
UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

☒ **ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2021

OR

☐ **TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the transition period from _____ to _____

Commission file number: 001-38855

Nasdaq, Inc.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware

52-1165937

(State or Other Jurisdiction of Incorporation or Organization)

(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

151 W. 42nd Street, New York, New York 10036

(Address of Principal Executive Offices) (Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: +1 212 401 8700

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class	Trading Symbol(s)	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common Stock, \$0.01 par value per share	NDAQ	The Nasdaq Stock Market
0.900% Senior Notes due 2033	NDAQ33	The Nasdaq Stock Market
0.875% Senior Notes due 2030	NDAQ30	The Nasdaq Stock Market
1.75% Senior Notes due 2029	NDAQ29	The Nasdaq Stock Market

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act. Yes ☐ No ☒

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically every Interactive Data File required to be submitted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit such files). Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, a smaller reporting company, or an emerging growth company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer," "smaller reporting company" and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accelerated filer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-accelerated filer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smaller reporting company	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emerging growth company	<input type="checkbox"/>		

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act. ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has filed a report on and attestation to its management's assessment of the effectiveness of its internal control over financial reporting under Section 404(b) of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (15 U.S.C. 7262(b)) by the registered public accounting firm that prepared or issued its audit report. ☒

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes ☐ No ☒

As of June 30, 2021, the aggregate market value of the registrant's common stock held by non-affiliates of the registrant was approximately \$21.0 billion (this amount represents approximately 119.3 million shares of Nasdaq, Inc.'s common stock based on the last reported sales price of \$175.80 of the common stock on The Nasdaq Stock Market on such date).

Indicate the number of shares outstanding of each of the issuer's classes of common stock, as of the latest practicable date.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Outstanding at February 14, 2022</u>
Common Stock, \$0.01 par value per share	164,412,114 shares

Documents Incorporated by Reference: Certain portions of the Definitive Proxy Statement for the 2022 Annual Meeting of Shareholders are incorporated by reference into Part III of this Form 10-K.

innovations, products and services; trademarks related to our brands, products and services; copyrights in software and creative content; trade secrets; and through other intellectual property rights, licenses of various kinds and contractual provisions. We enter into confidentiality and invention assignment agreements with our employees and contractors, and utilize non-disclosure agreements with third parties with whom we conduct business in order to secure and protect our proprietary rights and to limit access to, and disclosure of, our proprietary information.

We own, or have licensed, rights to trade names, trademarks, domain names and service marks that we use in conjunction with our operations and services. We have registered many of our most important trademarks in the U.S. and in foreign countries. For example, our primary “Nasdaq” mark is a registered trademark that we actively seek to protect in the U.S. and in over 50 other countries worldwide.

Over time, we have accumulated a robust portfolio of issued patents in the U.S. and in many other jurisdictions across the world. We currently hold rights to patents relating to certain aspects of our products, systems, software and services, but we primarily rely on the innovative skills, technical competence and marketing abilities of our personnel. No single patent is in itself core to the operations of Nasdaq or any of its principal business areas.

Corporate Venture Practice

We operate a corporate venture program to make minority investments primarily in emerging growth financial technology companies that are strategically relevant to, and aligned with, Nasdaq. Investments are made through the venture program to further our research and development efforts and accelerate the path to commercial viability. We expect that capital invested will continue to be modest and will not have a material impact on our consolidated financial statements, existing capital return or deployment priorities. Since its inception in 2017, our venture program has grown, with aggregate initial and follow-on investments of approximately \$90 million in 19 companies in various sectors, including data, analytics and workflow, digital assets, market infrastructure, anti-financial crime, new marketplaces, and ESG.

Environmental, Social and Governance Matters

Nasdaq is committed to further advancing our longer-term ESG strategy, advocacy and oversight. We continue to engage with internal and external stakeholders at all levels on ESG matters. During 2021, we deepened our corporate and community ESG efforts, including expanding ESG oversight of our own operations and furthering our commitment to greater sustainability and **climate change** awareness.

For the fourth consecutive year, Nasdaq achieved its continued commitment to be carbon neutral across all business operations through the purchase of green power, carbon removal offsets, and renewable energy certificates. We were named to the Dow Jones Sustainability North America Index for the sixth consecutive year and have seen

positive progress on our ESG scores across multiple rating agencies. Nasdaq is also a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact and the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment.

While our business operations account for a comparatively small environmental impact, we are able to focus environmental efforts on several key areas, including the way we use energy resources, manage our workspaces, and conduct business travel. Through these efforts, we seek to lessen the environmental impact of our organization by reducing atmospheric carbon emissions and managing water and waste associated with business operations. Our commitment to implement Science-Based targets as part of the Science-Based Targets Initiative further emphasizes our ambition to drive to a net-zero economy. For the first time, Nasdaq obtained a Platinum LEED certification for our New York Headquarters and we continue to look for opportunities to transition to green offices across the globe.

