RI USA 2024

Thriving in the rapidly evolving US sustainable finance landscape

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Please note, this is a draft document, session timings and descriptions are subject to occasional change.

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Day one
Tuesday 3 December

08:55 Opening remarks

Steven Rothstein, Managing Director, Accelerator, **Ceres**

09:00 Plenary 1: Transition finance in the US: Driving change through investment

- How are US investors approaching high-emitting sectors and corporates?
- Will transition finance be the main source of alpha in the US energy transition?
- Do US investors want dedicated transition finance regulation and/or instruments?
- Is there a tension between financing the transition and meeting net zero targets?

Moderator: **Andy Howell**, Director of Investor Influence, **Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)**
Curtis D. Ravenel, Senior Advisor to the Co-Chair & Vice Chair, **GFANZ**
Candice Coppere, Head of Climate and Nature Solutions, Product, **ISS STOXX**
Tara Mei Smith, ESG Integration Officer, **NYC Office of the Comptroller**

09:50 Plenary 2: Manager selection in the US

- How has the politicisation of ESG impacted manager selection?
- Is stewardship being priced into manager selection or neglected in search of lower fees?
- Is manager selection being utilised enough to drive asset owner priorities through managers?
- Are consultants doing enough to drive asset owner priorities through manager selection?
- Given the US context, will climate focused/net zero investors drift to European headquartered managers?

Moderator: **Paul Verney**, Features Writer, **Responsible Investor**
Matthew Illian, Director, **United Church Funds**
Rajith Sebastian, Head of ESG and Sustainable Investing, **New York State Insurance Fund (NYSIF)**

10:40 Networking break

11:10 Keynote - Eye of the storm: former SEC policy director reflects on three years at US regulator

Heather Slavkin Corzo, Principal, **Mindset**
Moderator: **Paul Verney**, Features Writer, **Responsible Investor**

11:30 Plenary 3: ESG regulation: The US, EU and beyond

- How are US investors navigating the SFDR and what do they want out of the regulatory reform?
- US anti-greenwashing efforts: what's next for SEC ESG disclosure and name rules?
- Expectations on financial institutions from CSRD and SEC climate rule
- Compliance vs action – how are investors balancing mandatory and voluntary disclosure needs with investment/stewardship activities?

Moderator: **Steven Rothstein**, Managing Director, Accelerator, **Ceres**
Sandra Silea, Director, ESG & Stewardship, **AustralianSuper**
Elizabeth Seeger, Board Member, ISSB, **IFRS Foundation**
Sireen Hajj, Director, Investor Outreach, **US SIF**

12:15 Plenary 4: Nature investment in North America: Risks and opportunities

- Nature as a systemic risk: how are investors approaching the challenge?
- Measuring biodiversity and nature risk across portfolios: methodologies, tools and barriers
- Public vs private markets: where are the nature investment opportunities?
- Are US corporates doing enough, and disclosing enough, on nature?

13:00 Lunch

Stream A	Stream B
13:50 – A1: Corporate transition plans: Next steps • What does a credible transition plan look like? • Are US companies embracing the concept of transition plans? • What guidance do companies and investors need? Prescriptive vs high-level • To what extent should climate lobbying activities be disclosed in transition plans? **Andreas Ross,** Head of New Product Research and Development, **ZAIS Group** **Joel Paque**, Head of Partnerships, US, **Climate Arc**	**13:50 – B1: The future of collaborative engagement in the US** • What exactly are the rules around collaborative engagement in the US? • All noise and no heat: do legal threats around antitrust carry any weight? If so, where are the lines which shouldn't be crossed? • How much has the politicization of ESG stunted collective engagement in the US? • How can investors defend themselves against accusations? What is best practice?

	Moderator: **Georgia Stewart,** CEO, **Tumelo** **Suzi van Es**, Investor Engagement Manager, **Access to Medicine Foundation**
14:30 Short turnaround break	
14:35 – A2: ESG Data: The next frontier • Do companies have the data they need for mandatory climate reporting? • Supporting scope 3 data requirements • How is technology helping to meet the nature data challenge? • What are the biggest gaps in supply chain data? • Estimations and the limits of ESG data **Samantha McCafferty**, Associate Director - Sustainable Investing, **Harvard Management Company** **Paul Vozzella**, Director, Americas, **GRESB**	**14:35 – B2: Agriculture: Sustainability and food security** • How are US investors thinking about agriculture and sustainability? • Is supporting food security compatible with financial institutions' net zero commitments? • How is technology changing the agricultural sustainability landscape? • Is regenerative agriculture a scalable solution? **Chris Janiec**, Americas Editor, **Agri Investor** **Sofia De La Parra**, Investor Outreach Manager, **FAIRR**
15:15 Short turnaround break	
15:20 – A3: Water risk: An investors' guide • Where are US companies most exposed to water risk? • How should investors engage corporates on water? • What tools and data are available to investors to assess water risk? • How can the private sector help to address water shortages? **Karen Sack**, Executive Director, **Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance** **Saumya Mehrotra**, Product Management Team, **ISS STOXX**	**15:20 – B3: Bond markets vs private credit: Financing the energy transition** • Are bond markets fit-for-purpose for financing the energy transition? • SLBs and transition bonds: do they have a role in the US? • Where can private credit fill the gaps in debt financing for the transition? • How is the policy landscape impacting ESG-labelled bond issuance in the US? Moderator: **Dominic Webb**, Senior Reporter, **Responsible Investor**

16:00 Networking break

16:10 Workshops

This session allows participants to learn from both experts and each other, providing interactive small group discussions guided by designated facilitators.

