

Sustainable finance – Switzerland on course to become a premier international hub

SBA sets out basic positions and guidelines

- The Swiss financial centre has the potential to play a leading global role in the field of sustainable finance. For Swiss banks, sustainable finance is both an opportunity and a top priority.
- The banking industry is pushing ahead with its own initiatives in 10 areas. One such measure is the "Guidelines on the integration of ESG criteria into the private client advisory process" published by the Swiss Bankers Association (SBA) to support Swiss banks in the provision of advice to private clients.
- Ten action areas have been identified to improve the framework conditions that will enable the Swiss financial centre to exploit the full potential of sustainable finance. In the new brochure "Sustainable finance in Switzerland: from pioneer to premier international hub", the SBA outlines a series of concrete and effective approaches.
- The SBA is expanding its presence in Geneva as it continues to develop and deepen its sustainable finance expertise.

Basel, 04 June 2020 – The Swiss financial centre is a pioneer of sustainable finance and is on course to become a premier international hub in this field. The SBA supports this initiative and has made sustainable finance a top priority. The SBA promotes an optimum combination of the industry's own initiatives and competitive framework conditions. One concrete initiative is the new set of SBA guidelines on the integration of environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria into the investment advisory process. In its latest brochure, "Sustainable finance in Switzerland: from pioneer to premier international hub", the SBA highlights ten of the industry's own initiatives and identifies ten action areas for improving the framework conditions. The key focus is on market-led approaches.

"With its combination of know-how, financial expertise, technological solutions and practical skills, the Swiss financial centre is extremely well positioned. We are well on course to becoming a premier international hub in sustainable finance," says Jörg Gasser, CEO of the SBA. Achieving this goal requires the support of all actors involved: not just policymakers, but also stakeholders such as banks, insurers and investment funds, as well as their industry associations.

Guidelines on the advisory process

Studies have shown that the integration of ESG factors into investment decisions is now the norm for most institutional clients such as pension funds. There is still some catch-up potential in the private clients business, however. By publishing the "Guidelines on the integration of ESG criteria into the private client advisory process", the SBA is encouraging the industry to exploit this potential. "As already announced earlier this year, the SBA now offers valuable guidelines for its members regarding investment advice to private clients," says Jörg Gasser. "These guidelines have been developed through close and intensive collaboration with our members. They are the result of a broad consensus and have the full backing of the banking industry."

Effective ways of improving the framework conditions for sustainable finance

The SBA brochure "Sustainable finance in Switzerland: from pioneer to premier international hub" provides policymakers and the general public with a comprehensive overview of current industry initiatives. The brochure also sets out concrete action areas where the framework conditions could be effectively improved. "Existing regulatory and fiscal burdens on sustainable financial instruments in Switzerland have to be dismantled in order to improve the overall conditions for sustainable financial flows," says August Benz, Deputy CEO and Head Private Banking & Asset Management.

- **Ten industry initiatives – ten action areas for policymakers**

The roadmap for developing the Swiss financial centre into the premier international hub for sustainable finance is set out in the brochure "Sustainable finance in Switzerland". The brochure can be downloaded [here](#).

SBA deepens its sustainable finance expertise with a new presence in Geneva

On 1 June 2020, the SBA increased its physical presence and personnel in Geneva by opening a branch office in the premises of the Fondation Genève Place Financière. Alexandre Roch, an expert in sustainable finance, began working at the start of June as the first SBA employee to be stationed in Geneva. This move strengthens the SBA's links not only with Geneva's financial centre, but with the numerous international organisations based in the area.

Documents

- [Press release as PDF](#)
- [New brochure](#)
- [Guidelines](#)

About the Swiss Bankers Association (SBA)

As the voice of the banking sector, the Swiss Bankers Association (SBA) promotes optimal framework conditions for the Swiss financial centre both at home and abroad. The SBA represents the interests of the banks vis-à-vis industry, policymakers, the authorities and the general public. The SBA is committed to ensuring scope for entrepreneurial freedom and open markets, and promotes competitive framework conditions. As a centre of competence, the SBA propagates banking expertise and actively engages with future-related themes. The SBA was founded in 1912 and brings together almost 300 institutions and around 12,000 individual members.

More information

This press release, the guidelines and the brochure are available in German, French and English on the SBA website www.swissbanking.org.

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