We also expanded our ESG services and solutions with new offerings for our clients, including:

- the Nasdaq ESG Advisory Program, which pairs companies with consultative ESG expertise to help them analyze, assess and enact ESG program best practices with the goals of attracting long-term capital and enhancing value;
- the Nasdaq OneReport platform, which helps clients streamline the data gathering process under various frameworks for sustainability reporting and to provide data to ratings agencies;
- the Nasdaq Sustainable Bond Network, which connects issuers and investors in sustainable, green and social bonds, and provides access to detailed information and impact data allowing investors to make more informed decisions;
- the Nasdaq ESG Data Hub, which connects investors with expert-led ESG data sets from leading providers across a wide spectrum of areas, including gender diversity, carbon emissions and **climate risk**, providing detailed and tangible intelligence on companies’ ESG profiles;
- the Nasdaq ESG Data Portal, which now includes ESG-related data from more than 630 companies;
- the Nasdaq ESG Footprint, a tool to help both institutional and retail investors understand the impact of their portfolios; and
- the acquisition of a majority stake in Puro.earth, a leading marketplace for carbon removal, which we believe will address the growing demand for carbon removal by corporations, as well as enable new carbon removal methodologies as technologies evolve.

In 2021, we also adopted a new Supplier Code of Ethics, which encourages our suppliers and vendors to adopt sustainability and environmental practices in line with our published Environmental Practices Statement. This code asks our suppliers to measure, report, and mitigate any potential negative **climate change** and biodiversity impacts associated with their operations, products and services including energy and water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, waste, air and water pollution, nature loss and hazardous materials. Our policy asks suppliers to provide us with information to support our reporting and transparency commitments related to environmental sustainability and supply chain emissions. Additionally, the Supplier Code of Ethics expects suppliers to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce and encourages suppliers to engage diverse-owned business in their supply chain. Our Supplier Code of Ethics is available on Nasdaq's website.

During 2021, the SEC adopted Nasdaq's new listings rule for companies listed on our U.S. exchange to publicly disclose consistent, transparent diversity statistics regarding their board of directors and choose whether to meet recommended board diversity objectives or disclose their reasons for not doing so. The diversity rule is currently being challenged by two advocacy groups in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Nasdaq also was included in the 2021 Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index in recognition for advancing equality across its global workforce, and earned a perfect score for the third consecutive year by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2021 Corporate Equality Index regarding LGBTQ+ workplace equality.

For more information regarding our ESG efforts in 2021, both internally and externally, please see the section entitled "Human Capital Management" below and our Proxy Statement.

Regulation

We are subject to extensive regulation in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

U.S. Regulation

U.S. federal securities laws establish a system of cooperative regulation of securities markets, market participants and listed companies. SROs conduct the day-to-day administration and regulation of the nation's securities markets under the close supervision of, and subject to extensive regulation, oversight and enforcement by, the SEC. SROs, such as national securities exchanges, are registered with the SEC.

This regulatory framework applies to our U.S. business in the following ways:

- regulation of our registered national securities exchanges; and
- regulation of our U.S. broker-dealer and investment advisor subsidiaries.

National Securities Exchanges. SROs in the securities industry are an essential component of the regulatory scheme of the Exchange Act for providing fair and orderly markets and protecting investors. The Exchange Act and the rules thereunder, as well as each SRO's own rules, impose many regulatory and operational responsibilities on SROs, including the day-to-day responsibilities for market and broker-dealer oversight. Moreover, an SRO is responsible for enforcing compliance by its members, and persons associated with its members, with the provisions of the Exchange Act, the rules and regulations thereunder, and the rules of the SRO, including rules and regulations governing the business conduct of its members.

Nasdaq currently operates three cash equity, six options markets and one corporate bond market in the U.S. We operate The Nasdaq Stock Market, The Nasdaq Options Market and the Corporate Bond Market pursuant to The Nasdaq Stock Market's SRO license; Nasdaq BX and Nasdaq BX Options pursuant to Nasdaq BX's SRO license; Nasdaq PSX and Nasdaq PHLX pursuant to Nasdaq PHLX's SRO license; and Nasdaq ISE, Nasdaq GEMX and Nasdaq MRX, each of which operates an options market under its own SRO license. As SROs, each entity has separate rules pertaining to its broker-dealer members and listed companies. Broker-dealers that choose to become members of our exchanges are subject to the rules of those exchanges.

