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**EU agrees to ban products made with forced labor**

2024 began with key framework providers for sustainability disclosure upgrading their frameworks to enable better ESG disclosure and many securities commissions making watertight norms to avoid greenwashing. The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) has developed scope 3 target setting while EU's expert advisors openly opposed the inclusion of gas and nuclear energy into the EU Taxonomy guidelines.



## Introduction

The European Parliament and Council provisionally agreed to ban products made with forced labor in the EU market. The agreement would result in investigations and the potential withdrawal of such products. Google partnered with Salt River Project (SRP) to add 430 MW of carbon-free energy to Arizona's grid, targeting 24/7 carbon-free energy by 2030. This partnership will achieve 80% carbon-free energy for Google's Arizona operations by 2026, with NextEra Energy Resources providing wind, solar, and battery storage. Additionally, Google planned to use air cooling technology to address water scarcity. Marcy Block joined Sustainable Fitch (SuF) as the Global Head of ESG ratings; SuF provides valuable insights for investors.

EY and IBM launched a sustainability reporting Managed Services solution by combining assurance expertise with IBM's Envizi software. Morningstar introduced Low Carbon Transition Leaders Indexes to identify companies, leading the shift to a low-carbon economy. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) enacted rules to improve climate-related disclosures, aiming for uniform and dependable data for investors. Invesco exited Climate Action 100+, along with other major asset managers, prompting continued commitment from investors to drive emissions reduction and improve climate disclosures among major emitters.



# Index

MARKET TRENDS	04
COLLABORATION	06
PEOPLE MOVEMENTS	08
FINTECH	10
PRODUCTS & SERVICES	12
LAWS, POLICIES, & REGULATIONS	14
CONTROVERSIES	16



# MARKET TRENDS

## Trends driving positive environmental and social change

Businesses, financial institutions, and regulatory bodies have realized the significance of addressing ESG risks and capitalizing on the underlying opportunities to adopt sustainability. Catch the latest developments in industries from government mandates to revolutionary initiatives in this section.

## EU agrees to ban products made with forced labor



The European Parliament and Council reached a provisional agreement to “ban products made with forced labor from the EU market.” The EU Commission will

conduct investigations, and if forced labor is found, products will be withdrawn from the market. A “new Forced Labour Single Portal” would help enforce the new rules regarding digital tools, cooperation with third countries, and fines for non-compliance.

► Source: European Parliament

## EU Parliament targets fast fashion and mandates textile recycling costs



The European Parliament adopted proposals to reduce waste from textiles and food sectors. It mandates fashion brands and textile producers to collect and

recycle clothing and footwear and set food waste reduction targets for the EU. These measures aim to tackle environmental impacts, including 12.6 million tons of textile waste and 59 million tons of food waste annually.

► Source: ESG Today



## US invests USD750mn for clean hydrogen production

The U.S. Department of Energy allocated USD750mn across 24 states to enhance clean hydrogen production and usage capacities. Hydrogen, crucial for reducing fossil fuel dependency, will be produced via electrolyzers powered by emissions-free sources. The initiative aims to achieve the National Clean Hydrogen Strategy goal of producing 10 million metric tons of clean hydrogen annually by 2030.

► Source: Reuters

## A U.S. appeals court temporarily halts SEC climate reporting regulations



A U.S. appeals court temporarily halted the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)’s new rules requiring climate-related risk reporting for public companies.

The New Orleans-based 5th Circuit of Court granted Liberty Energy Inc.’s and Nomad Proppant Services LLC’s request to pause the rules, citing concerns over compliance costs and increased litigation. The SEC argued that the rules fit its mandate and offer vital investor information.

► Source: Reuters

## EU Parliament approves the revised supply chain sustainability law



The European Parliament’s Legal Affairs Committee “approved the revised Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)” in a 20-4 vote. The bill mandates

companies to address their negative impacts on human rights and the environment across their supply chains. The directive, scaled back from a prior version, aims to prevent corporate abuse and provide clarity to companies.

► Source: ESG Today



## Biden-Harris Administration invests USD475mn for clean energy solutions

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) allocated USD475mn for clean energy projects on current and former mine lands in five states. These states are West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Kentucky, and Arizona. These clean projects aim to boost local economies, generate jobs, and advance clean energy goals. The initiative supports President Biden’s commitment to inclusive clean energy transitions and environmental justice.

