list on a regular basis. Suppliers that meet the exit conditions are removed from the list, as a way of maintaining the healthy operation of Zhihu's supply system.

**Case: Zhihu's supplier relationship management (SRM) system officially launched**

To further optimize procurement practices, the Company launched its SRM system in October 2023. The system, which includes modules for supplier admission management, performance management, exit management, bid invitation/quotation comparison, contracts, orders, acceptance inspection, payment, and so on, has enabled an end-to-end digital procurement chain at Zhihu. The system is anticipated to facilitate more efficient, transparent and compliant responsible procurement and promote the sustainable development of our supply system.

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## 2. IMPROVING USER EXPERIENCE AND UPGRADING SERVICE OFFERINGS

Zhihu always listens to users' voice, with continuous efforts to optimize user communication channels and improve its customer service system. Through these initiatives, we wish to safeguard user health and deliver a comprehensive, top-class service experience.

### 2.1. User-centric Principle and Service Optimization

With the goal of improving user satisfaction and service experience, Zhihu is devoted to addressing problems for users. We highly value users' feedback and insist on standing up for their opinions. By providing better products and services for both the community and users, we endeavor to enhance users' recognition of and trust in the community.

#### *Optimizing service system*

Zhihu honors community values and uses customer services as a useful channel to get feedback from users. To address the growing and diversified service demands of users, Zhihu has built a full-process user feedback system based on information and digital technologies and also continuously optimized its intelligent service system utilizing massive data analysis. In doing so, we can improve the quality and efficiency of our platform services in an all-round way and present a more considerate and convenient user service experience.

#### **Customer service mechanisms at Zhihu**

- **Multi-channel feedback:** Zhihu provides feedback channels like online customer services, service hotline and e-mail, which builds a bridge between users and the platform and ensures that customer services are available anytime, anywhere.
- **Complaint handling:** Zhihu regularly monitors user feedback and organizes responsible departments to resolve problems in a timely manner.
- **Attentive Zhihu Bulter:** Zhihu offers attentive customer services that promptly respond to and address the problems raised by users.
- **Intelligent customer services:** Based on machine learning, big data and other technical means, Zhihu continues to improve its intelligent and autonomous service capabilities, thereby providing users with a more convenient and efficient service experience.
- **Periodic follow-up:** Zhihu records and follows up the problems raised by users around-the-clock, and routinely asks users how satisfied they are with the services they receive, which serves as the foundation for subsequent improvements.

Our customer service team is responsible for assuring a satisfactory user experience, while efficiently, clearly, and fully conveying user voices to the Company, so as to advance the improvement of Zhihu's product and service experience. For the purpose of standard and professional customer services, we have established a sophisticated training system, which requires customer service employees to complete tasks and learn about advanced service skills. Through layered talent training and other approaches, we work hard to improve the comprehensive capabilities and work skills of the customer service team.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

### Zhihu's customer service training system

- **On-board training:** New employees receive training in basic knowledge, skills, corporate service culture, and team goals, so that they can quickly fit into Zhihu's service atmosphere.
- **Professionalism training:** It focuses on fostering cohesion and teamwork among employees with the goal of enhancing their knowledge and skills and compensating for any shortcomings.
- **Advanced training:** It improves employees' service capabilities and communication skills in order to expand the backbone talent pool.
- **Management training:** It is dedicated to training service managers for improved service quality and efficiency.

### *Listening to users*

Zhihu upholds the principle of offering "standard, warm" services. We listen carefully to user feedback via a variety of user communication channels, pledging to provide every user with a thoughtful, interactive, and warm service experience. We continuously optimize our closed-loop feedback mechanism. It allows us to provide robust support for decision-making, better understand user needs and make timely improvement, in a bid to address users' problems and pain points.

- **Holistic response mechanism**

In order to provide users with better services, we have made the rule that the first employee to answer a user's inquiry should be accountable. Meanwhile, we keep refining the way we handle complaints, respond, and communicate with users. Our goal is to promptly, accurately, and efficiently address and resolve users' concerns. While following standard service procedures, we try to deliver a more comfortable communication and service experience by providing customized answers. In addition, Zhihu has a visual service data platform, which effectively enhances the platform's intelligent service capabilities through data analysis and algorithmic support.

- **Multi-channel complaint and feedback**

We routinely track and respond to user complaints, suggestions and comments to continuously improve the user experience. To ensure timely response and efficient handling, we require our customer service team to respond within 30 minutes and provide feedbacks within 24 hours". During the process, users may view the progress of complaint handling and resolution, which effectively protects their rights and enhances their satisfaction. In 2023, we received a total of 43,014 user complaints, representing a decrease of over 50% from last year.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 2.2 Product Liability and Digital Inclusion

*Care for groups with special needs*

- **Adolescents Protection**

Zhihu is constantly committed to youth protection as well as the healthy growth of minors. We strictly comply with the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Minors* and the *Regulations on the Protection of Minors in Cyberspace*. And our administrative measures for illegal content involving teenagers have been stipulated in the *Community Guidelines of Zhihu*. We have also set up a working group on youth protection. It adopts an approach of combining dredging and blocking, and takes charge of the management of teens-related content as well as the development and launch of teens protection functions.

As a way of positive guidance, we have introduced the Zhihu Youth Mode, which prioritizes recommending educational and knowledge-based content to minors, filters inappropriate content, and deactivates features such as livestreaming, rewards, and top-ups. Based on Zhihu's featured Q&A mode, we regularly organize activities themed on youth protection, widely attracting teenagers to participate in the discussion on different topics and communicating civilized, healthy, scientific and premium online information to young people. On the other hand, we continue to expand the identification scope of malicious information, and strengthen manual review and historical content inspection. Wally bodyguard can also detect and remove spam on the platform in real time to reduce the risk of bad information attacks. Moreover, we have set up dedicated whistle-blowing channels for teens, including a portal, an e-mail address and a hotline. A complaint handling team is in place to timely verify and dispose of the cases.

### **Case: "Cyberspace Clean-Up" program**

In 2023, Zhihu and Office of the Beijing Municipal Cyber Affairs Commission launched the "Cyberspace Clean-Up" program in active response to the campaign "Collaborative Protection of Seedlings 2023". We initiated heated discussions on the protection of minors in cyberspace through a series of self-produced animations, special topics, Q&A, and videos on Internet safety knowledge. The program and the customized animations attracted over 3.2 million and 3.8 million views, respectively.

In addition, a section for "combating online infringement involving minors" was set up to handle the complaints we received during the summer under the "Collaborative Protection of Seedlings 2023". Throughout the event, Zhihu received a total of 4,094 reports, verified and removed 485 pieces of offensive content, banned several accounts involved and made public the outcomes.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

- **Caring for the elderly and disabled**

Zhihu is constantly concerned with and pursuing digital inclusion. We take multifaceted initiatives to ensure that all users, including the elderly, the visually impaired or those with limited mobility, have equal access to our services, helping them fit into digital life and close the digital divide.

To help seniors better use Zhihu's services and address their service demands, we continuously optimize our age-friendly and accessibility service modules and "Care" page. We have also set up a service hotline for the elderly that offers rapid manual services to respond directly and swiftly to their needs. Since the elderly are susceptible to fraud, Zhihu has created "a whistle-blowing section for fraud against seniors," in order to prevent such crimes and safeguard the elderly's legitimate rights and interests.

