

No. 06968057

PRIVATE COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION
of
NEW EARTH SOLUTIONS (WEST) LIMITED

(As adopted by Special Resolution passed on.....2022)



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1 PRELIMINARY

- 1.1 In these articles "**Model Articles**" means the model articles set out in Schedule 1 to the Companies (Model Articles) Regulations 2008 as in force on the date when these articles become binding on the company. The articles contained in the Model Articles shall, except where they are excluded or modified by these articles, apply to the company.
- 1.2 Model Articles 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 22(2), 26(5), 52 and 53 shall not apply to the company but the articles hereinafter contained and the remaining articles of the Model Articles, subject to the modifications hereinafter expressed, shall constitute the articles of the company.
- 1.3 Save as expressly stated otherwise, words and expressions defined in the Model Articles shall (unless the context otherwise requires) bear the same meanings in these articles. The headings are inserted for convenience only and shall not affect the construction of these articles.
- 1.4 In these articles, "**A Shareholder**" means any person who is a holder of A ordinary shares of £1.00 each in the capital of the Company's indirect holding company Acumen Group Holdings Limited.
- 1.5 In these articles, "**B Shareholder**" means any person who is a holder of B ordinary shares of £1.00 each in the capital of the Company's indirect holding company Acumen Group Holdings Limited.
- 1.6 In these articles, "**A Shareholder Representative Director**" means any director from time to time who is a representative, officer, employee, or other person connected with the A Shareholder(s) (or any of their group undertakings), who is expressly appointed by the A Shareholder(s) as such and, as at the date of adoption of these articles, being Brian McCabe, Damien Murray and Michael Ashall.
- 1.7 In these articles, "**B Shareholder Representative Director**" means any director from time to time who is a representative, officer, employee, or other person connected with the B Shareholder(s), who is expressly appointed by the B Shareholder(s) as such and, as at the date of adoption of these articles, being Kristian Sutton and Andrew Crossley.
- 1.8 In these articles, the "**Act**" means the Companies Act 2006.
- 1.9 In these articles, "**Companies Acts**" means the Act, the Companies Act 1985 and, where the context requires, every other statute from time to time in force concerning companies and affecting the Company.

2 LIABILITY OF MEMBERS

- 2.1 The liability of the members is limited to the amount, if any, unpaid on the shares in the company held by them.

DIRECTORS

3 CHANGE OF NAME

- 3.1 Subject to the provisions of these articles, the directors may, by way of a resolution passed at any meeting of the board, change the name of the company.

4 CHAIRING OF DIRECTORS MEETING

- 4.1 The chair of directors' meetings shall always be an A Shareholder Representative Director.

5 ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

- 5.1 Any director (other than an alternate director) may at any time appoint any other director or any other person who is willing to act to be their alternate director. Any director may at any time remove from office an alternate director appointed by them.
- 5.2 An alternate director shall (subject to their giving the company an address for the purpose of communications in electronic form at which notices may be served on them) be entitled to receive notice of all meetings of the directors and of committees of which their appointor is a member and (in the absence of their appointor) to attend and vote as a director and be counted in the quorum at any such meeting and generally (in the absence of their appointor) to perform all the functions of their appointor as a director.
- 5.3 An alternate director may represent more than one director. An alternate director shall have one vote for each director for whom they act as alternate (in addition, if they are a director, to their own vote), but they shall count as only one for the purpose of determining whether a quorum is present.
- 5.4 An alternate director shall not be entitled to receive any remuneration from the company in respect of their appointment as an alternate director except only such part (if any) of the remuneration otherwise payable to their appointor as their appointor may by notice in writing to the company from time to time direct.
- 5.5 An alternate director shall be entitled to contract and be interested in and benefit from contracts or arrangements with the company and to be repaid expenses and to be indemnified to the same extent as if they were a director.

