

A roundtable discussion on current challenges in environmental finance

Session time: 1 pm – 2:30 pm on Thursday 31 March 2022

Theme: Current Challenges in Environmental Finance

This session is open to the public

Workshop Venue: Birkbeck campus, University of London, and live stream

Registration: please register via the platform for the workshop on environmental finance for the common good <https://efcg2022.sciencesconf.org> Registration is free but mandatory.

This session will be run in the roundtable-style and available to academics, students, practitioners, and the public.

We are delighted to have Thomas Singer from the US Conference Board, Maria Netto from the New Development Bank, and Karsten Schulz from the University of Groningen, Netherland, as our panel discussants in this roundtable discussion. By sharing their valuable working experience, they will provide their unique insights into current issues in sustainability disclosure, possible solutions to overcome current challenges (for example, blockchain), and how to help emerging economies establish climate-related finance disclosure and channel climate finance.

Every speaker will talk for about 20 minutes. Q&A will follow. Please find their short Bios below. If you wish, pre-reading information is also available below. Enjoy your reading before you meet our interesting discussants.

We look forward to seeing you at our roundtable discussion!

Session chair: Dr. Alessandra Tanda, University of Pavia, Italy

Thomas Singer

Topic: “The current state of corporate sustainability disclosure: examining trends, challenges, and best practices.”



Thomas Singer is a Principal Researcher in the ESG Center at The Conference Board, where he leads research on corporate sustainability issues. Singer is the author of numerous publications, including “Organizing for Success in Corporate Sustainability” and “Purpose-Driven Companies: Lessons Learned.” Prior to joining The Conference Board, Singer worked with Blu Skye Sustainability Consulting and SustainAbility, helping clients embed sustainability

into their core business. He began his career as a management consultant with Kaiser Associates, advising clients on white space opportunities, competitive analysis, and benchmarking. Singer holds a BA from Tufts University and an MSc from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Karsten Schulz

Topic: [Blockchain technology for innovative climate finance: evidence from developed and developing countries](#)



Karsten Schulz is Assistant Professor for Governance and Innovation at the University of Groningen (Netherlands), where he also coordinates the Master's program in Climate Adaptation Governance. Before joining the University of Groningen, he worked as a government consultant in the field of digitalization and as a researcher for a number of international

organisations and climate change-related research projects. His current research focuses on the role of digital innovations (blockchain, DLT, platforms) for climate change adaptation, climate finance, and collective/democratic decision-making. Karsten Schulz is a member of the Young Academy Groningen and serves on the advisory board of the Future Earth-led project 'Re-imagining Climate Governance in the Digital Age'. His work on blockchain, climate finance and sustainability transformations has been published in academic journals such as *Futures*, *Earth System Governance*, and *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, among others.

[A concise introduction to blockchain technology:](#)

<https://www.ibm.com/topics/what-is-blockchain>

Further reading:

Schulz, K., & Feist, M. (2021). Leveraging blockchain technology for innovative climate finance under the Green Climate Fund. *Earth System Governance*, 7, 100084.

Schulz, K. A., Gstrein, O. J., & Zwitter, A. J. (2020). Exploring the governance and implementation of sustainable development initiatives through blockchain technology. *Futures*, 122, 102611.

(continued)

Maria Netto

Topic: Latest trends relating to green and sustainable finance in emerging markets



Maria Netto is the Chief of the Financial Institutions and Markets Division of the New Development Bank, leading the Bank's relating to green and sustainable finance resource mobilization and loan syndications, public and private financial intermediation operations, and development of financial solutions and innovation. Previously she worked for over 12 years in the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) as principal specialist in capital markets and financial institutions and was responsible to oversee programs for innovative financing strategies with local financial institutions and capital markets to promote private sector investments in low carbon and resilient projects in the LAC region. She also worked in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) where she was responsible for overseeing global projects to assist countries to assess investments and financial flows and policy options to integrate green business in different sectors and economic activities. Finally, Maria Netto worked for more than 10 years in the Secretariat of the Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), where, among others, she was responsible for leading the institution's work on bilateral and multilateral financial cooperation, for the assessments and follow up of investment and financial flows to address climate change and the development of carbon markets mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol. She has a MA in economy in the International Studies Institute of Geneva.