► Source: Department of Energy



# COLLABORATIONS

## Companies joining forces to shape sustainable solutions

ESG issues continue to grow in relevance, be it employee health & safety or climate change. The impact is multifold in current times. Investor groups and corporates are increasingly collaborating to address such issues and drive sustainability. The following are the major coalitions in the ESG space.

## Lego Group enters a 9-year carbon removal agreement with Climeworks



climeworks

Climeworks, a Zurich-based Direct Air Capture (DAC) provider, signed a 9-year carbon removal deal worth over USD2.8mn with the LEGO Group and KIRKBI. The deal aligns with LEGO's climate commitments, including net-zero emissions by 2050.

Endorsed by the International Energy Agency (IEA), DAC technology extracts CO<sub>2</sub> directly from the atmosphere, with Climeworks being a prominent DAC provider.

► Source: ESG Today

## Mercedes-Benz secures low carbon steel agreement with Nucor



Mercedes-Benz

NUCOR

Nucor Corporation collaborated with Mercedes-Benz to provide low-embodied carbon steel for the automaker's Tuscaloosa

plant. The agreement follows Mercedes-Benz's pursuit of green steel supply chains, including partnerships with Steel Dynamics and H2 Green Steel. The Tuscaloosa plant produces various SUV models, will now utilize Econiq-RE steel from Nucor. Econiq-RE certifies that steel is made with 100% renewable energy, facilitating the reduction of significant Scopes 1, 2, and 3 emissions.

► Source: ESG Today

## Google secures a 430 MW carbon-free energy agreement with SRP



Delivering water and power™

Google partnered with Salt River Project (SRP) to add over 430 MW of carbon-free energy to the Arizona grid, aligning with Google's 24/7 carbon-free energy (CFE) goal by 2030. This partnership enables at least 80%

carbon-free energy for Google's Arizona operations by 2026. NextEra Energy Resources will supply wind power, solar energy, and battery storage for Google's Arizona data center in Mesa, slated for operations in 2025. Additionally, Google plans to use air cooling technology instead of water cooling due to local water scarcity concerns. Google is also investing in local community initiatives, including tree-planting workshops and educational support programs.

► Source: ESG Today

## AT&T enters carbon removal pact with IPointfive



IPointFive, an Occidental (Oxy) subsidiary focusing on Direct Air Capture (DAC), signed an agreement with AT&T to buy carbon dioxide removal (CDR) credits from STRATOS, its Texas-based DAC

facility. This deal aligns with AT&T's aim to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. STRATOS, expected to be the world's largest DAC facility, will capture 500,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. Additionally, IPointFive joins AT&T's Connected Climate Initiative to aid in reducing GHG emissions.

► Source: ESG Today

## Confluence integrates MSCI ESG data with Style Analytics



Confluence Technologies enhanced its Style Analytics platform by integrating comprehensive MSCI ESG Research data. This integration simplifies

ESG investing for asset managers and fund selectors, offering in-depth analysis, comparison tools, and portfolio enhancement features. The user-friendly interface allows detailed exploration and fund analysis aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and helps gain actionable insights to optimize sustainable investment opportunities amid growing investor interest in sustainability.

► Source: Know ESG

## ExxonMobil and Shell collaborate with the Singapore government on carbon capture and storage value chain



ExxonMobil Asia Pacific PTE. Ltd. and Shell Singapore PTE. Ltd., members of the S-Hub

consortium, collaborated with the Singapore government as principal

developers for a cross-border carbon capture and storage (CCS) initiative. The project aims to securely store over 2.5 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually by 2030. This partnership aligns with Singapore's decarbonization goals, targeting hard-to-abate sectors like energy and chemicals, power, and waste.

► Source: ESG Broadcast



# PEOPLE MOVEMENTS

## Thought leadership through key hires

Companies across the globe are demanding analysts, strategists, and knowledgeable professionals to understand and drive their ESG data, strategies, and solutions for a range of stakeholders. This section brings you the latest movements of such highly skilled professionals in the ESG sector.



## Verdane hires Dr. Erich Becker and Christina Levin-Rylander



Verdane expanded its decarbonization team by hiring Dr. Erich Becker as a new Partner and Christina Levin-Rylander as the COO. Becker will

join the firm in its London office. In her new role as the COO of the Elevate team, Levin-Rylander will focus on decarbonization investments and lead the firm's sustainability team.

