



Eurosif

Press Release: Thursday December 4th, 2008

Eurosif Water report: challenges and opportunities for water-dependent businesses

Eurosif (European Sustainable Investment Forum) publishes today a report highlighting critical environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues currently facing water-dependent industries. In the report, Eurosif highlights **four critical water issues** and their associated risks and opportunities for water-dependent businesses:

1. Water Scarcity and Unequal Distribution of Current Supply;
2. Drinking Water and Sanitation;
3. Water Pollution;
4. Climate Change.

Among the many issues mentioned in the study for investors to consider, a few examples include:

- Worldwide, more than 2.6 billion people do not have access to an adequate sanitation infrastructure, and 1.1 billion do not have access to a secure source of drinking water.
- In the European Union, 20% of all surface water is seriously threatened by pollution.
- The agriculture sector alone accounts for two-thirds of water use worldwide.

Beyond the agricultural sector, the Eurosif report reveals that, food and beverage, energy, mining and forestry are also particularly exposed to water-related risks.

Eurosif partnered with INrate for the research while an esteemed steering committee of asset managers and NGO representatives presided over the content quality to ensure stakeholder and financial points of view. The steering committee included representatives from *ASSET4, Bank Sarasin, BNP Paribas Asset Management, IONIS-Inter Expansion, MACIF Gestion, Schroders, SNS Asset Management and WWF.*

Matt Christensen, Executive Director of Eurosif, says

*"The publication of this study shows that Eurosif is moving beyond traditional industrial segment coverage to now address key sustainable challenges requiring multiple industries to transform the way they operate. **Water issues and the risks and opportunities they represent should be a key focus area for businesses.** I am especially pleased that the steering committee gathered professionals from both asset management companies and NGOs, illustrating the diversity of our member affiliates."*

Rolf Iten from INrate's Management Board, Division Sustainability Research, states

*"Only 3% of all water on earth is freshwater and **global water scarcity is increasing.** Investors should assess the reliance of their portfolios on water resources and their vulnerability to water scarcity and water pollution. This report will assist them in doing so".*

These Eurosif mini-studies, whether focusing on a theme or sector, aim at helping policy makers, mainstream and specialist SRI investors, pension fund trustees, and companies understand risks that are not consistently integrated into traditional financial analysis, but which have the potential to influence companies' shareholder value and fund managers' investment decisions. They describe the companies' impacts on the environment and society, discuss the opportunities and related risks and outline ways in which companies can address them.

Eurosif's water report will be followed by a sector report on Shipping, to be released in early 2009.

To view the report, please go to www.eurosif.org/publications .

Notes to Editors

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EUROSIF, the European Sustainable Investment Forum, is the pan-European network whose mission is to **address sustainability through the financial markets**. Eurosif works as a partnership of the national Social Investment Forums (SIFs) within the EU and with the support and involvement of Member Affiliates. Recognised as the premier European forum for sustainable investment, Eurosif's Member Affiliates are drawn from leading pension funds, asset managers, NGO's, trade unions, academic institutes and research providers, together representing assets totalling over €1 trillion. The key benefits that Eurosif affiliate members receive include ground-breaking research, EU interfacing, and European wide initiatives that integrate ESG issues into the financial services sector.

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INrate AG, founded in 2001, studies and evaluates worldwide the environmental and social sustainability of companies, institutions and countries. Based on INrate's sustainability ratings, financial service providers create investment products with enduring sustainability such as the "Futura Swiss Stock" investment fund of Switzerland's Raiffeisen Banks. In 2008 this fund has been awarded for the third time the "Lipper Fund Award" in the category "Swiss stocks for 3 years".

Recently, INrate and the independent Swiss sustainability rating agency Centre Info, initiated a strategic collaboration for environmental, social and governance (ESG) research and analysis of Swiss and international companies. The combined research team comprises 27 analysts, of which 12 are senior analysts, making it one of the largest and most experienced ESG research centres in Europe.