We are highly concerned with the disabled community, adhering to the tenet that "people with disabilities have barrier-free access to knowledge at Zhihu." With reference to accessibility standards at home and abroad, the Company continues to optimize itself as a barrier-free community through technology iteration and preferential policies, in an effort to provide more thoughtful and convenient services for users with disabilities. To foster a more inclusive atmosphere for communication without barriers, we have also invited professional organizations and individuals to our "Barrier-Free Column." The column is intended to promote more barrier-free knowledge, and provide an inclusive, barrier-free environment where the disabled can acquire and share knowledge freely. Harnessing the warmth and power of Zhihu's community spirit, we hope to help connect individuals with disabilities to a broader world.

### **Case: Accessible Museums: Disabled Community Connection Program**

To contribute to offline barrier-free communities, Zhihu's Beacon Prize has provided millions of RMB in funding and other resources to the "Accessible Museums: Disabled Community Connection Program", which was launched by the innovative NGO Qitu Accessibility. The program will record the experience of visiting dozens of museums in Beijing, Nanjing, Xi'an and Shanghai from the perspective of people with disabilities, provide the public with a detailed guide of accessible travel to museums across the country, and discuss the accessibility design, policy and management of museums.



# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## *Taking care of mental health*

Constantly concerned about users' mental health, Zhihu is committed to learning about their potential spiritual and psychological needs. We not only intend to make Zhihu a platform that helps users learn new knowledge and win respect and recognition, but also wish to give users the right care when they need it. In 2023, we organized discussions and roundtable activities such as "Don't let people with autism feel more lonely" and "Find answers in heart 2023," where psychiatrists, university scholars and psychologists were invited to talk about mental health concerns and offer advice on how to manage negative emotions and live happier, more fulfilling lives. At the same time, Zhihu Bulter takes the initiative to provide psychological counseling to users who have left pessimistic messages or are experiencing psychological distress.

To ensure timely detection and regulation of users' negative emotions, we have developed a set of rescue steps including discovery, judgment, and hierarchical treatment. In response to selected search terms that indicate negative emotions, our system will automatically initiate preventive and instructional actions and display psychological crisis intervention hotlines across China. Also, Zhihu has a specialized team that designs algorithms and develops products to take care of users' mental health.

In 2023, a team of Zhihu answerers and medical professionals holding master's or doctoral degrees, known as Psychiatrists, launched a research project on "the positives of and countermeasures for ADHD." With the support of Zhihu, the team initiated a roundtable discussion on "ADHD Treatment Guide" with Zhihu Psychology. Experts, academics and patient representatives from home and abroad were invited to have professional dialogues and publish assets such as scientific introductions to the disorder, patient interviews and practical guidelines. While healing ADHD patients, we also hope to encourage a better understanding of ADHD among the public and raise awareness of mental and psychosocial health issues.

## **2.3. Information Security and Privacy Protection**

Zhihu places a high value on information security management and user privacy protection. We safeguard the secure operations of the Company and users' data privacy by establishing a sound information security management structure and regulations, consistently optimizing information security management technology, and conducting internal and external audits.

## *Enhanced information security management*

We strictly abide by laws and regulations such as the *Cybersecurity Law of the People's Republic of China*, the *Data Security Law of the People's Republic of China*, the *Personal Information Protection Law of the People's Republic of China* and the *Administrative Measures on Internet Information Services*, and have formulated a series of cybersecurity and information security policies such as the *Data Security Early Warning Management Standards*, the *Data Life Cycle Management Standards*, the *Emergency Response Process for Data Security Incidents* and the *Data Access Approval Standards*, which cover the entire data life cycle including collection, transmission, storage, use and destruction, laying a solid institutional foundation for information security management.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

- **Hierarchical management framework**

To standardize the construction of the Company's cybersecurity and information security system and fulfill the specific requirements of cybersecurity and information security efforts, we have established a systematic information security management framework and set up the Zhihu Cybersecurity and Data Security Committee to provide a framework for information security. The Zhihu Cybersecurity and Data Security Committee is composed of the decision-making management, the management and the executive team. The decision-making management is responsible for formulating the Company's medium and long-term security strategic plan, the management is responsible for managing and driving the deployment of security efforts and the executive team is responsible for the specific implementation of cybersecurity and information security efforts. All levels work together to ensure the smooth implementation of Zhihu's information security management efforts.

- **Process-oriented management system**

Zhihu continues to optimize its information security management system and has established an information security protection mechanism that incorporates "pre-event prevention", "in-process monitoring" and "post-event response" to ensure that the Company's information security is preventable, manageable and controllable. In the "pre-event prevention" phase, the Company incorporates information security protection measures into the development of its products and services, and continuously strengthens its preventive and protective measures for information security through such "security review" methods such as login authentication schemes, permission granting schemes, two-factor authentication, personal information collection scenarios, whether to encrypt the transmission and storage of personal information, whether to mask sensitive data for display and whether to add watermarks. In the "in-process monitoring" phase, the Company has established threat intelligence, traffic analysis and security operation centers to monitor and analyze information security threats in real time and promptly warn of security risks. In the "post-event response" phase, the Company has put in place security orchestration, automation and response handling capabilities as well as manual handling processes to reduce the probability of security incidents by automatically or manually handling identified risks.

- **Security audit and certification**

Zhihu has established a robust cybersecurity and information security audit mechanism, carrying out external and internal audits on a regular basis to strictly prevent and control data leakage and security incidents. We regularly invite external auditors and security service providers to conduct cybersecurity and information security audits of all relevant departments in accordance with applicable standards at home and abroad, and rectify any issues identified and improve the situation within the Company accordingly. In addition, internal security audits are conducted in real time by the Company's security department. Using automated audit tools, Zhihu's security engineers conduct daily audits and analyses of cybersecurity anomalies and information security risks, and immediately address anomalies to ensure risk control.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

- **Information security awareness training**

Zhihu attaches great importance to fostering information security awareness among its employees. In 2023, we held multiple information security and cybersecurity awareness training sessions to comprehensively enhance the information security awareness of our employees and improve their information security skills and knowledge through a combination of online learning and offline experience.

- **Supply chain information security management**

In terms of external management and control of information security, Zhihu has created a supplier information security management system to manage supplier information throughout the process. At the registration and access stage, all suppliers are required to sign *the Non-Disclosure Agreement* and *the Fair Trade Commitment* to ensure information security; At the phase of invitation for bid, technical scoring criteria are designed for suppliers' information security of IT-related categories, and the information compliance head is invited to give scores, and project judges must complete the *Clarification of Interests* in SRM, Zhihu's procurement system, before they can participate in the rating process; At the supplier contract fulfillment stage, information security is included in the assessment of supplier performance for IT-related categories, and supplier performance appraisals are conducted on a regular basis to ensure information security across the supply chain.

### *User privacy protection*

Respect for the privacy of users' personal information is a red line that Zhihu has always insisted on when protecting personal information. We continue to improve our information protection system and have formulated such documents as the *Personal Information Protection Guidelines*, the *User Agreement* and the *Third Party Data Sharing Reporting Standards*, which specify the content of information to be collected, the use of information, the scope of data sharing and other requirements, as part of our ongoing efforts to standardize information security governance in the Company.

In terms of information collection, Zhihu will obtain user consent to collect information prior to providing services to them, so that users are fully aware of the purpose, manner and scope of their personal information being collected, used and shared. In terms of the use of information, Zhihu strictly manages the personal information collected from users to prevent it from being leaked, tampered with, misappropriated, destroyed or illegally provided to third parties, thus safeguarding users' right to privacy and control over their personal information.