► Source: Verdane

## LOIM appoints Mona Shah as the Senior Sustainability Strategist



Lombard Odier Investment Managers (LOIM) welcomed Mona Shah as the Senior Sustainability Strategist. With her extensive background in sustainable investments, Shah will shape the future of sustainable finance at LOIM.

Her task is to craft cutting-edge sustainable investment solutions for clients while working closely with the holistiQ sustainability research and investment teams.

► Source: ESG Today

## Low Carbon Investment Management welcomes Annabel Wiscarson as the new CEO



Low Carbon Investment Management appointed Annabel Wiscarson as the new CEO. She will sit on the Low Carbon Board and report to Roy Bedlow, the Founder and Chief Executive. She will ensure that investors' needs align with the delivery of large-scale

renewables.

► Source: ESG Today

## SuF recruits Marcy Block as the Global Head of ESG Ratings



Sustainable Fitch (SuF) welcomed Marcy Block as the Global Head of ESG ratings. She will serve the public market and investment-grade clients. With in-depth expertise and leadership experience, Marcy is exceptionally well-positioned to lead the analytical group within

SuF and drive the firm's commitment to providing investors with valuable insights for informed decision-making.

► Source: ESG News

## Persefoni appoints Douglas Sabo to the Advisory Board



Persefoni hired Douglas Sabo to its Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB). In the new role, Sabo will strategically advise the firm's Executive Team with critical insights from within a leading corporation. He will also advise on how the firm's leading

AI-driven carbon accounting platform can meet companies' needs today and over the long term.

► Source: ESG News



# FINTECH

## Innovation in sustainable investing

The fintech section captures various innovations in the data analytics, software solutioning, and technology space that benefit both investors and data providers. Learn about the most groundbreaking technologies leading their way to ESG.

## Persefoni introduces a free measurement and reporting emissions solution



Persefoni, a provider of the Climate Management & Accounting Platform

(CMAAP), unveiled Persefoni Pro, a newly launched complimentary tool empowering businesses to measure and disclose their GHG emissions. The SaaS platform, introduced in 2020, aids companies and investors in analyzing, planning, forecasting, and reporting their carbon footprint, addressing regulatory mandates globally.

► Source: ESG today

## GRESB debuts new sustainability data solutions for real estate managers and investors



Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark (GRESB), a real estate and infrastructure focused ESG data provider, introduced REAL Solutions, a suite of tools offering

actionable insights into asset sustainability, resilience, and efficiency. The first solution, REAL Benchmarks, allows fund managers to analyze asset performance and compare it against asset-specific benchmarks and industry standards. Extra features comprise the capability to visually represent energy and GHG performance and refine portfolios by property type, location, and year.

► Source: ESG today

## EY and IBM launch an end-to-end sustainability data and reporting solution



EY and IBM jointly launched a new sustainability reporting Managed Services solution to assist

companies in meeting the evolving ESG disclosure requirements. By combining EY's assurance expertise with IBM's Envizi sustainability software, the solution aims to streamline capturing, analyzing, and managing sustainability data, providing assurance-ready reporting. This collaboration expands the EY-IBM Sustainability Center of Excellence (CoE), offering end-to-end support in addressing sustainability reporting challenges and driving long-term value beyond compliance.

► Source: ESG Today

## Oracle introduces a new tracking and reporting sustainability data solution

Oracle introduced Oracle Cloud Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) for Sustainability. It is a solution

designed to assist organizations in measuring, managing, and tracking sustainability efforts while complying with new reporting standards. This offering, a part of the Oracle Fusion Cloud EPM platform, utilizes AI and machine learning (ML) for efficient data recording, tracking, and analysis across disparate sources.

► Source: ESG today

## Greater Than releases an AI-driven ESG compliance solution



**Greater Than**

Greater Than, a prominent pioneer in driver crash probability and climate

impact intelligence, introduced an innovative AI-driven ESG compliance package. This strategic move targets the mobility aspect of ESG reporting, which is in line with the stringent Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) standards. By focusing on enhanced ESG reporting within the mobility sector, Greater Than addresses the evolving requirements set by the EU's CSRD legislation, emphasizing social and environmental disclosures across diverse companies.

