

5 October 2021

## **Asian issuers show global leadership in embrace of sustainability agenda**

Asian issuers are assigning high levels of importance to environmental and social issues, putting them ahead of their global peers and investors in the region, according to HSBC's Sustainable Finance and Investing Survey 2021.

Some 58% of Asian issuers say that these issues are very important to their organisation, which is significantly higher than the global average of 44%, the highest percentage among issuers of any region and a slight increase (56%) on the those who said the same last year. By comparison, 32% of Asian investors said these issues are very important to them.

What's more, almost all Asian issuers (96%) say they have increased their focus and attention on environmental issues, social issues or both in the past 12 months, with 60% of them – a regional high – focusing on environmental issues specifically. For their part, some 72% of Asian investors have also increased their attention to these issues from last year, indicating the strength of momentum supporting sustainable economic change in the region.

However, there are certain issues holding back sustainable investing in Asia, the most common reason is environmental, social and governance (ESG) talent shortage. Over 40% of institutional investors in Asia say they are being held back from more ESG based investing, due to a shortage of expertise or qualified staff.

Other issues holding Asian investors back include a lack of attractive investment opportunities, a lack of comparability of ESG data across issuers, and regulatory or legal constraints. These are some of the same issues encountered by investors elsewhere.

Such challenges may frustrate progression, but they do not prevent it. And Asian investors are continuing to embrace ESG investing, albeit at their own, slower pace. Some 39% of them this year say their organisation has a firm-wide policy on responsible investing or ESG issues and a further 36% say they intend to have one in place in the future.

The good news is 72% of respondents in Asia say they are paying greater attention to ESG issues compared to last year, indicating greater prioritisation among investors in the region.

Jonathan Drew, head of ESG solutions at HSBC, said: "Let's get behind the efforts of governments, regulators and industry associations across the region to build talent

and create robust green jobs for the future. Sustainable finance and investment is a huge untapped opportunity for Asian corporates and investors, to differentiate themselves and drive growth. It is also critical in ensuring the region – which is among the most vulnerable to the climate crisis – transitions to a path of sustainable, low carbon, economic growth. A robust ecosystem of principles, frameworks and standards, across definitions and disclosure, requires expertise and dedicated human resource for it to happen. Meeting this need requires focus and investment, but doing so should pay huge dividends both in terms of building a sustainable future, and in terms of improving the bottom line.”

*ends/more*

**Media enquiries to:**

Nguyen Thi Thu Phuong

0903 262 006

[phuong1.nguyen@hsbc.com.vn](mailto:phuong1.nguyen@hsbc.com.vn)

**Notes to Editors:**

**HSBC Bank (Vietnam) Ltd.**

HSBC has been in Vietnam for over 150 years – the bank first opened an office in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in 1870. HSBC was the first foreign bank to launch its locally incorporated entity on 1 January 2009 as HSBC Bank (Vietnam) Ltd. The bank’s current network includes two branches and five transaction offices in Ho Chi Minh City, one branch and four transaction offices in Hanoi, and two full-service branches in Binh Duong and Da Nang. HSBC is one of the largest foreign banks in the country in terms of investment capital, product range, and customer base.

**HSBC’s commitment to helping issuers and investors better understand and manage sustainable financing and investing**

In 2020 it launched an ESG Solutions Unit, focused on supporting and advising clients including businesses, governments and asset managers.

In 2018, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainable Leadership (CISL), HSBC launched an online course for all employees and since 2009, over 4,000 senior staff, clients and suppliers have been educated through HSBC Sustainability Leadership Programmes in partnership with environmental NGO Earthwatch.

HSBC also runs the [Centre for Sustainable Finance](#), which provides thought leadership on low carbon solutions, investment opportunities and climate risk management.

HSBC has played a lead part in developing Asia’s sustainable finance markets through its role in organisations including the International Capital Markets Association (ICMA), the Asia-Pacific Loan Market Association (APLMA) and the Hong Kong Green Finance Association (HKGFA).

**HSBC Sustainable Financing and Investing Survey 2021**

The HSBC Sustainable Financing and Investing Survey 2021 is an annual global survey of 2,000 capital market issuers and institutional investors. The survey was run during May and June and was designed and executed by Euromoney Institutional Investor PLC. Respondents were split evenly between issuers, from across 19 industries, and institutional investors, including asset allocators and asset owners. In total, respondents were based in 34 territories across the regions of Americas, Europe, Middle East, Asia-Pacific, and Asean.

The global report and regional reports for Asia Pacific, Americas, Middle East and Europe can be accessed here: <https://www.gbm.hsbc.com/en-gb/campaigns/sfi-survey>

*ends/all*