6 NUMBER OF DIRECTORS

- 6.1 Unless and until determined otherwise by ordinary resolution of the Company, the number of directors (other than alternate directors) shall not be less than three and is not subject to any maximum.
- 6.2 Each B Shareholder shall, for so long as they are a B Shareholder and an employee, director, worker or consultant of any Group Company, have the right, exercisable from time to time, to be a director of the Company.
- 6.3 The A Shareholder shall have the right, exercisable from time to time, to appoint up to three persons to act as directors of the Company.

7 DIRECTORS' GRATUITIES AND PENSIONS

- 7.1 The directors may exercise all the powers of the company to provide benefits whether by the payment of gratuities, pensions or other retirement, superannuation, death or disability benefits of any kind or other allowances or benefits to any individuals (including, without limitation, their relations, dependants and people connected with them) who are or were at any time directors of the company or any body corporate which is or has been a subsidiary of the company or a predecessor in business of the company or any such subsidiary. The directors may contribute to any fund or scheme and pay premiums to a third party for the purchase or provision of any such benefit.
- 7.2 A director or former director shall not be accountable to the company or the shareholders for any benefit of any kind conferred under or pursuant to this article 7.

8 DIRECTORS' POWERS TO AUTHORISE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 8.1 The board of directors shall, for the purposes of section 175 of the Act, have the power to authorise any matter which would or might otherwise constitute or give rise to a breach of the duty of a director under that section to avoid a situation in which they have, or can

have, a direct or indirect interest that conflicts, or possibly may conflict, with the interests of the company.

8.2 Authorisation of a matter under this article 8 shall be effective only if:

- (a) any requirement as to the quorum at the meeting of the board at which the matter is considered is met without counting the director in question and any other interested director (together the "**interested directors**"); and
- (b) the matter was agreed to without the interested directors voting or would have been agreed to if the votes of the interested directors had not been counted.

8.3 Any authorisation of a matter under this article 8:

- (a) may extend to any actual or potential conflict of interest which may reasonably be expected to arise out of the matter so authorised;
- (b) shall be subject to such conditions or limitations as the board may determine, whether at the time such authorisation is given or subsequently;
- (c) may be terminated or suspended by the board at any time,

provided always that any such termination or suspension or the imposition of any such conditions or limitations will not affect anything done by the director concerned prior to such event in accordance with the relevant authorisation.

8.4 A director shall comply with the terms of any such authorisation and with any policies or procedures dealing with conflicts of interest which are from time to time approved by the board.

8.5 Articles 8.1 to 8.4 (inclusive) shall not apply to any interest permitted under article 9.

9 DIRECTORS' PERMITTED INTERESTS

9.1 Subject to compliance with article 9.3 a director notwithstanding their office may:

- (a) be a party to, or otherwise interested in, any proposed or existing contract, transaction or arrangement with a relevant company;
- (b) hold any other office or place of profit with any relevant company (except that of auditor) in conjunction with their office of director on such terms, including, without limitation, as to remuneration, as the directors may determine;
- (c) alone, or through a firm with which they are associated, do paid professional work (except as auditor) for any relevant company and be entitled to remuneration for professional services as if they were not a director;
- (d) be a director or other officer or trustee or representative of, employed by, a partner or a member of, or hold shares or other securities (whether directly or indirectly) in, or otherwise be interested in, any relevant company;
- (e) have any interest which has been authorised by an ordinary resolution of the company, subject to any terms or conditions applicable to such authorisation under or pursuant to such resolution.

9.2 For the purposes of article 9.1 a "**relevant company**" means:

- (a) the company, the ultimate holding company of the company and all subsidiaries and subsidiary undertakings of that holding company; or