► Source: fintech global

## Billups and Cedara collaborate to spearhead a worldwide sustainability solution



Billups and Cedara, a leading carbon intelligence platform, joined forces to promote sustainability in the Out-of-Home (OOH) advertising sector. Utilizing

Cedara's carbon measurement platform, Billups aims to measure and mitigate the environmental impacts of clients' campaigns. This partnership aims to achieve net-zero emissions across the entire media supply chain by 2030.

► Source: fintech global



# PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

## Industry demands met with sustainable investment products and ESG data & services

As businesses work toward getting ESG-compliant and investors channel their funds into ESG products, the market is gearing up to facilitate all forms of products and services. In this section, you will find news on key products and services including the launch of climate change-targeted funds as well as ESG data and services.

## Morningstar introduces LCTL Indexes



Morningstar, in collaboration with Morningstar Sustainalytics, launched the Morningstar® Low Carbon Transition Leaders (LCTL) Indexes™. This initiative aims to help investors identify companies leading the shift to a low-carbon economy. These indexes use metrics like Sustainalytics Low Carbon Transition Ratings to spotlight companies with strong management strategies and positive environmental impacts.

► Source: ESG News

## Iceland releases inaugural green bond



Iceland issued a USD810mn green bond with a 3.5% fixed rate coupon and a 10-year maturity, with an unprecedented nine times over-subscription. The bond was issued under Iceland's Sustainable

Financing Framework. It attracted interest from various institutions, reflecting confidence in Iceland's fiscal and environmental policies, according to the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Thordis Kolbrun Reykfjord Gylfadottir.

► Source: ESG News

## Nestlé initiates new projects to lower emissions in its cocoa supply chain



Nestlé launched two new five-year projects partnered with suppliers Cargill and ETG | Beyond Beans. These projects

aim to reduce and remove carbon emissions from its cocoa supply chain by promoting agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, and reforestation. These five-year projects aim to plant over two million shade trees, which are anticipated to remove 500,000 metric tons of carbon over 20 years.

► Source: ESG Today

## Mirova unveils a new private equity impact fund



Sustainability-focused investment manager Mirova introduced Mirova Impact Life Essentials (MILE), a new private equity fund, aiming to raise USD218mn, to support companies addressing key sustainability challenges. The fund, led by Judith-Laure Mamou-Mani, intends to be classified under "Article 9" within the European SFDR regulation framework.

► Source: ESG Today

## Canada issues a second green bond



Canada completed its second issuance of a CAD4bn (USD2.948bn) green bond, a landmark as the first sovereign

issuer to include nuclear energy expenditures. This follows the government's updated Green Bond Framework, which added nuclear energy as an eligible investment area. The inaugural green bond was issued in 2022 for green infrastructure and climate-related projects. Over one-third of the latest bond's proceeds are allocated to clean transportation, particularly for zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) adoption and ZEV infrastructure deployment.

► Source: ESG Today



# LAWS, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS

## Major policies that pave the way to disclosure in the industry

Policy reformation and amendments in the ESG reporting space are at an all-time high. What started as a voluntary disclosure is now making its way to becoming mandates. Be it sustainable investments standards or climate change reporting mandates and transparency in governance practices, we bring you the latest regulatory updates in this section.



## EU member states approve corporate sustainability due diligence legislation

EU member states compromised on corporate sustainability legislation and scaled back coverage to companies with over 1,000 employees or with over EUR450mn (USD491mn) in revenue. This law will reduce the number of companies in the scope of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) by approximately two-thirds. Changes include a five-year phase-in and the exclusion of product disposal. The core of the directive returns to the Parliament for approval despite criticism.

► Source: ESG Today



U.S. SECURITIES AND  
EXCHANGE COMMISSION

## SEC implements rules for enhanced climate disclosures

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) enacted rules to improve and standardize climate-related disclosures by public companies and in public offerings. The objective was to offer investors more uniform, comparable, and dependable data concerning the financial repercussions of climate-related risks. These rules aim to provide clear reporting requirements and specificity on climate risk disclosures.

► Source: US Securities and Exchange Commission

## Canadian Sustainability Standards Board Announces Proposed Sustainability Disclosure Standards

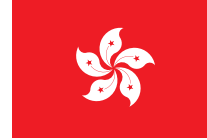
### CSSB unveils sustainability disclosure standards

The Canadian Sustainability Standards Board (CSSB) released the first two proposed exposure drafts of Canadian Sustainability Disclosure Standards. The proposed standards are based on the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB)'s IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards. The CSSB also

introduced a "Criteria for Modification Framework" to "modify the ISSB IFRS Standards when adopting them in Canada." The standards require disclosure of "all sustainability-related risks and opportunities," and the framework aimed to align Canadian standards with international standards.

