



Press Release

Earth Forum 2025: Green Capital, Global Connect – Shaping Hong Kong as a Sustainable Finance Hub

Hong Kong, 22 April 2025 – The Financial Services Development Council (FSDC), Friends of the Earth (HK) (FoE (HK)), and the China Sustainable Investment Forum (China SIF) joined forces to host the Earth Forum 2025, an annual event focused on accelerating transition finance for a sustainable future.

Graced by Mr Joseph Chan, Acting Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, as the Guest of Honour, Earth Forum 2025 underscored Hong Kong's ambition to solidify its position as a premier hub for cross-boundary capital flows and green investment in equity and debt markets. By aligning with globally recognised standards, fostering transparency, and enhancing corporate sustainability reporting, the city aims to attract green issuers and investors, while inspiring confidence in global capital markets.

Mr Plato Yip, Chairperson of FoE (HK), emphasised the pivotal role of the financial industry in driving sustainable development, "Hong Kong possesses the financial infrastructure, expertise, and capital required to drive the global advancement in sustainable finance. By leveraging these strengths, we can channel capital into sustainable initiatives, enhance market transparency, and accelerate the adoption of international standards. As a global financial hub, Hong Kong is committed to building a resilient, future-ready economy that harmonizes economic growth with environmental sustainability, setting a global benchmark for sustainable finance."

Dr King Au, Executive Director of the FSDC, stated, "Hong Kong is uniquely positioned to lead the global transition to sustainable finance. With our strong regulatory framework, deep capital markets, and connectivity to Mainland China, we can drive cross-border green capital flows while aligning with global standards. By fostering innovation and resilience, we aim to shape a low-carbon economy and solidify Hong Kong's role as a leader in sustainable finance."

Dr Bing Leng, Board Member of the International Sustainability Standards Board, IFRS Foundation, delivered a keynote speech on the International Financial Reporting Standards - Sustainability Disclosure Standards (ISSB Standards) and their implications for Hong Kong. He highlighted the importance of ISSB Standards in advancing sustainable finance, "The ISSB is committed to collaborating with global stakeholders to establish a sustainable disclosure framework that effectively connects companies' sustainability status, efforts, and performance with their market valuation and resource allocation. Hong Kong has demonstrated a strong commitment to becoming a world-class green financial centre by actively adopting ISSB Standards and developing a comprehensive sustainability disclosure ecosystem. The high-quality implementation of ISSB Standards will support Hong Kong in realising its vision of becoming a leading financial centre and a hub for sustainable finance."



The forum featured two key panel discussions. The first panel, themed “The Importance of ISSB Standards for Global Sustainability Reporting”, moderated by Dr King Au, examined the ISSB’s role in establishing a unified global framework for sustainability disclosures. With 96% of the world’s largest companies integrating sustainability reporting into their operations¹, the panel highlighted Hong Kong’s roadmap to adopt ISSB Standards by 2028 and its leadership in implementing these global standards locally.² The panel brought together industry leaders and regulators to discuss insights, challenges, and opportunities in advancing ISSB adoption.

The second panel discussion, themed “The Role of Capacity Building in Advancing Sustainable Finance Markets,” moderated by Prof Anthony Cheung, Vice-Chairperson of FoE (HK) and Independent Standards Board Member of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP), explored how skills development and regulatory alignment are shaping sustainable finance. It examined Hong Kong’s regulatory roadmap for capacity building across the banking, securities, and insurance, highlighting essential ESG competencies for financial professionals. Panellists discussed adapting European practices—such as ESG certifications and climate risk management frameworks—to Hong Kong’s unique market context. Actionable strategies were shared for institutions to address evolving standards and emerging sustainability challenges beyond climate, underscoring the city’s commitment to becoming a future-ready green finance hub.

Dr Jesús López Zaballos, President of The European Federation of Financial Analysts Societies (EFFAS), underscored the pivotal role of professional qualifications in advancing Hong Kong’s sustainable finance ambitions. “The Certified ESG Analyst (CESGA) programme is at the heart of building a robust pipeline of ESG talent for Hong Kong and the region, with over 1,700 CESGA holders in Hong Kong,” he stated. “By equipping financial professionals with internationally recognised expertise in ESG integration, CESGA empowers them to meet the demands of evolving disclosure standards and drive meaningful change in investment practices. We are also excited to introduce the new EFFAS Certified Climate Risk Analyst programme, which will further strengthen the market’s capacity to assess and manage climate-related financial risks. Our partnership with FoE (HK) ensures that these globally benchmarked qualifications are accessible to the next generation of leaders, supporting Hong Kong’s vision as a premier sustainable finance hub.”

Dr Peiyuan Guo, Chairman of China SIF and China Representative of United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) emphasised that building a sustainable future is inseparable from a sustainable financial system, and constructing such a system relies on high-quality ESG disclosure. Therefore, implementing the roadmap on sustainability disclosure in Hong Kong is a crucial step in shaping Hong Kong as a sustainable finance hub.

¹ KPMG International. (2024, November). *The move to mandatory reporting: Survey of Sustainability Reporting 2024*. <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmgsites/xx/pdf/2024/11/the-move-to-mandatory-reporting-web-copy.pdf>.coredownload.inline.pdf

² HKSAR Government. (2024, December). *Roadmap on Sustainability Disclosure in Hong Kong: Ambition · Assurance · Enablement*. https://www.fstb.gov.hk/fsb/en/publication/report/docs/FSTB_Roadmap2024_eBooklet_EN.pdf



The Forum convened financial institutions, corporations, and industry experts to highlight the importance of ISSB Standards for consistent and high-quality sustainability reporting across markets. Hong Kong is positioned to lead their adoption and attract global investors for the green transition. Capacity building through training, data enhancement, and collaboration among regulators and stakeholders is key to navigate the evolving landscape of sustainability reporting.

Special thanks to the event sponsor Vistra and the venue sponsor Deloitte China for their invaluable support in making Earth Forum 2025 a success.

For more details about Earth Forum 2025, please visit the [official event webpage](#).



About the FSDC

The FSDC was established in 2013 by the Government of the HKSAR as a high-level advisory body to engage the industry in formulating proposals to promote the further development of the financial services industry of Hong Kong and to map out the strategic direction for the development.

In September 2018, the FSDC was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. This change allows it to better discharge its functions through research, market promotion, and human capital development with greater flexibility.

Keep up with the latest FSDC news by following our [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) & [YouTube](#).

About the FoE (HK)

Friends of the Earth (HK) ("FoE (HK)") is a leading environmental advocate that actively engages with the government, businesses, and the community to foster equitable and sustainable policymaking, business practices, and community lifestyles in protection of the local and regional environment. We are also dedicated to promoting green finance and cultivating ESG talents. By partnering closely with government and research institutes, professional bodies, SME associations, and international organisations, FoE (HK) strives to build a sustainable society and environment for all.

About the China SIF

China Sustainable Investment Forum (China SIF), established in Beijing as a non-profit organisation in 2012, is dedicated to promoting responsible investment and providing an internationalised platform for exchanging and sharing ideas on issues concerning sustainable development, with focus on facilitating Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) integration, advocating green finance, and contributing to a responsible capital market in China as well as its sustainability.

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