plia

Plia European Advisory Board Initial Meeting

Attendees

- Bill Stephenson, Dave Lauer & Amy Scott (Urvin.Compliance / Plia)
- Adam Conn (Baillie Gifford)
- Barney Quinn (Franklin Templeton)
- Dan Riches (M&G)
- Frances Ritter (Vanguard)
- Gregg Dalley (Schroders)
- Jeremy Ellis (T Rowe Price)
- Paul Squires (Invesco)
- Simon Steward (Capital)
- Sal Rodrigez (Instinet)
- James Harron (JP Morgan)
- Thalia Rance/Chloe Frayne (Credit Suisse)

Goals

- Bill outlined the goals for this group:
    1. Collaborate on new ideas for the Plia platform
    2. Prioritize enhancements & new functionality
    3. Discuss ways to widen the network of users to strengthen the overall benefits of the platform

- and the structure of the group:
    1. Inclusion of both buyside and sellside, Plato and non-Plato members.
    2. Meeting quarterly or as needed
    3. Focus groups formed as needed
    4. Capped at 15 members (expecting 10 would attend any meeting)
    5. Run in parallel to US and Asia Advisory boards (neither formalised yet)
    6. Engagement with Compliance and or Legal at each member firm.
       - Please send contact details for these departments.

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Technology

- Dave gave an update on the current application

  1. On acquiring the system, the code base was in good shape, but required updating.

  2. Security is and always was fundamental to the platform. To that end, the dev team specialisation is security. A penetration test has been performed and a report is available if you should require it.
  We would encourage use of the 2 Factor Authentication feature of the platform for increased security.

  3. We have made some updates to the platform, making it more modern and scalable.
  We have given the platform a complete facelift on the user interface, making it more modern and user-friendly.

  4. We have also added an automated billing system, which was rolled out last week.

- and enhancements to come;

  5. More user experience changes.

  6. The addition of online support & help, making this function more scalable and self-service.

- Bill and Dave outlined some enhancements which are planned for the next phase, and invited comment and Q&A:

  1. Questionnaire Management:
  Making this easier for both sides. An overhaul and rationalisation of the standard questionnaires within the system - your feedback would be helpful.
  Adding the ability to create custom questions (private) at a firm level.
  Answers can then be compared over time periods and counterparties as with questions on the standard questionnaires throughout the platform.
  The aim here is to ultimately be able to increase automation and efficiency using AI where possible.

  2. Counterparty Management:
  Contacts by region and asset class
  Algo & Risk limit customisation
  (sellside pull out a file for each client to feed into their algos).
  KYC / legal document storage

  3. Best Execution reporting repository:
  Systematic Internaliser / Block trading / Risk trading
  It might be useful to create a standard format across all brokers, which could be co-ordinated on the platform.

Q & A

- Adam Conn asked a question regarding questionnaires from other regions, such as the HK SFC questionnaire - he felt that it was important this should still be available in the European region.
  Bill answered that that is the case, and that other users are currently using Plia for their SFC attestations.

- Adam Conn asked a question: Will it be possible to upload 'backdated' questionnaires to the system e.g. responses already received to standard questionnaires in 2019, which would be useful for comparison purposes going forward.
  Dave answered that this is not currently planned as a feature, but is something that could be offered as a service, or alternatively the planned document storage features could be leveraged for this purpose.

- Adam Conn asked a question: when creating an ad hoc question, can I make it private or share publicly if I want to?
  Dave answered that yes you will be able to make your custom question private. In future we could use AI technology to identify common themes across custom questions from multiple counterparties and work with those firms to standardise and potentially replace with a new standard question.

- Adam Conn asked a question: What do you envisage the release schedule to look like?
  Dave answered that we envisage a release cycle to be around 4-8 weeks in duration, depending on the level of complexity. The plan would be to release every 4 weeks, although some of these would be minor and some major.

- Bill & Dave asked the brokers if they would share some of their previous frustrations.
  Sal Rodriguez answered that responses must be vetted and approved by Compliance and/or Legal departments, so receiving many versions of the same question worded slightly differently is frustrating and time consuming.

- Gregg Dalley asked whether brokers might be happy to share some documents on the platform for "public" consumption (i.e. all counterparties, whether they are connected with that broker or not).
  Barney Quinn commented that it may be difficult if the broker was to have a different response for different counterparties.
  Dave commented that it would be possible if required and that the concept of a permission request could be implemented, and in the proposed document storage enhancement potentially a counterparty could request a subscription to be alerted to changes within a document.

- A general discussion followed on this topic. It was generally agreed that the ability to have a central repository for information such as venue preferences, algo information/best execution policies etc. whereby when there was a change to the document/settings alerts could be sent to the counterparties, would be very useful for both buyside and sellside.
Simon Steward commented that it would be very helpful to have this kind of two-way interaction with their counterparties within the platform, in a central place with audit trail. The ability to share changes in parameters, preferences, trade limits in one place with all counterparties would be very useful e.g. remove a venue and instantly alert all my brokers.

- Barney Quinn commented that Franklin Templeton had tried to request algo information from their brokers in their own standardised format, to make it easier to compare reports.

- There was a general discussion around a central dashboard where all reports could be viewed together and compared, in context with your own trading information.
The question was asked as to whether there was any interest in RTS 27/28 and rule 606 data collection reporting.
Adam Conn & Gregg Dalley answered that they had no interest in this. Dan Riches mentioned that RTS 27 was likely to be of more interest than 28, but that this information also was to be displayed on their firm's website, and nothing is standardised as yet, so it was agreed that this could be revisited at a later date.

- Thalia Rance mentioned that from a broker perspective, a salesperson on the desk manually inputting information into Plia was a potential introduction of manual errors. The information must be supplied in a timely manner - is there any way in which it can be supplied automatically?
Dave replied that an API level access/interface is part of the roadmap, and asked whether this would be a priority for the sellside participants on the call.

- Simon Steward mentioned that the biggest issue from his perspective is tracking communication through many different channels (especially email). The ability to have a central repository with an audit trail is very helpful, and in his opinion a time lag would be acceptable for this trade off, whilst in realtime is obviously the utopia.

Conclusion

Thank you to everyone for your time.
As mentioned on the call, we will send a short survey to gather your priorities.
We will then summarise these across the group and let you know our roadmap for the next release cycles.

Next meeting: TBA