► Source: Bennett Jonnes

## Hong Kong FSTB proposes a sustainability disclosure ecosystem



The Hong Kong Financial Services and Treasury Bureau (FSTB) proposed a holistic approach to develop a sustainability disclosure ecosystem in the country. FSTB aims to align local sustainability disclosure requirements with the ISSB standards. The roadmap is expected in 2024.

► Source: Deloitte

## GRI releases three policymaker guides



The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) released three new guides for policymakers, covering double materiality, due diligence, and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). The guidelines represent the interconnectedness of

an entity's impacts on society and the environment, simplifying adverse impact management.

► Source: Deloitte



## EU strikes a deal on sustainable packaging regulations

The European Parliament and Council reached a provisional agreement on "sustainable packaging rules to address growing packaging waste" and boost the circular economy. The agreement included a goal for all packaging to be fully recyclable by 2030. The legislation also banned single-use plastic packaging and PFAS "or forever chemicals" in food contact packaging.

► Source: ESG Today



# CONTROVERSIES

## Global sustainability watchdogs chasing wrongdoers

Do companies follow their ESG commitments? Tracking corporate controversies helps in investment decisions and enables stakeholders to determine whether the companies are being fair to their commitments or merely greenwashing. We bring you the top controversies in this section.





## BlackRock receives warning for misleading ESG fund statements

The U.S. state of Mississippi issued a legal warning to BlackRock. The warning was over “false and misleading statements to Mississippi investors” regarding ESG fund misstatements.

► Source: Reuters



## Invesco withdraws from CA100+ amid US asset manager exodus

Invesco joins recent departures from Climate Action 100+ (CA100), including JPMorgan Asset Management, State Street Global Advisors, and PIMCO. Additionally, BlackRock reduced its participation with the climate group. CA100+ expressed disappointment but highlighted continued commitment from hundreds of investor signatories to drive emissions reduction and improve climate-related disclosures among major emitters.

► Source: Reuters



## Australian court rules against Vanguard in greenwashing lawsuit

A federal court in Australia finds Vanguard guilty of misleading claims about an ESG fund, failing to exclude fossil fuel investments as advertised. The Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC) initiated the suit as part of a crackdown on greenwashing, marking the regulator’s first civil penalty action. Vanguard self-reported discrepancies in disclosures, admitting to false claims. The penalty hearing is set for August.

► Source: ESG Today



## New York initiates greenwashing lawsuit against JBS

NY Attorney General sued JBS USA for alleged misleading environmental impact claims, including the net-zero GHG emissions by 2040. The lawsuit aims to stop JBS from “false and misleading marketing practices,” return the resulting “ill-gotten profits,” and pay penalties. The court pointed out that the claims made by the company were “misleading,” citing prior warnings from BBB National Programs’ National Advertising Division (NAD) to stop using net-zero claims in its advertising.

► Source: ESG Today



## Mastercard and Visa agree to settle over credit card fees

Mastercard and Visa reached a landmark USD30bn settlement over allegations of anticompetitive credit card fees. The settlement is expected to bring relief to US merchants and consumers affected by high interchange fees and is the result of a lawsuit filed in 2005. However, nothing is confirmed until approved by the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York. Additionally, the settlement mandates Visa and Mastercard to uphold swipe fee rates from December 31, 2023, for five years.

► Source: CNN Business

## Apple, Google, Meta targeted in EU's first Digital Markets Act investigations

### EU under the DMA probes into Apple, Google, and Meta

The EU antitrust regulators initiated their first probes under the Digital Markets Act (DMA), targeting Apple, Google, and Meta. The European Commission (EC) is investigating Alphabet's Google Play steering rules and self-preferencing on Google Search, Apple's App Store steering rules and Safari choice screen, and Meta's "pay or consent model." The EU executive intends to finalize the investigations within a year, which is the DMA-specified timeframe for such oversight.

► Source: Fox Business





# SGA BLOGS

“Climate Actions 2050: Setting a Competitive Path to Achieve Net-Zero Goals” [Read More...](#)



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