- (b) any other body corporate promoted by the company or in which the company is otherwise interested.
- 9.3 Subject to article 9.4, a director shall declare the nature and extent of any interest permitted under article 9.1 at a meeting of the board or in the manner set out in section 184 or section 185 of the Act (irrespective of whether the interest is in a transaction or arrangement with the company and whether they are under a duty under the Act to make such a declaration) or in such other manner as the board may lawfully determine.
- 9.4 No declaration of an interest shall be required by a director:
- (a) in relation to an interest which cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to give rise to a conflict of interest; or
 - (b) in relation to an interest of which the director is not aware or where the director is not aware of the contract, transaction or arrangement in question (and for these purposes, the director concerned is treated as aware of anything of which they ought reasonably to be aware);
 - (c) if, or to the extent that, the other directors are already aware of such interest (and for these purposes, the other directors are treated as aware of anything of which they ought reasonably to be aware); or
 - (d) if, or to the extent that, it concerns the terms of their service contract.
- 9.5 If a director has an interest which is permitted under Article 9.1 they shall comply with any policies or procedures dealing with conflicts of interest and with any specific terms relating to that director which are (in each case) from time to time approved by the board.

10 PROVISIONS APPLYING TO AUTHORISED CONFLICTS AND PERMITTED INTERESTS

- 10.1 A director shall not by reason of their holding office as director (or of any fiduciary relationship established by holding that office), be accountable to the company for any benefit, profit or remuneration which they or any person connected with them derives from any matter authorised under article 8 or any interest permitted under article 9.
- 10.2 No contract, transaction or arrangement relating to any matter authorised under article 8 or any interest permitted under article 9 shall be liable to be avoided by virtue of such authorised matter or permitted interest.
- 10.3 Subject to any terms imposed by the board and/or to any policies or procedures dealing with conflicts of interests which are from time to time approved by the board, a director shall be under no obligation to disclose to the company any information which they obtain or have obtained otherwise than as a director of the company and in respect of which they owe a duty of confidentiality to another person in relation to any matter authorised under article 8 or any interest permitted under article 9.
- 10.4 Article 10.3 is without prejudice to any equitable principle or rule of law which may excuse a director from disclosing information where these articles would otherwise require them to do so.

11 REDEEMABLE A ORDINARY SHARES

- 11.1 Subject to the Companies Acts, and to any rights attaching to existing shares, the Company may issue redeemable A ordinary shares of £0.01 each (the "**Redeemable A Ordinary Shares**"), which can be redeemed or are liable to be redeemed at the option of the Company or the holder. The board may determine the terms, conditions and manner of redemption of the Redeemable A Ordinary Shares PROVIDED ALWAYS that such

redemption shall be at par value. Such terms and conditions shall apply to the relevant shares as if the same were set out in these Articles.

11.2 The holder(s) of the Redeemable A Ordinary Shares:

- (a) shall not be entitled to receive notice of, to attend, to speak or to vote at any general meeting of the Company or to receive or vote on written resolutions;
- (b) shall not be entitled on the disposal (whether by a sale, transfer or otherwise) of all or a substantial part of the business, assets, property or undertaking of the Company to any part of the business, assets, property or undertaking of the Company;
- (c) shall not be entitled to the assets of the Company remaining after the payment of its liabilities, whether this arises on a return of capital, whether on liquidation, capital reduction or otherwise (but excluding a purchase of own shares or redemption of shares made in accordance with the provisions of these Articles); and
- (d) shall be entitled to a dividend strictly at the discretion of the board who shall approve:
 - (i) the payment;
 - (ii) the amount of the payment;
 - (iii) the manner of payment;
 - (iv) the timing of the payment; and
 - (v) all and any other provisions, conditions or obligations whatsoever relating to the payment,

of any dividend via a simple majority decision of the board.

12 PROCEEDINGS OF DIRECTORS

12.1 Subject to any terms imposed by the board and/or to any policies or procedures dealing with conflicts of interests which are from time to time approved by the board, a director:

- (a) shall be counted in the quorum for and shall be entitled to attend and vote at any meeting of the board in relation to:
 - (i) any proposed or existing contract, transaction or arrangement with the company in which they are interested and which is permitted under article 9.1(a)
 - (ii) any resolution relating to a matter authorised under article 8 or any interest which is permitted under article 9.1; and/or
- (b) may, where they reasonably believe that any actual or potential conflict of interest arising out of any matter authorised under article 8 or any interest permitted under article 9 exists:
 - (i) absent himself from any meeting of the board (or part of any meeting) at which any such matter or interest will or may be discussed; and/or
 - (ii) make arrangements not to receive or review documents or information relating to any such matter or interest and/or for such documents or information relating to any such matter or interest to be received and reviewed by a professional adviser.