At the same time, Zhihu continues to optimize privacy protection technologies such as data encryption, data masking and access control, and has created a closed-loop process of risk monitoring, event alerting and alert handling for risk points at each stage of data management. Zhihu has built an all-round information security monitoring and emergency response platform to continuously strengthen its ability to sense data risk events.

Currently, Zhihu has achieved ISO/IEC 27001 certification for information security management systems, ISO/IEC 27701 certification for privacy information management systems and cybersecurity protection level 3 certification for important business systems. During the Reporting Period, Zhihu did not experience any significant information or user data breaches.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 3. FOSTERING DIVERSITY AND BUILDING A JOYFUL WORKPLACE

Zhihu has always been adhering to the concept of “talent first” and striving to bring in outstanding talents through diversified and equal employment policies, ample opportunities for career growth and a positive and supportive work environment, constantly inspiring the potential and vitality of each employee to achieve alignment between corporate development and employee value.

### 3.1. Protecting the Legitimate Rights and Interests of Employees

Zhihu respects and protects the rights and interests of its employees and continues to build a sound recruitment and selection mechanism for human resources. We strictly comply with the *Labor Law of the People’s Republic of China*, the *Labor Contract Law of the People’s Republic of China*, the *Provisions on Prohibition of Child Labor* and other laws and regulations concerning labor and employee rights, as well as international conventions such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and have formulated internal policies such as the *Management Rules for the Use of Recruitment Channels*, the *Zhihu Background Investigation Policy and Management System* and the *Re-employment System*. We sign labor contracts with our employees in accordance with the law to protect their vital interests. During the Reporting Period, Zhihu did not engage in any child labor or forced labor.

At the same time, the Company adheres to the principle of fair and equitable employment and is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive work environment. We oppose all forms of employment discrimination and ensure that employees are not affected by factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, region and religious background. We respect and protect the legitimate rights and interests of all employees and follow policies of gender equality and equal pay for work of equal value. We safeguard the special rights and interests enjoyed by female employees and employ people with disabilities based on the realities of our posts, giving each employee an equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

#### Employer brand awards won by Zhihu in 2023

- Sirius Awards “Best High-Tech Employer Brand 2023”
- Nowcoder NFuture Best Campus Recruitment Employers Awards “Most Favored Campus Recruitment Employer for Tech Talent 2023”
- Haitou “Most Influential Employers 2024”

### 3.2. Unleashing the Growth Potential of Employees

Talent is the foundation of value creation at Zhihu. Zhihu has always adhered to the concept of talent first and strives to unleash the vitality and potential of our employees through a systematic talent training framework, a robust leadership pipeline, an open internal talent flow mechanism and innovative training content and models that enable them to align self-learning with professional development.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## *Diversified training systems*

Based on the diverse needs of each employee's development, Zhihu has built all-in-one talent training system that encompasses leadership training, professional competency training and general skills training, providing employees with multi-channel and customized growth support in conjunction with the M+ plan (Zhihu Mentor Mechanism), the T+ plan (Zhihu Internal Trainer Management System), the online learning platform "Zhi learning" and other resources and platforms.

- **General skills training**

The Company has designed a complete development path for fresh graduates to help orient them to the workplace. We have formulated a five-year training plan for fresh graduates in 2023 to help them achieve continuous growth from students to qualified "professionals" and "pirates" through such programs as "Zhihu Open Day", "Sailing Training Camp", "Return Day", "Business Tie" and "Management Trainee Selection". In 2023, Zhihu conducted a total of eight training sessions for new employees, covering a wide range of topics including corporate culture, general workplace skills and business capabilities, to help new employees tap their potential. In addition, more than 2,200 micro-lessons, totalling over 30,000 hours of content, have been created since the launch of Zhihu's online learning platform, "Zhi learning".

**Case: 2023 "Sailing Training Camp" to accelerate employee integration**

In 2023, Zhihu launched the "Sailing Training Camp", an exclusive training program for fresh graduates. Focusing on cultural values, the camp features an innovative multi-faceted training format in which industry experts and lecturers are invited to present and share through closed-door training and full integration. Through a combination of self-management and teamwork, it guides new employees towards a deeper understanding of the Company's culture and business, as well as their role in the workplace, and a better idea of how they can better develop and progress within the Company, and helps them become part of the Zhihu family.

- **Professional competency training**

We believe that developing industry-leading talent and enhancing the professional competencies of our employees are key to the long-term development of the Company. Based on the career path development system of each professional path, Zhihu identifies the key competency requirements and incorporates human resource training into each business team. Zhihu has set up a diversified system of specialized courses and built a specialized knowledge map, launching targeted technical training to support the iteration and upgrade of business strategies and enhance employee competencies.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

- **Leadership training**

Zhihu has established a comprehensive leadership development system and attaches great importance to the long-term growth of young talents in the Company. We have formulated the “Sailor Program” for backup and new managers, the “Sailing Program” for low-level management, the “Navigating the Future” program for middle management and the “20,000 Miles” program for top management. Through diverse training activities such as in-house self-developed courses, external visits and end-of-year review meetings, we promote cross-team collaboration, communication and integration among managers at all levels and develop Zhihu leaders with a broad vision and real-world experience.

**Case: “Navigating the Future” program empowering leadership**

The “Navigating the Future” program is designed for middle managers with extensive management experience within the Company. Through lectures, interactive discussions, the “World Café” method, co-creation and other forms of training, the program aims to further enhance the comprehensive leadership of the managers, help them gain a deeper understanding of Zhihu’s overall strategy, reach a consensus on the Company’s current goals and future development and cultivate future-oriented versatile managers and industry talents equipped with a global sense of business and professional capabilities.



# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## *Clear and smooth path of career development*

Zhihu has created a transparent and smooth career path for its employees, giving every employee equal opportunities for growth and helping them achieve both personal and professional development. We have established the *Zhihu Rank System*, which divides employees into “management path” and “professional path” according to their job characteristics. Based on their own career plans, employees can grow within their own path or transfer between paths. Employees are offered an upward path that matches their career plans and individual strengths.

Meanwhile, Zhihu has established a “flexible mechanism” for talent flow, in which employees can be transferred to another matching position within the Company. In addition to facilitating the efficient allocation of the Company’s need for product and business talents, the mechanism helps create a flexible, efficient and diversified career development path for each employee, enabling the development and advancement of both employees and the Company.

### **3.3. Providing Employee Care**

Zhihu is committed to open, free and people-oriented management and endeavors to foster workplace happiness. Zhihu has listened extensively to employee feedback and established a comprehensive, multi-level employee welfare system to create a comfortable and joyful work environment where employees can feel a sense of respect, happiness and belonging through a rich variety of benefits and caring activities.

Zhihu provides high-quality facilities and people-oriented services for its employees. In terms of office facilities, the Company provides employees with ergonomic chairs, break rooms with a wide selection of drinks, relatively private negotiating rooms, nursing rooms and a fresh air ventilation system. To ensure a healthy and balanced lifestyle for employees, we provide nutritious work meals, set up various hobby groups and organize regular and diverse cultural and sports activities to create an atmosphere of equality, mutual respect, interaction and fun.