All of our U.S. national securities exchanges are subject to SEC oversight, as prescribed by the Exchange Act, including periodic and special examinations by the SEC. Our exchanges also are potentially subject to regulatory or legal action by the SEC at any time in connection with alleged regulatory violations. We have been subject to a number of routine reviews and inspections by the SEC or external auditors in the ordinary course, and we have been and may in the future be subject to SEC enforcement proceedings. To the extent such actions or reviews and inspections result in regulatory or other changes, we may be required to modify the manner in which we conduct our business, which may adversely affect our business, operating results and financial condition.

Section 19 of the Exchange Act provides that our exchanges must submit to the SEC proposed changes to any of the SROs' rules, practices and procedures, including revisions to provisions of our certificate of incorporation and by-laws that constitute SRO rules. The SEC will typically publish such proposed changes for public comment, after which the SEC may approve or disapprove the proposal, as it deems appropriate. SEC approval requires a finding by the SEC that the proposal is consistent with the requirements of the Exchange Act and the rules and regulations thereunder. Pursuant to the requirements of the Exchange Act, our exchanges must file with the SEC, among other things, all proposals to change their pricing structure.

GENERAL RISK FACTORS

We are a holding company that depends on cash flow from our subsidiaries to meet our obligations, and any restrictions on our subsidiaries' ability to pay dividends or make other payments to us may have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition.

As a holding company, we require dividends and other payments from our subsidiaries to meet cash requirements. Minimum capital requirements mandated by regulatory authorities having jurisdiction over some of our regulated subsidiaries indirectly restrict the amount of dividends paid upstream.

In addition, unremitted earnings of certain subsidiaries outside of the U.S. are used to finance our international operations and are considered to be indefinitely reinvested.

If our subsidiaries are unable to pay dividends and make other payments to us when needed, we may be unable to satisfy our obligations, which would have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and operating results.

We may experience fluctuations in our operating results, which may adversely affect the market price of our common stock.

Our industry is risky and unpredictable and is directly affected by many national and international factors beyond our control, including:

- economic, political and geopolitical market conditions;
- natural disasters, terrorism, pandemics, war or other catastrophes;
- broad trends in finance and technology;
- changes in price levels and volatility in the stock markets;
- the level and volatility of interest rates;
- volatility in commodity markets, including the energy markets;
- changes in government monetary or tax policy;
- the imposition of governmental economic sanctions on countries in which we do business or where we plan to expand our business;
- the perceived attractiveness of the U.S. or European capital markets; and
- inflation.

Any one of these factors could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and operating results by causing a substantial decline in the financial services markets and reducing trading volumes or values.

Additionally, since borrowings under our credit facilities bear interest at variable rates and commercial paper is issued at prevailing interest rates, any increase in interest rates on debt that we have not fixed using interest rate hedges will increase our interest expense, reduce our cash flow or increase the cost of future borrowings or refinancings. Other than variable rate debt, we believe our business has relatively large fixed costs and low variable costs, which magnifies the impact of

revenue fluctuations on our operating results. As a result, a decline in our revenue may lead to a relatively larger impact on operating results. A substantial portion of our operating expenses is related to personnel costs, regulation and corporate overhead, none of which can be adjusted quickly and some of which cannot be adjusted at all. Our operating expense levels are based on our expectations for future revenue. If actual revenue is below management's expectations, or if our expenses increase before revenues do, both revenues less transaction-based expenses and operating results would be materially and adversely affected. Because of these factors, it is possible that our operating results or other operating metrics may fail to meet the expectations of stock market analysts and investors. If this happens, the market price of our common stock may be adversely affected.

Our operational processes are subject to the risk of error, which may result in financial loss or reputational damage.

We have instituted extensive controls to reduce the risk of error inherent in our operations; however, such risk cannot completely be eliminated. Our businesses are highly dependent on our ability to process and report, on a daily basis, a large number of transactions across numerous and diverse markets. Some of our operations require complex processes, and the introduction of new products or services or changes in processes or reporting due to regulatory requirements may result in an increased risk of errors for a period after implementation. Additionally, the likelihood of such errors or vulnerabilities is heightened as we acquire new products from third parties, whether as a result of acquisitions or otherwise.

Data, other content or information that we distribute may contain errors or be delayed, causing reputational harm. Use of our products and services as part of the investment process creates the risk that clients, or the parties whose assets are managed by our clients, may pursue claims against us in the event of such delay or error. Even with a favorable outcome, significant litigation against us might unduly burden management, personnel, financial and other resources.

In addition, the sophisticated software we sell to our customers may contain undetected errors or vulnerabilities, some of which may be discovered only after delivery, or could fail to perform its intended purpose. Because our clients depend on our solutions for critical business functions, any service interruptions, failures or other issues may result in lost or delayed market acceptance and lost sales, or negative customer experiences that could damage our reputation, resulting in the loss of customers, loss of revenues and liability for damages, which may adversely affect our business and financial results.