- 12.2 Save where the Company has a sole director, the quorum for meetings of the board shall be three directors including, without limitation, at least one A Shareholder Representative Director and at least one B Shareholder Representative Director. No business shall be transacted at any board meeting unless the requisite quorum is present at the commencement of the business and also when such business is voted upon. The board may also make decisions by passing resolutions in writing, signed by each of the directors.
- 12.3 If a quorum is not present within half an hour of the time specified for the relevant meeting of directors, the meeting shall be adjourned and Article 11.4 shall apply.
- 12.4 Each director will be notified by the Company by notice in writing of the date, time and place of an adjourned meeting to be convened pursuant to Article 11.3. If at such meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour of the time specified for the meeting then the directors present shall be deemed to form a quorum and the meeting shall proceed
- 12.5 If the number of votes for and against a proposal at a directors' meeting are equal, the chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote.
- 12.6 The A Shareholder Representative Director(s) shall between them and at all times, in aggregate, have one more vote at board meetings than the aggregate number of votes held by the B Shareholder Representative Director(s) and any other directors. By way of illustration only, if three non-A Shareholder Representative Directors are present and entitled to vote on a matter, and only two A Shareholder Representative Directors are present and entitled to vote, then the two A Shareholder Representative Directors would have two votes each to cast (i.e. four votes in aggregate). Where the aggregate number of votes held by the A Shareholder Representative Directors present cannot be divided equally between them then the A Shareholder Representative Director acting as chair of the meeting shall be entitled to cast the additional vote(s).

SHARES AND DISTRIBUTIONS

13 ISSUE OF SHARES

- 13.1 Subject to the provisions of any agreement as may be entered into between the A Shareholders and the B Shareholders from time to time in respect of Acumen Group Holdings Limited, the directors shall be entitled to exercise any power available to them to allot any equity security.

14 EXCLUSION OF STATUTORY PRE-EMPTION RIGHTS

- 14.1 Section 561 of the Act shall not apply to the allotment by the company of any equity security.

15 TRANSFER OF SHARES

- 15.1 The directors may, in their absolute discretion decline to register any transfer of any share, whether or not it is a fully paid share.
- 15.2 Notwithstanding anything contained in these articles, any lien on any shares (whether part or fully paid) which the company has shall not apply in respect of any shares that have been mortgaged or charged by way of security to a bank, other financial institution or other person to which shares have been mortgaged or charged by way of security (or any agent, trustee, nominee or nominees or receiver of such bank, financial institution or other person to which such shares have been mortgaged or charged by way of security).
- 15.3 Notwithstanding anything contained in these articles (whether by way of or in relation to pre-emption rights, restrictions on, or conditions applicable to, share transfers, or otherwise, including, without limitation, any lien referred to in the articles), the directors shall not decline to register any transfer of shares nor suspend registration thereof.

- (a) where such transfer is in favour of a bank, other financial institution or other person to which such shares have been mortgaged or charged by way of security (each a "**Secured Party**"), or to any nominee of a Secured Party and the transfer is as contemplated by, or pursuant to, any mortgage or charge of shares or any call or other share option granted in favour of such Secured Party; or
- (b) where such transfer is by or on behalf of a Secured Party or any nominee of a Secured Party in favour of any third party upon disposal or realisation of shares following the Secured Party having become entitled to exercise or enforce its rights under any such mortgage, charge and/or call or other option

and a certificate by or on behalf of the Secured Party that the relevant transfer is within article 15.3(a) and/or 15.3(b) shall be conclusive evidence of that fact.

16 PURCHASE OF OWN SHARES

- 16.1 Subject to the Companies Acts but without prejudice to any other provision of these articles, the company may purchase its own shares, including, without limitation, to the extent permitted by section 692(1ZA) of the Act.