We view our employees as our most valuable assets and strive to foster work-life balance in the workplace. We advocate work-life balance, where employees’ performance is evaluated based on their actual output and value instead of working hours and overtime, so as to ensure that employees enjoy their work and get relaxed and to encourage them to prioritize their physical and mental well-being.

Zhihu values the feedback and suggestions from its employees and has various communication and exchange channels in place to respond to their requests in a timely manner. As our online community for internal communication, the “Pirate Ship” provides an open platform for employees to freely communicate and help each other. We also provide timely answers to staff questions through our “Zhihu Staff Group Chat” and “Pirate Manager”. In addition, employees can appeal against performance evaluations and other results via e-mail, which will be handled properly and in a timely manner by the responsible person in the corresponding department, forming a closed-loop solution.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 3.4. Creating a Safe Work Environment

Zhihu values the health and safety of its employees and is firmly committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all its employees. We strictly abide by the *Labor Law of the People's Republic of China*, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Prevention and Control of Occupational Diseases* and the *Fire Protection Law of the People's Republic of China*, and have developed standards and plans such as the employee emergency plan for sudden illness or accidental injury and the food and beverage safety inspection standards, specifying standardized procedures for emergency response to ensure timely response to and proper handling of employee health and safety incidents and to protect the health and safety of the employees.

Based on the laws and regulations on emergency management and fire safety in the locations where it operates, Zhihu has set up a comprehensive security and fire safety system in office areas with medical facilities such as automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and first aid kits and put up prominent safety warning signs at relevant locations to improve safety management in terms of prevention and prepare for all possible contingencies. The Company also establishes standards for food and beverage safety inspections and conducts regular food hygiene and safety inspections at meal production sites to ensure the safety of meals for its employees. In addition, the Company has enhanced safety awareness training and organized regular fire drills and sudden cardiac arrest emergency drills to increase employee awareness of crisis prevention and self-rescue capabilities in the event of a crisis.

We provide supplemental medical and accident insurance for all regular employees, as well as employer-sponsored medical exams and customized medical exams by gender and age to encourage employees to take care of their health. Evaluations indicate that there are no positions in the Company that endanger occupational health and safety, and there have been no work-related deaths or injuries to employees during the years 2021, 2022 and 2023.

## 4. CONTRIBUTING TO A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

As one of the largest comprehensive online content communities in China, Zhihu actively engages in charitable and public welfare endeavors. We are committed to being a responsible corporate citizen by empowering our users with positive energies and giving back to society.

### 4.1. Empowering Education

- **Focusing on inclusive and equitable education**

Staying true to its aspiration of promoting education and public welfare, Zhihu focuses on the growth of the young generation and contributes to balancing educational resources. Since 2018, we have paired up with Rongjiang County in the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture of Guizhou Province to support the latter in poverty alleviation, and have continued to donate funds and materials to the area. On June 1, 2023, Zhihu donated cash and helped build the campus infrastructure of Zaima Town Central Elementary School in Rongjiang County, safeguarding the rights of local students to education. In addition, Zhihu plays an active role in funding education. Through its partnership with the Haidian Education Foundation of Beijing, the Company contributes to the cause of public good in education with donations aimed at rewarding outstanding teachers and supporting needy students.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

- **Redefining vocational training**

Zhihu leverages big data, large language models and other innovative advantages to actively empower the vocational training and education industry. As the largest user group in the Zhihu community, the “new-generation professionals” actively pursue growth in both work and life, and have become the backbone of the Chinese community. Focusing on the growing demand for vocational education among the new-generation professionals, Zhihu leverages its content and technology strengths to build an ecosystem that combines community and education, and has created the “Zhihu Zhixuetang” brand, an online vocational education platform. Zhihu applies cutting-edge technologies such as big data and large models to the development of vocational education scenarios, integrating high-quality educational resources to provide users and the community with a wealth of training content on workplace skills, languages, qualifications, interests and specialties. Zhihu ZhiXueTang currently serves more than 20 million users, making it one of the most comprehensive vocational education content systems in China.

As a technology company that empowers education, Zhihu helps foster internal circulation by creating a variety of new career opportunities for new-generation professionals within the community ecosystem, facilitating their transition from learners to creators. Meanwhile, the Company strives to expand the integration of industry and education by being deeply involved in the vocational education and training system of colleges and universities to better adapt vocational education to the job market and effectively drive high-quality employment through extracurricular activities such as practical training and comprehensive ability training.

We see vocational education as an extension of the professional discussion forum of the Zhihu community. We continue to advance the digitalization of vocational training by promoting the full coverage of AI technologies in key training phases, enabling every new-generation professional to move forward on the path towards their future careers in an efficient and systematic way and contributing to the exploration and reshaping of the vocational education industry.

#### 4.2. Promoting positive energies

“Professional discussion” is key to Zhihu’s brand positioning and its ability to contribute to public welfare undertakings. We encourage professionals in various fields to participate in community question-and-answer sessions around topical issues to bring positive energies to society through professional discussions.

In 2023, Zhihu launched an online roundtable titled “Psychology Has the Answer 2023”, where answerers from psychology, health and other fields participated in discussions on topics related to psychology to help young people release stress, prevent mental illness and improve their mental health literacy. In addition, professionals from the medical and healthcare industries have compiled a *Handbook on Prevention and Control of Respiratory Diseases in Children*, pooling expertise in the areas of emergency guidelines, home medication, home protection, medical treatment, prevention in general, and dispelling rumors to provide assistance for parents.

In addition, through the “Beacon Prize”, Zhihu focuses on a wide range of topics such as wildlife conservation, accessible mobility, the health of people with ADHD, and accessible museums. By supporting research conducted by professional teams, Zhihu delivers valuable and diverse information to the community, conveys its care for society and facilitates the growth and development of outstanding public welfare projects and civic-minded energies. In 2023, Zhihu’s “Beacon Prize” was recognized as the “Public Welfare Case of the Year” at the 4th Dream Builders Public Welfare Conference held by Southern Weekly.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 5. COMPLIANT OPERATION AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

Compliance is an important foundation for sound business development. Zhihu adheres to standardized development, continuously optimizes its governance structure, strengthens corporate risk management, and sticks to the business bottom line to safeguard information security and user privacy and ensure its sound and sustainable development.

### 5.1. Effective Risk Management

Zhihu believes that good risk management is an important guarantee for the sustainable operation of the Company. We have identified possible risks in our day-to-day operations and developed scientific risk response mechanisms to minimize the potential impact of risks. To better manage internal and external risks in a systematic manner, Zhihu has adopted a “three lines of defense” risk management model and established an internal control structure and risk management system under the supervision and guidance of our Board of Directors.

#### Zhihu “Three Lines of Defense” Risk Management Model

- The first line of defense: It is mainly composed of business departments to identify, evaluate, monitor and manage risks in daily operations.
- The second line of defense: It is mainly composed of human resources, legal affairs, finance, risk control, community, safety and governance center and other functional departments, to provide professional knowledge support and guarantees for the effective implementation of the first line of defense.
- The third line of defense: It is mainly composed of the supervision department and internal audit department of the risk control center with a high degree of independence. It is primarily responsible for evaluating the Company’s risk management and internal monitoring systems and overseeing the implementation of the first and second lines of defense.