Climate change may have a long-term adverse impact on our business, and climate change disclosure requirements may reduce demand for listings on our exchanges.

While we seek to mitigate our business risks associated with climate change by establishing robust environmental and sustainability programs, there are inherent climate related risks wherever our business is conducted. There is an

increased focus from our investors, clients, employees, and other stakeholders concerning corporate citizenship and sustainability matters. Access to clean water and reliable energy in the communities where we conduct our business, whether for our offices, data centers, vendors, clients or other stakeholders, is a priority. For example, changes in weather where we operate may increase the costs of powering and cooling our data centers or the facilities that we use to operate our exchanges and clearinghouses, develop our products or provide cloud-based services. **Climate** related events, including extreme weather events and their impact on the critical infrastructure in the United States and elsewhere, have the potential to disrupt our business or the business of our clients; cause increased volatility in commodity markets in which Nasdaq Clearing operates as a clearinghouse, which may result in Nasdaq Clearing holding insufficient collateral for such volatility; lead to an increase in costs of raw materials, which may adversely affect certain of our listed companies operating in certain sectors and create adverse market conditions, including trading volatility beyond historical levels, any of which could adversely affect our business, reputation, financial condition and operating results. Additionally, if the SEC or other federal regulatory agencies impose comprehensive reporting obligations regarding **climate change** on public companies, there may be a decrease in new listings or an increase in de-listings of our listed companies, which may adversely affect our business, financial condition and operating results. Such new regulations, whether in the U.S. or in other countries in which we operate, could also cause us to incur additional compliance and reporting costs.

Our businesses operate in various international markets, including certain emerging markets that are subject to greater political, economic and social uncertainties than developed countries.

Our businesses operate in various international markets, including but not limited to Northern Europe, the Baltics, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, and our non-U.S. operations are subject to the risk inherent in the international environment. Political, economic or social events or developments in one or more of our non-U.S. locations could adversely affect our operations and financial results. Some locations, such as Lithuania, India and the Philippines, have economies that may be subject to greater political, economic and social uncertainties than countries with more developed institutional structures, which may increase our operational risk.

Unforeseen or catastrophic events could interrupt our critical business functions. In addition, our U.S. and European businesses are heavily concentrated in particular areas and may be adversely affected by events in those areas.

We may incur losses as a result of unforeseen or catastrophic events, such as terrorist attacks, natural disasters, pandemics (such as COVID-19), extreme weather, fire, power loss, telecommunications failures, human error, theft, sabotage and

vandalism. Given our position in the global capital markets, we may be more likely than other companies to be a target for malicious disruption activities.

In addition, our U.S. and European business operations are heavily concentrated in the U.S. East Coast, and Stockholm, Sweden, respectively. Any event that impacts either of those geographic areas could potentially affect our ability to operate our businesses.

We have disaster recovery and business continuity plans and capabilities for critical systems and business functions to mitigate the risk of an interruption. Any interruption in our critical business functions or systems could negatively impact our financial condition and operating results. Additionally, some colocation customers may lack adequate disaster recovery solutions to avoid loss of trade flow from a sustained interruption of our critical systems.

Because we have operations in numerous countries, we are exposed to currency risk.

We have operations in the U.S., the Nordic and Baltic countries, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and many other foreign countries. We therefore have significant exposure to exchange rate movements between the Euro, Swedish Krona, the Canadian dollar and other foreign currencies towards the U.S. dollar. Significant inflation or disproportionate changes in foreign exchange rates with respect to one or more of these currencies could occur as a result of general economic conditions, acts of war or terrorism, changes in governmental monetary or tax policy, changes in local interest rates or other factors. These exchange rate differences will affect the translation of our non-U.S. results of operations, interest expense and financial condition into U.S. dollars as part of the preparation of our consolidated financial statements.

If our risk management methods are not effective, our business, reputation and financial results may be adversely affected.

We utilize widely-accepted methods to identify, assess, monitor and manage our risks, including oversight of risk management, by Nasdaq's Global Risk Management Committee, which is comprised of senior executives and has the responsibility for regularly reviewing risks and referring significant risks to the board of directors or specific board committees. Local risk management committees in our international offices provide local risk oversight and escalation to local boards, as appropriate. Certain risk management methods require subjective evaluation of dynamic information regarding markets, customers or other matters. That variable information may not in all cases be accurate, complete, up-to-date or properly evaluated. If we do not successfully identify, assess, monitor or manage the risks to which we are exposed, our business, reputation, financial condition and operating results could be materially adversely affected.