DECISION-MAKING BY SHAREHOLDERS

17 PROCEEDINGS AT GENERAL MEETINGS

- 17.1 Model Article 41(1) shall be modified by the insertion at the end of that regulation of the following sentence: "If at any adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes from the time appointed for holding that meeting, the meeting shall be dissolved."
- 17.2 A poll may be demanded at any general meeting by any member present in person or by proxy and entitled to vote. Model Article 44 shall be modified accordingly.
- 17.3 In the case of an equality of votes, whether on a show of hands or on a poll, the chair shall be entitled to a casting vote in addition to any other vote they may have.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

18 NOTICES

- 18.1 If a notice or other document is sent by post, it shall be deemed to have been served or delivered twenty-four hours after it was posted or (where second class post is used) forty-eight hours after it was posted. Proof that an envelope containing the notice or document was properly addressed, stamped and put into the post shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given. Any notice or other document not sent by post but delivered or left at a registered address or address for service in the United Kingdom shall be deemed to have been served or delivered when it was so delivered or left. A notice or other document sent in electronic form shall be deemed to have been served or delivered at the time it was sent. Proof that a notice or other document in electronic form was sent in accordance with guidance issued from time to time by the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given.

19 RIGHT TO INDEMNITY

- 19.1 If and only to the extent permitted by law, but without prejudice to any indemnity to which a relevant officer may otherwise be entitled, the company may, if the board so determines, indemnify out of its own funds:
- (a) every relevant officer against all costs, charges, losses, expenses and liabilities incurred by them:

- (i) in connection with any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust by them in relation to the company or an associated company;
 - (ii) in performing their duties; and/or
 - (iii) in exercising their powers; and/or
 - (iv) in claiming to perform their duties or exercise their powers; and/or
 - (v) otherwise in relation to or in connection with their duties, powers or office; and
- (b) every relevant officer, where the company or associated company acts as a trustee of an occupational pension scheme, against any liability incurred in connection with the relevant company's activities as a trustee of such scheme.

19.2 For the purposes of this article 19 and article 21:

- (a) "**associated company**" shall mean a company which is either a subsidiary or holding company of the company or a subsidiary of the holding company of the company (including, without limitation, any company which is a trustee of an occupational pension scheme (as defined by section 235(6) of the Act); and
- (b) "**relevant officer**" means any director or other officer (or former director or other officer) of the company or an associated company, but excluding in each case any person engaged by the company (or associated company) as auditor (whether or not they are also a director or other officer), to the extent they act in their capacity as auditor).

20 INSURANCE

- 20.1 If and only to the extent permitted by law, but without prejudice to the power contained in article 19, the directors may purchase and maintain at the expense of the company insurance for or for the benefit of any persons who are or were at any time directors, officers (excluding auditor) or employees of the company or any related company or trustees of any pension fund or employees' share scheme in which any employees of the company or any related company are interested.
- 20.2 In this article "**related company**" means (i) any company which is or was the company's holding company or (ii) any body (whether incorporated or not) in which the company or any holding company has or had any kind of interest (whether direct or indirect) or (iii) any body (whether incorporated or not) which is associated or connected in any way with the company or any holding company of the company, (iv) any predecessors in business of the company or any other body referred to in this article 20.2, or (v) any body (whether incorporated or not) which is a subsidiary undertaking of the company or any other body referred to in this article 20.2.

21 FUNDS TO MEET EXPENDITURE

21.1 The company (to the extent permitted by law):

- (a) may provide a relevant officer with funds to meet expenditure incurred or to be incurred by them:
 - (i) in defending any criminal or civil proceedings in connection with any alleged negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust by them in relation to the company or an associated company; or
 - (ii) in connection with any application for relief under any of the provisions mentioned in section 205(5) of the Act; or

- (iii) in defending himself in any investigation by a regulatory authority or against action proposed to be taken by a regulatory authority, in connection with any alleged negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust by them in relation to the company or an associated company; or
- (b) may do anything to enable a relevant officer to avoid incurring such expenditure.