We have formulated institutional policies such as the *Regulations Management Code*, *Conflict of Interest Management Policy* and *Internal Audit Management Policy*, and built relevant risk management and internal control processes based on the COSO internal control framework model. In addition, we regularly conduct internal self-assessments of the risks faced by the Company, form documents such as risk self-assessment tracking lists, synchronize with relevant departments for subsequent risk identification and ultimately form audit plans and risk management measures. We also invite the Company’s senior management to and internal auditors to supervise, rectify and review major risk cases based on the problems identified, so as to form a whole-chain risk management mechanism and strive to improve the level and effectiveness of risk management.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The COSO internal control framework is the internal control framework recommended for use by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 5.2. Creating A Fair Business Environment

Creating a fair business environment is a key guarantee for long-term business development. Zhihu abides by a business ethic of integrity and fairness, has zero tolerance for corruption and is committed to creating a fair and favorable business environment, both internally and externally.

### *Adherence to business ethics*

Zhihu strives to create a fair market environment, resolutely opposes the use of inappropriate means to restrict or exclude market competition and persists in its efforts against unfair competition and monopolies. Zhihu updates the Company's relevant systems in a timely manner based on the *Law of the People's Republic of China Against Unfair Competition*, the *Anti-monopoly Law of the People's Republic of China* and other laws and regulations, shapes a corporate culture of honesty and integrity, upholds responsibilities and obligations and builds a foundation of business ethics defined by transparency, fairness and openness.

### *Practicing anti-corruption*

Zhihu always has zero tolerance for corruption. The Company builds red line awareness and promotes the construction of corporate integrity through anti-corruption systems, employee codes of conduct, partner propagation and other initiatives. Zhihu has set up a supervision department as its internal anti-corruption body and established internal policies such as the *Zhihu Employee Integrity Code*, the *Zhihu Employee "Seven Red Lines"*, the *Zhihu Employee Sunshine Declaration Policy* and the *Zhihu Sunshine Monitoring Policy* to continuously strengthen internal supervision and regulate anti-corruption practices within the Company.

Meanwhile, Zhihu continues to strengthen the integrity awareness of all its employees in the hope of eliminating corruption from within. Zhihu has established an integrity commitment clause in the *Employment Contract* of its employees, stipulating that all employees are required to sign the *"Notice of Integrity for Zhihu Employees"* and receive anti-corruption compliance training when they join the Company. On this basis, Zhihu stipulates that employees are not allowed to accept gifts from outside parties, and encourages them to make declarations of hospitality and visits with outside parties.

We continue to improve our anti-corruption system and strengthen innovative practices for integrity and compliance. Zhihu conducts anti-corruption training on different topics from time to time and has set up an internal integrity monitoring and advocacy platform, the *"Sunshine Pirate/Pirate Ship"*, releasing alerts and educational messages in the form of typical anti-corruption cases and industry integrity dynamics, reminding every employee to never challenge the red line.

### *Improving whistleblower protection*

To ensure smooth communication, Zhihu has set up a multi-channel and multi-form complaint and whistle-blowing mechanism. We have developed internal policies such as the *Supervision Department Case Investigation Specification* and the *Whistle-blower, Complainant and Witness Protection Policy* to standardize the reporting process and established a whistleblower protection mechanism to impose strict controls on the extent of authority in receiving reports, ensure information security and privacy of whistleblowers and eliminate acts of retaliation. Whistleblowers can provide information via the monitoring and reporting mailbox. Upon receipt of a complaint or report, the Company will advance the response and implement the investigation according to the internal process and the specified time limit. During the Reporting Period, Zhihu had no concluded corruption lawsuits against the Company or its employees.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 6. PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS FOR A BETTER HOMELAND

Building an ecologically sound green home is a shared responsibility of humanity as a whole. Guided by the goal of achieving carbon peak and carbon neutrality, Zhihu strives to improve its environmental management measures by practicing green operations, advocating green growth and strengthening emissions and water management, and endeavors to tackle the impact of climate change, making every effort to move towards a green and sustainable future.

### 6.1. Practicing Green Operations

Zhihu promotes the concept of green operations and strives to be an environmentally friendly business, incorporating the concepts of energy conservation, emission reduction and resource conservation into the Company's daily operations to minimize the environmental impact of its operations. Zhihu strictly abides by laws and regulations such as the *Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China* and the *Law on Energy Conservation of the People's Republic of China*, and has formulated the *Zhihu Office Area Energy Conservation Policy* to create a low-carbon, environmentally friendly operating model.

#### *Energy use and management*

Zhihu practices energy conservation and emission reduction in its daily office activities and is committed to reducing energy consumption in its operations. In addition to more energy-efficient office equipment and LED lighting systems, the Company employs a smart air conditioning system that can be turned on differently for office areas based on outdoor temperatures to reduce energy use. In addition, we have set up energy-saving and emission reduction sign reminders at major power-using equipment in the office area to remind employees to conserve electricity in their daily work, such as turning off electronic equipment during non-use hours.

Zhihu also adopts cloud servers in its operations. Compared with traditional servers, cloud servers can allocate resources based on actual demand and consolidate computing tasks to enhance the effectiveness of hardware resources and reduce unnecessary energy losses, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of a data center. In addition, cloud server providers regularly update their hardware to ensure server performance and reliability, reduce device wear and tear and increase energy efficiency.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

### *Emissions management*

To sustainably manage emissions, Zhihu strictly complies with the *Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China*, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Prevention and Control of Water Pollution*, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Waste*, the *Regulations on Domestic Waste Management of Beijing Municipality* and other relevant regulations, and has taken a series of measures to minimize the environmental impact of its emissions.

In the emissions generation phase, we consciously choose environmentally friendly products to avoid pollution at the source, such as biodegradable food boxes instead of disposable ones, and more eco-friendly materials for gift boxes.

#### **Case: Safe and environmentally friendly biodegradable food containers contribute to plastic reduction goals**

Plastic reduction actions have become an urgent environmental need as the problem of plastic pollution has intensified. Following rigorous testing and adjustments, Zhihu has fully adopted safe and environmentally friendly biodegradable food containers which meet the national standards to replace the current options used in group meals and buffets. The food boxes decompose quickly in the natural environment, avoiding long-term damage to the planet. The initiative will help significantly reduce plastic waste and carbon dioxide emissions. It is expected to reduce plastic waste by 24 tonnes a year and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by approximately 55 tonnes, equivalent to planting 3,055 trees per year for the planet.

In the disposal of emissions, Zhihu adheres to the principle of non-hazardous treatment. Hazardous wastes including used toner and ink cartridges are processed by the original manufacturer on a regular basis. Other electronic wastes and all end-of-life equipments will be processed in a closed-loop manner by specialized suppliers in accordance with environmental standards to minimize negative environmental impact. In addition, we strictly follow the requirements of the management regulations of each operating site to sort wastes generated in office areas by classifying them into four categories to promote waste recovery and recycling.

### *Water management*

Zhihu advocates sustainable water use and improves water efficiency through a variety of initiatives. The Company conducts regular maintenance of water equipment to ensure that faucets and other facilities are functioning properly. At the same time, smart water-saving devices such as sensor faucets and flushing systems have been installed to ensure water quality while reducing water waste. We also strive to raise awareness of water conservation and promote civilized water use among our employees by posting relevant slogans in office areas.

