

Press Release

Together with Swiss Sustainable Finance to the top

Zurich, 6 May 2015.

It takes the right mix of financial specialists to make it to the top internationally as a global centre for sustainable finance. The prospects for Switzerland are upbeat. The industry association Swiss Sustainable Finance (SSF) is continuing to grow, and now has 83 members and partners, a trend that is continuing to gather speed. 11 new members joined over the past six months alone, including three of the largest Swiss banks.

An increasing number of clients are explicitly demanding a long-term perspective when it comes to financial products. Many Swiss stakeholders are already undertaking a lot to shape global developments in this field with their innovative products and services. One of the key objectives of SSF is to promote these sustainable financial services in the Swiss financial market together with members and network partners.

Combined power in every region of the country

Klaus Tischhauser, SSF Chairman, is pleased with the organisation's strong roots in the three language regions of Switzerland: German, French and Italian. "From the very outset we secured the support of specialists for our concept throughout Switzerland. We benefit not just from their expertise and international profile, but also from the different cultures of our members. From the smallest financial institution to major banks, all are represented in our association. We are building on this potential." Since the autumn of 2014 eleven new members have joined (in alphabetic order): Alternative Bank Switzerland AG, Centro di Studi Bancari, Credit Suisse, Eltaver AG, FINANCEcontact Ltd., Impact Finance Management SA, UBS AG, Unigestion SA, Valeur Fiduciaria SA, Vietnam Holding Asset Management, Zurich Cantonal Bank.

Caroline Anstey, Global Head of UBS and Society, highlights the importance of sustainable finance for a major bank: "As a globally operating bank and the largest wealth manager, we note that investor expectations, and consequently the manner in which companies operate, has strongly shifted. It is apparent that the millennial generation are keen to change things with their assets. We are determined to activate this potential for the Swiss financial centre."

Béatrice Fischer, Head Philanthropy Services and Responsible Investment at Credit Suisse, seconds this: "Credit Suisse is one of the leading asset managers for sustainable investments. We already manage sustainable investments worth CHF 9 billion, and the trend is rising as a recently conducted client survey confirms. The greater the demand for sustainable investment solutions, the broader the supply will become, the more liquid the market becomes, and the more attractive it will be for investors. Further collective efforts are required in terms of Information and training. We are determined to contribute towards this."

Bettina Giménez, Specialist of Public Service Mandate at Zurich Cantonal Bank, explains what motivated the largest Swiss cantonal bank to join SSF: "We set up an in-house investment sustainability research team in 1996. In 2009 we signed the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), and in the meantime we offer a broad range of products. We have also won external

awards for our sustainable investments. We are determined to do all we can to strengthen the sustainable investments theme, and to position involved financial actors in the Swiss financial sector at the top."

Studies show: Responsibility and profit are compatible

As a broad study conducted by Clark, Feiner and Viehs, Oxford University 2014¹, shows, responsibility and profits are not mutually exclusive. Quite the contrary, in fact: they complement each other. Analysis of over 200 academic papers on the topic of sustainability and corporate performance showed that the facts speak for sustainable investments: 90% of the studies demonstrate that sound sustainability standards reduce cost of capital, 80% show that stock price performance is positively influenced by good sustainability practices, and 88% of the studies show that solid ESG procedures have a positive impact on operating performance.

'Bridging the mental gap' with information and training

Despite strong arguments for sustainable investments, a barrier still exists. There is considerable interest from high-net-worth private investors; however, investment consultants are still too reluctant to propose sustainable investments. This discrepancy, the so-called 'sustainable investment gap' needs to be closed. "It sounds almost paradoxical. Investor demand exists. A wide variety of products is also available. Yet volumes are growing only slowly, particularly in the private client segment. New studies show that many investment consultants still find the complexity of the topic off-putting. For this reason we are working hard to provide clear and comprehensible information on the topic. One of our working groups is dedicated to the needs and requirements of institutional investors," explains Sabine Döbeli, SSF Managing Director. The fact that the voice of SSF is already substantial is illustrated by the partnership with UNEP and BAFU for the Swiss Symposium of 6 May 2015 "Swiss Finance in a changing world" – a symposium in response to the UNEP Inquiry into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System. SSF will present the Swiss input to a high-powered circle of contributors.

¹ Source: Clark, Gordon, Andreas Feiner, and Michael Viehs. "How Sustainability Can Drive Financial Outperformance." 2014. Quoted in: Morgan Stanley, Institute for Sustainable Investing: "Sustainable Reality – Understanding the performance of sustainable investment strategies", March 2015 <http://mgstn.ly/1NllahX>

Contact: Sabine Döbeli, Managing Director of Swiss Sustainable Finance, Tel.: 058 283 62 16, e-mail: sabine.doebeli@sustainablefinance.ch, www.sustainablefinance.ch

Jean Laville, Deputy Managing Director, Swiss Sustainable Finance, Geneva, Tel.: 022 907 71 06, e-mail: jean.laville@sustainablefinance.ch

Swiss Sustainable Finance strengthens the position of Switzerland in the global marketplace for sustainable finance by informing, educating and catalyzing growth. The association, founded in 2014, has representation in Zurich, Geneva and Lugano. Currently SSF unites 83 members and network partners from financial service providers, investors, universities and business schools, public sector entities and other interested organisations.
www.sustainablefinance.ch

The list of current Swiss Sustainable Finance members and network partners is published on <http://www.sustainablefinance.ch/en/membersandpartners.html>. A *newsletter can be subscribed free of charge*.

Enclosed List of members