

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## Largest academic conference on sustainable finance hosted by the University of Zurich with excellent research results and a bridge to practice

Zurich, CH – September 9th, 2022

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Global Research Alliance for Sustainable Finance and Investment (GRASFI) took place in Zurich between September 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>, with 250 participants exchanging ideas, debating results, and discovering future research options.**

Of 172 research papers submitted, 42 were presented at the conference. "The research field of Sustainable Finance has experienced a rapid increase in the quantity and quality of research papers produced over the past five years. What was still a niche back then has now become an integral part of research on finance," comments Falko Paetzold, Managing Director of the Center for Sustainable Finance and Private Wealth and host of the GRASFI 2022 conference.

From the papers presented, the academic committee selected the best papers in five categories. These are:

**Best Paper Award:** ['Cheap Talk in Corporate Climate Commitments: The Role of Active Institutional Ownership, Signaling, Materiality, and Sentiment Firm sustainability: How do investors drive it ahead, if at all?'](#) by Julia Bingler, Mathias Kraus, Markus Leippold and Nicolas Webersinke

**Best Paper Award for Transparency for Stakeholders:** ['Which institutional investors drive corporate sustainability?'](#) by Marco Ceccarelli, Simon Glossner, Mikael Homanen and Daniel Schmidt

**Best Paper Award for Climate Finance Research:** ['Scope 3 Emissions: Data Quality and Machine Learning Prediction Accuracy.'](#) by Quyen Nguyen, Ivan Diaz-Rainey, Adam Kitto, Ben McNeil, Nic Pittman and Renzhu Zhang

**Best Paper Award for Impactful Research:** ['The Optimal Design of Green Securities.'](#) by Adelina Barbalau and Federica Zeni

**PhD Paper Award:** ['Nature as a Defence from Disasters: Natural Capital and Municipal Bond Yields.'](#) Claudio Rizzi

**Runners-up for the Best PhD Award:** ['Pricing Physical Climate Risk in the Cross-Section of Returns.'](#) by Glen Gostlow and ['Inflated ESG ratings through socially responsible investing: An inverse relation to sustainable performance.'](#) by Bram van der Kroft and Dennis Bams





In addition to the scientific paper presentations, the conference offered plenty of room for exchange. The opening discussion "How can science drive real-world impact?" with Thomas Vellacott, CEO WWF Switzerland, Stefan Flückiger, State Secretary for International Finance at the Swiss Department of Finance, climate activist Marie-Claire Graf, and GRASFI Co-Chair Prof. Rob Bauer built a bridge between science and practice.

Further similar exchanges happened during the four 'Science Meets Practice' sessions:

1. The session on **Biodiversity** demonstrated the urgency for action by panelists Jessica Smith, Nature Lead UNEP Finance Initiative, Amadine Favier, Head of Sustainable Finance WWF Switzerland, Robert-Alexandre Poujade, Senior ESG Analyst, Biodiversity Lead BNP Paribas AM, and Professor Rob Bauer, Professor of Finance at Maastricht University School of Business and Economics.
2. Equally urgent were the challenges presented in the session on **Banks & Climate** by Professor Steven Ongena, Professor of Banking at the University of Zurich, and his colleagues Winta Beyene, Emanuela Benincasa, and Emilia Garcia, as well as Chiara Colesanti Senni, Council on Economic Policies.

The other two sessions focused more on solutions:

3. In a session on **Unleashing Private Wealth**, with Kristin Siegel, Head of EMEA and Director of the 100% Network at Toniic, Dr. Charly Kleissner, self-made UHN impact investor and co-founder of Toniic, and GRASFI 2022 host Dr. Falko Paetzold, the field of deep impact was evaluated.
4. The session on **Measuring Impact**, with Dr. Jonathan Harris, Founder of the Total Portfolio Project, Dr. Julian Kölbel, Assistant Professor in Sustainable Finance at the University of St. Gallen, Harald Walkate, advisor on ESG and former Head of ESG at Natixis Investment Managers, and Dr. Falko Paetzold, elaborated on the field of metrics.

"We all experienced the enormous need for exchange, especially on these relatively new research topics. It is very important to see how practitioners can use our results and where there is a need for further research," says Dr. Falko Paetzold.

For speaker quotes and inside information on every session, visit GRASFI's [Twitter account](#) ([twitter.com/susfinalliance](https://twitter.com/susfinalliance)) and [LinkedIn page](#).

The 6th Annual GRASFI Conference will be held in the USA and hosted by Yale University.

FURTHER INFORMATION/ MEDIA CONTACT:

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#### ABOUT CSP:

The Center for Sustainable Finance and Private Wealth (CSP) is a research and teaching unit at the University of Zurich. CSP works at the intersection of research, wealth owners, and investment professionals to generate state-of-the-art knowledge on impact and sustainable investing. This knowledge is used to mobilize capital toward impact. CSP was the co-host of the 2022 Annual Conference of the Global Research Alliance for Sustainable Finance.