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## *Creating a low-carbon work environment*

We advocate the concept of green offices and pursue green and low-carbon development by locating our offices in a low-carbon park renovated from old buildings. We implemented “technology, safety, green and harmony” concepts in the design and construction phases, to ensure compliance with low carbon and environmental protection standards. During the renovation, we also strived to reduce resource consumption by preserving as much of the original structure as possible, and to mitigate harmful emissions by using eco-friendly paints and limiting the use of glue in an effort to transform the old park into a greener and healthier workspace. Additionally, we promote green travel among our employees by encouraging the use of public transportation to reduce the carbon footprint of commuting. We work with our employees to pass on the concept of green, low-carbon growth to accelerate green changes in everyday life.

### **Environmental objectives**

We have set objectives based on the environmental impact of our operations, which include:

- Achieving 100% recycling of hazardous waste.
- Implementing 100% waste separation and paperless offices at Zhihu’s Beijing location.
- Reducing per capita electricity consumption at Zhihu’s Beijing location by 5% by the end of 2027, with 2022 as the base year.
- Enhancing employees’ awareness of water conservation and reduce per capita water consumption at Zhihu’s Beijing location by 5% by the end of 2027, with 2022 as the base year.

## **6.2. Advocating Environmental Protection**

Zhihu leverages the advantages and influence of its platform to promote green growth and environmental protection concepts, disseminate green culture and knowledge and advocate sustainable lifestyles to its users and the public. On Earth Day 2023, Zhihu released the “20 Small Things to Do for the Environment” list to help users understand what they can do and take action to foster environmental protection awareness through small things, thereby contributing to a greener, better and happier home.

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The oceans are the source of life on Earth. In November 2023, the *Where the Sea Begins* science and art exhibition supported by Zhihu's Beacon Prize was held in Nanjing. Using AI technology, the exhibition innovatively transformed scientific observational data into tangible audio-visual interactive experiences that presented viewers with an immersive experience of crises such as melting glaciers and ocean pollution. Through high-tech means and artistic expression, *Where the Sea Begins* provided a sharing platform for the public to learn about marine knowledge and marine issues, bringing marine science to the public in a fun way to help them experience the allure of the ocean and inspire their passion for environmental protection.



Where the Sea Begins Science and Art Exhibition

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 6.3. Addressing Climate Change

Climate change is a global challenge. Faced with the challenges posed by rising temperatures and extreme weather, Zhihu has proactively identified the various risks that climate change poses to business operations and has actively developed countermeasures to enhance the company's resilience under climate change scenarios and explored ways to jointly respond.

- Governance

Zhihu's Board of Directors is actively involved in making decisions on the identification of climate-related risks and opportunities and formulating management strategies accordingly, and has mandated the Corporate Governance Committee to oversee ESG management and to guide the ESG Working Group in the identification and assessment of climate risks on a regular basis.

- Strategy

Based on the identification of risks and opportunities posed by climate change, Zhihu has developed and reviewed specific initiatives to address climate change, kept optimizing its business development strategy and resource allocation and continuously activated its innovation capacity, in an effort to address the risks and challenges of climate change and seize the opportunities of low-carbon development and transition.

- Risk management

The Company incorporates climate change risks into its corporate risk management. In 2023, the Board of Directors and the Corporate Governance Committee assessed the Company's potential climate risks and developed appropriate management and response initiatives. The details are as follows:

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

Risk type		Potential risk impacts	Key responses
Physical risks	Acute risks	Hurricanes	<p>Disasters arising from extreme weather events caused by climate change, such as hurricanes, extreme precipitation and blizzards, will affect the normal operation of infrastructure, employee commuting, business travel, etc., resulting in business interruptions and other issues that could Zhihu in breach of contract, damages and legal liabilities.</p> <p>Impacts such as increases in average temperatures, changes in rainfall and potential sea level rise due to climate change could negatively affect the proper functioning of the infrastructure and equipment at Zhihu, the service life of the equipment and the Company's operations.</p> <p>When selecting locations for operations, the Company should consult local historical data on natural disasters and give priority to weather-friendly areas within the operating area.</p> <p>The Company provides advance forecasts and warnings of extreme weather, develops the Emergency Response Plan for flood control, natural disasters and other emergencies and implements a work-from-home strategy when necessary to keep people and property safe.</p> <p>The Company continuously optimizes operational efficiency, increases the use of energy-efficient technologies and equipment, monitors and manages overall energy efficiency performance, and explores clean energy opportunities.</p>
		Extreme precipitation	
		Blizzards	
	Chronic risks	Increases in average temperatures	
		Increased precipitation	

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

Risk type		Potential risk impacts	Key responses	
Transition risks	Policy and regulatory risks	Increasingly stringent laws, regulations and policies related to climate change	Domestic and international policies are tightening, with carbon trading, carbon taxes and other mechanisms being phased in, and regulators and capital market rating indices in China and other countries increasingly demanding disclosure of environmental information from companies. Zhihu must continue to improve the comprehensiveness and accuracy of its environmental information disclosures; otherwise it may face compliance risks and potential investor pressure.	The Company studies and follows up on climate-related laws, regulations and policies, updates each business line on the impacts of these laws, regulations and policies, and implements strategies and countermeasures.
		Enhanced responsibility for information disclosure	The Company optimizes environmental management, improves detection and analysis control systems and enhances the comprehensiveness and accuracy of environmental information disclosures.	
	Technology risks	Costs of transitioning to energy-efficient/low-emission technologies	Amid global efforts to adapt to and mitigate climate change, the transition to green and low-carbon technology has gone mainstream, and Zhihu is also facing pressure from the transition to low-carbon technology and the purchase of environmentally friendly and energy-efficient equipment, resulting in increased potential compliance and operational costs.	The Company encourages and increases the use of green technologies within the Company and its value chain partners, and explores energy conservation and emission reduction possibilities by increasing the use of cloud servers, promoting green offices and other means.
			The Company carefully considers the rationality and feasibility of green technologies before investing in their development and widespread use, so as to reduce the risk of potential financial losses.	
	Market risks	Gradual increase in user and consumer acceptance of the green, low-carbon growth concept	With the growing public acceptance of the concept of environmental protection, users and consumers will favor green options when choosing platforms. If the Company fails to effectively implement the green growth path, Zhihu may risk losing their market.	Leveraging the resources and influence of Zhihu as a knowledge-sharing platform, we promote green growth, create a good corporate image and gain the favor of our customers through themed communications, roundtables, art exhibitions and other activities.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

Risk type		Potential risk impacts	Key responses
Transition risks	Market risks	Gradual increase in user and consumer acceptance of the green, low-carbon growth concept	With the growing public acceptance of the concept of environmental protection, users and consumers will favor green options when choosing platforms. If the Company fails to effectively implement the green growth path, Zhihu may risk losing their market.
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# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 7. ALIGNMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) refers to the 17 global development goals formulated by the United Nations which provide constructive guidance for promoting global sustainable development. To help achieve the UN SDGs, Zhihu has integrated these goals into its own strategy and operations, identified UN SDGs relevant to its operations and actively implemented actions to address them.