Workshop A – Scope 3	**Workshop B – Climate adaptation**	**Workshop C – Investing in 2050**
		Investing has changed. Is changing. Will change. And the pace of change is accelerating exponentially. • How are fundamental assumptions around investing, including methodology, metrics, technology, regulation, and community formation, changing? • How is the pace of change in investing accelerating? • How can we discuss the future of investing through thought-experiments and examine the issues shaping the next 25 years? • What are the implications of technology, new investing theories, demographic shifts, space exploration, and increased longevity for investing? Co-facilitator: **Doug Scott**, CEO & Co-founder, **Ethic** Co-facilitator: **Georgia Stewart**, CEO, **Tumelo**

17:00 Networking drinks

18:00 End of day one

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RI USA 2024

Day two

Wednesday 4 December

8:00 Networking breakfast

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<tr><th>Stream A</th><th>Stream B</th></tr>
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9:00 – A4: Understanding ESG supply chain risk: An investors' guide

How are investors engaging with corporates on supply chain risk?
Where are the biggest gaps in corporate supply chain data?
How is regulation affecting corporate supply chain reporting?
Which supply chain issues are most material for investors?

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9:00 – B4: Greenwashing vs greenhushing

How are US corporates and investors navigating political and public scrutiny of sustainability?
What are the implications of corporate greenhushing for investors?
How have investors responded to the SEC's greenwashing crackdown?

Moderator: Dominic Webb, Senior Reporter, Responsible Investor

Ekaterina Grigoryeva, Environment and Social Development Specialist (Global Lead, Financial Sector), The World Bank
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<tr><td colspan="2">09:40 Short turnaround break</td></tr>
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09:45 – A5: Governance risk: Board competence and capabilities

How are investors approaching governance risk?
How do governance failures impact investor confidence and company valuation?
What are the emerging standards for governance transparency and reporting?
How can companies improve their disclosure practices to build trust with investors?
AI board competence

Matt Moscardi, Head of Board Moneyball, Free Float Analytics
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09:45 – B5: Real estate and climate risk

Decarbonising real estate – a missed low-hanging fruit opportunity for investors?
Real estate climate engagement
Uninsurable assets: what does this mean for real estate investors?
How are US real estate developers approaching the net zero challenge?

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Marcel Bucsescu, Vice President, Strategic Engagement, **NACD**	

10:25 Networking break

10:55 Plenary 5: Investing for sustainable outcomes

- Defining a 'sustainable outcome' or proving real-world sustainability impact in 2024: what methods and frameworks are investors using?
- Net-zero commitments and interim climate investing goals: are investors on track to meet them?
- The US renewable energy market is continuing to boom – the IRA has been referred to as the US green taxonomy: to what extent is this translating to opportunities for ESG investors in public markets?

Fran Seegull, President, **U.S. Impact Investing Alliance**

11:35 Plenary 6: The state of corporate reporting in the US

- How are US corporates currently approaching sustainability reporting?
- Does corporate reporting in the US meet the needs of investors?
- Will ISSB become the de facto standard for corporate sustainability reporting in the US?
- What assurance are investors asking for on non-financial corporate disclosures?

Neil Stewart, Director of Corporate Outreach, **ISSB/IFRS Foundation**
Meagen Stack, Manager, ESG Reporting, **Chevron**

12:15 Lunch

13:05 Keynote

13:25 Plenary 7: After Exxon: The future of shareholder proposals

- What are the implications for shareholder rights in the US of the Exxon lawsuit?
- Will the file-first mentality of shareholders shift towards a more engagement/dialogue-focused approach?
- Will other companies follow Exxon's lead?
- How can shareholder proposals be used most effectively in a sustainability context?

Moderator: **Paul Verney**, Features Writer, **Responsible Investor**
Sanford Lewis, Director, **Shareholder Rights Group**
Danielle Fugere, President & Chief Counsel, **As You Sow**
Heidi Welsh, Executive Director, **Sustainable Investments Institute (Si2)**

14:10 Plenary 8: Fiduciary duty in 2024: Operating effectively within a polarized environment

- Beyond the politics: What does fiduciary duty look like for a universal owner in 2024?
- What ESG issues are necessary for a fiduciary to consider, is it just climate-related financial risks? Are some like AMR being overlooked?
- How can a universal owner mitigate systemic risks to portfolios?
- To what extent can sustainability preferences – and outcomes – be factored into fiduciary duty?

Moderator: **Dominic Webb**, Senior Reporter, **Responsible Investor**

15:00 End of conference