UN SDGs		Zhihu's key initiatives
 <p>1 無貧窮</p>	<p><b>Goal 1: No poverty</b></p>	<p>Zhihu is committed to serving the development of rural revitalization by improving the conditions of basic education. For example, the Company donated cash and lighting facilities to Rongjiang County in the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture of Guizhou Province, contributing to the country's public welfare undertakings.</p>
 <p>3 良好健康與福祉</p>	<p><b>Goal 3: Good health and well-being</b></p>	<p>Zhihu is concerned about the mental health of its users, and has built a rescue procedure integrating "discovery, study and judgment and graded treatment" to encourage users to face life positively. At the same time, the Company attaches importance to the occupational health and safety of its employees and has established a comprehensive system for safeguarding their health and safety.</p>
 <p>4 優質教育</p>	<p><b>Goal 4: Quality education</b></p>	<p>Zhihu values talent development and training, and has created a comprehensive and systematic talent training framework that incorporates general skills, leadership and professional competencies. True to its aspiration to promote education, Zhihu contributes to the cause of public good in education with donations aimed at supporting needy students through its partnership with the Haidian Education Foundation of Beijing.</p>
 <p>5 性別平等</p>	<p><b>Goal 5: Gender equality</b></p>	<p>Zhihu strives to create a fair and equal work environment by adhering to policies of gender equality and equal pay for work of equal value and providing caring facilities such as nursing rooms.</p>
 <p>6 清潔飲水和衛生設施</p>	<p><b>Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation</b></p>	<p>With a focus on water management, Zhihu strives to strengthen employee awareness of water conservation and reduce water waste by adopting smart water-efficient equipment, posting water conservation slogans and other initiatives.</p>

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

UN SDGs	Zhihu's key initiatives
 <p>8 體面工作和經濟增長</p>	<p><b>Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth</b></p> <p>Zhihu provides competitive salaries and a comprehensive welfare system to create a satisfying workplace and enhance employees' sense of belonging. Meanwhile, through the Zhihu Rank System and other references, Zhihu provides employees with clear, transparent and diverse career development channels.</p>
 <p>9 產業、創新和基礎設施</p>	<p><b>Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure</b></p> <p>Zhihu adheres to technology research and development and product innovation, launching its first Large Language Model, Zhihaitu AI, leading innovation in product business and product services and effectively safeguarding its innovation outcomes through a sound information security management framework and system.</p>
 <p>10 減少不平等</p>	<p><b>Goal 10: Reduced inequalities</b></p> <p>Zhihu opposes all forms of workplace discrimination, upholds fair and just employment and welcomes employees of different genders, ages, nationalities, regions and religious backgrounds to create a diverse work environment that respects and protects the legitimate rights and interests of employees.</p>
 <p>11 可持續城市和社區</p>	<p><b>Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities</b></p> <p>Through campaigns such as "Collaborative Protecting the Seedlings 2023" and "Cyberspace Clean-Up", Zhihu has strengthened community building, safeguarded the healthy growth of young people and created a safe online environment and quality digital communities. The Company values digital inclusion and ensures that all users, including the elderly and the visually impaired, have equal access to digital services.</p>
 <p>12 負責任消費和生產</p>	<p><b>Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production</b></p> <p>Zhihu is committed to building a healthy business ecosystem by practicing advertising compliance operations and responsible marketing through a rigorous ad review mechanism. Zhihu has also strengthened the green management of its supply chain, and advocates low-carbon development and responsible production and consumption.</p>
 <p>13 氣候行動</p>	<p><b>Goal 13: Climate action</b></p> <p>Zhihu is actively responding to climate change by enhancing green growth through initiatives such as promoting green, low-carbon development and environmental protection and implementing green offices, and enhancing its resilience to climate change by actively identifying climate change-related risks.</p>
 <p>16 和平、正義與強大機構</p>	<p><b>Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions</b></p> <p>Zhihu continues to strengthen business ethics management for its employees and suppliers, and has formulated a whistleblower protection mechanism and set up an internal integrity monitoring and dissemination platform. The Company adheres to compliant operations and conducts rigorous investigations into corruption.</p>

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Environmental Key Performance Indicators

Category	Indicator	Unit	2023
Emissions	<b>Greenhouse Gas</b>		
	Total greenhouse gas emissions <sup>3</sup>	Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	869.11
	Greenhouse gas emission intensity	Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)/person	0.31
	Direct emissions (Scope 1)	Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	0
	Indirect emissions (Scope 2)	Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	869.11
	<b>Waste</b>		
	Non-hazardous waste <sup>4</sup>	Tonnes	28.80
	Hazardous waste <sup>5</sup>	Tonnes	0.09
	Per capita generation of non-hazardous waste	Tonnes/person	0.01
	Per capita generation of hazardous waste	Tonnes/person	0.00003
Use of Resources	<b>Energy</b>		
	Total energy consumption <sup>6</sup>	Kilowatt-hour (kWh)	1,523,961.00
	Energy consumption intensity	KWh/person	558.02
	Indirect energy consumption	Kilowatt-hour (kWh)	1,523,961.00
	Purchased electricity <sup>7</sup>	Kilowatt-hour (kWh)	1,523,961.00
	<b>Water consumption</b>		
	Total water consumption <sup>8</sup>	Tonnes	12,577.00
Per capita water consumption	Tonnes/person	4.61	

<sup>3</sup> During the Reporting Period, Zhihu's GHG emissions were generated only from the use of purchased electricity, with no gasoline, diesel or natural gas consumption, resulting in zero direct GHG emissions. GHG emissions are calculated with reference to the calculation methods and emission factors in *The Greenhouse Gas Protocol: A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard* and the *Notice on the Management of GHG Emissions Reporting for Power Generation Sector from 2023 to 2025*.

<sup>4</sup> Non-hazardous waste includes office waste, household waste, food waste and other non-hazardous waste.

<sup>5</sup> Hazardous waste includes selenium-containing and carbon-containing waste, electronic waste, spent fluorescent tubes, used batteries and other hazardous waste.

<sup>6</sup> During the Reporting Period, Zhihu did not generate direct energy consumption and all indirect energy consumption was generated from the use of purchased electricity, and therefore no direct energy consumption is shown.

<sup>7</sup> The purchased electricity data covers workplaces in all of Zhihu's operating locations, including those in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Nanjing and Wuhan.

<sup>8</sup> The main sources of total water consumption in Zhihu are municipal water supply and drinking water, and there are no water purchases and no issues in sourcing water.

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## Social Key Performance Indicators

Category	Indicator	Unit	2023
Employment	Number of employees	Persons	2,731
	<b>By employment type</b>		
	Number of full-time employees	Persons	2,731
	Number of part-time employees	Persons	0
	<b>By gender</b>		
	Total number of male employees	Persons	1,246
	Total number of female employees	Persons	1,485
	<b>By employee level</b>		
	Total number of employees at senior management level	Persons	27
	Total number of employees at middle management level	Persons	174
	Total number of non-management employees	Persons	2,530
	<b>By age</b>		
	Number of employees under the age of 30	Persons	1,395
	Number of employees aged 30 and above	Persons	1,336
	<b>By region</b>		
	Number of employees based in the Mainland of China	Persons	2,728
Number of employees based in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, China and overseas regions	Persons	3	

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Category	Indicator	Unit	2023
Employment	<b>Employee turnover</b>		
	Employee turnover rate of the year	%	26.7%
	<b>By gender</b>		
	Turnover rate of male employees	%	26.4%
	Turnover rate of female employees	%	27.0%
	<b>By age</b>		
	Turnover rate of employees under the age of 30	%	34.3%
	Turnover rate of employees aged 30 and above	%	18.7%
	<b>By region</b>		
	Employee turnover rate in the Mainland of China	%	26.7%
Employee turnover rate in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, China and overseas regions	%	33.3%	
Development and Training	<b>Percentage of employees trained</b>		
	<b>By gender</b>		
	Percentage of male employees trained	%	51.7%
	Percentage of female employees trained	%	48.3%
	<b>By employee level</b>		
	Percentage of senior management trained	%	1.3%
	Percentage of middle management trained	%	6.1%
Percentage of non-management employees trained	%	92.6%	

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Category	Indicator	Unit	2023
Development and Training	<b>Average number of hours of training for employees by gender and employee category</b>		
	<b>By gender</b>		
	Average number of hours of training for male employees	Hours	14
	Average number of hours of training for female employees	Hours	15
	<b>By employee level</b>		
	Average number of hours of training for senior management	Hours	11
	Average number of hours of training for middle management	Hours	14
	Average number of hours of training for non-management employees	Hours	15
Health and Safety	Lost days due to work injury	Days	0
Supply Chain Management	Total number of suppliers	Unit	6,366
	<b>By region</b>		
	Number of suppliers in the Mainland of China	Unit	6,254
	Number of suppliers from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, China and overseas regions	Unit	112

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

## 9. REPORTING GUIDE CONTENT INDEX

Subject Areas, Aspects, General Disclosures and KPIs	Corresponding Section
<b>A. Environmental</b>	
<b>A1 Emissions</b>	
General Disclosure	6.1 Practicing Green Operations
A1.1 The types of emissions and respective emissions data.	N/A
A1.2 Direct (Scope 1) and energy indirect (Scope 2) greenhouse gas emissions (in tonnes) and, where appropriate, intensity (e.g. per unit of production volume, per facility).	Key Performance Indicators
A1.3 Total hazardous waste produced (in tonnes) and, where appropriate, intensity (e.g. per unit of production volume, per facility).	Key Performance Indicators
A1.4 Total non-hazardous waste produced (in tonnes) and, where appropriate, intensity (e.g. per unit of production volume, per facility).	Key Performance Indicators
A1.5 Description of emissions target(s) set and steps taken to achieve them.	6.1 Practicing Green Operations
A1.6 Description of how hazardous and non-hazardous wastes are handled, and a description of reduction target(s) set and steps taken to achieve them.	6.1 Practicing Green Operations
<b>A2 Use of Resources</b>	
General Disclosure	6.1 Practicing Green Operations
A2.1 Direct and/or indirect energy consumption by type (e.g. electricity, gas or oil) in total (kWh in '000s) and intensity (e.g. per unit of production volume, per facility)	Key Performance Indicators
A2.2 Water consumption in total and intensity (e.g. per unit of production volume, per facility)	Key Performance Indicators
A2.3 Description of energy use efficiency target(s) set and steps taken to achieve them.	6.1 Practicing Green Operations
A2.4 Description of whether there is any issue in sourcing water that is fit for purpose, water efficiency target(s) set and steps taken to achieve them.	6.1 Practicing Green Operations
A2.5 Total packaging material used for finished products (in tonnes) and, if applicable, with reference to per unit produced.	N/A

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Subject Areas, Aspects, General Disclosures and KPIs	Corresponding Section
<b>A3 The Environment and Natural Resources</b>	
General Disclosure	6.1 Practicing Green Operations
A3.1 Description of the significant impacts of activities on the environment and natural resources and the actions taken to manage them.	6.1 Practicing Green Operations
<b>A4 Climate Change</b>	
General Disclosure	6.3 Addressing Climate Change
A4.1 Description of the significant climate-related issues which have impacted, and those which may impact, the issuer, and the actions taken to manage them.	6.3 Addressing Climate Change
<b>B. Social</b>	
<b>Employment and Labor Practices</b>	
<b>B1 Employment</b>	
General Disclosure	3.1 Protecting the Legitimate Rights and Interests of Employees
B1.1 Total workforce by gender, employment type (for example, full- or part-time), age group and geographical region.	Key Performance Indicators
B1.2 Employee turnover rates by gender, age group and region.	Key Performance Indicators
<b>B2 Health and Safety</b>	
General Disclosure	3.4 Creating a Safe Work Environment
B2.1 Number and rate of work-related fatalities occurred in each of the past three years including the reporting year.	3.4 Creating a Safe Work Environment
B2.2 Lost days due to work injury.	Key Performance Indicators
B2.3 Description of occupational health and safety measures adopted, and how they are implemented and monitored.	3.4 Creating a Safe Work Environment
<b>B3 Development and Training</b>	
General Disclosure	3.2 Unleashing the Growth Potential of Employees
B3.1 The percentage of employees trained by gender and employee category (e.g. senior management, middle management).	Key Performance Indicators
B3.2 Average number of hours of training completed per employee by gender and employee category.	Key Performance Indicators

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Subject Areas, Aspects, General Disclosures and KPIs	Corresponding Section
<b>B4 Labor Standards</b>	
General Disclosure	3.1 Protecting the Legitimate Rights and Interests of Employees
B4.1 Description of measures to review employment practices to avoid child and forced labor.	3.1 Protecting the Legitimate Rights and Interests of Employees
B4.2 Description of steps taken to eliminate such practices when discovered.	3.1 Protecting the Legitimate Rights and Interests of Employees
<b>Operating Practices</b>	
<b>B5 Supply Chain Management</b>	
General Disclosure	1.5 Supply Chain Management, Assured Procurement Compliance
B5.1 Number of suppliers by geographical region.	Key Performance Indicators
B5.2 Description of practices relating to engaging suppliers, number of suppliers where the practices are being implemented, and how they are implemented and monitored.	1.5 Supply Chain Management, Assured Procurement Compliance
B5.3 Description of practices used to identify environmental and social risks along the supply chain, and how they are implemented and monitored.	1.5 Supply Chain Management, Assured Procurement Compliance
B5.4 Description of practices used to promote environmentally preferable products and services when selecting suppliers, and how they are implemented and monitored.	1.5 Supply Chain Management, Assured Procurement Compliance
<b>B6 Product Responsibility</b>	
General Disclosure	1.1 Healthy Atmosphere, Premium Community
B6.1 Percentage of total products sold or shipped subject to recalls for safety and health reasons.	N/A
B6.2 Number of products and service related complaints received and how they are dealt with.	2.1 User-First Principle, Service Optimization
B6.3 Description of practices relating to observing and protecting intellectual property rights.	1.4 Intellectual Property Protection, Sustained Creative Energy
B6.4 Description of quality assurance process and recall procedures.	N/A
B6.5 Description of consumer data protection and privacy policies, and how they are implemented and monitored.	2.3 Information Security, Privacy Protection

# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

Subject Areas, Aspects, General Disclosures and KPIs	Corresponding Section
<b>B7 Anti-corruption</b>	
General Disclosure	5.2 A Fair Business Environment
B7.1 Number of concluded legal cases regarding corrupt practices brought against the issuer or its employees during the Reporting Period and the outcomes of the cases.	5.2 A Fair Business Environment
B7.2 Description of preventive measures and whistle-blowing procedures, and how they are implemented and monitored.	5.2 A Fair Business Environment
B7.3 Description of anti-corruption training provided to directors and staff.	5.2 A Fair Business Environment
<b>Community</b>	
<b>B8 Community Investment</b>	
General Disclosure	4. Contributing to a Harmonious Society
B8.1 Focus areas of contribution (e.g., education, environmental concerns, labor needs, health, culture, sports).	4. Contributing to a Harmonious Society
B8.2 Resources contributed (e.g., money or time) to the focus areas.	4. Contributing to a Harmonious Society