Annual review shows sustainable investments in Switzerland resilient despite difficult market conditions

Sustainable investment volumes in Switzerland remaining steady at around 42 billion Swiss francs / Institutional investors’ share of the market rising / Integration of sustainability into institutional asset management gaining in significance / Active engagement playing an increasingly important role

Zurich, 18 April 2012 – In 2011, the sustainable investment market in Switzerland managed to maintain its volume almost unchanged under difficult market conditions. This is one of the findings of the “Sustainable Investments in Switzerland” study published jointly by the independent consultancy firm onValues and the Swiss Sustainable Investment Forum, FNG Switzerland, on 18 April in Zurich. The study puts the volume of sustainable investments at the end of 2011 at 42.3 billion Swiss francs, representing growth of around one per cent from the previous year’s volume.

Commenting on the publication of the study, Sabine Döbeli, Vice-Chair of FNG and head of FNG Switzerland, said “These stable figures in difficult times are proof of the resilience of sustainable investments.” Döbeli, an expert on finance and sustainability, went on to say, “The survey shows that there is growing interest among institutional investors in integrating sustainability into their investment strategies. In addition, Swiss providers continued to demonstrate a high capacity for innovation in 2011: despite the market conditions, they introduced a variety of innovative products, for example in the areas of impact investing and emerging markets.”

In 2011, lower volumes of investment in investment funds and structured products were offset by growth in mandates. Nonetheless, the majority of sustainable investments (53 per cent) were still in investment funds, while mandates accounted for 44 per cent and structured products for three per cent. Overall, institutional investors strengthened their position at the expense of private investors, leaving each group with a fifty per cent share of the market. Bonds saw their market share rise by ten percentage points to 31 per cent in 2011, while equities’ share of the market fell by the same amount and now stands at 53 per cent.

Looking at market trends, Dr. Ivo Knoepfel, the author of the study and Managing Director of onValues, points to the growing significance of the sustainable investment strategies of integration and engagement. The financial expert sums up the situation as follows: “Investments where shareholder voting rights are being exercised actively have once again grown sharply and have now reached the impressive level of 11.4 billion francs.” He goes on to say, “Providers have begun integrating sustainability aspects into their financial analyses directly, so 9.1 billion Swiss francs are now invested in line with this approach. This development could be the key to the wider use of sustainable investments by occupational pension schemes.”

Since 2005, onValues has been recording data on the sustainable investment market in Switzerland every year on FNG Switzerland’s behalf. The methodology used is in line with that of the European umbrella organisation Eurosif (European Sustainable Investment Forum). onValues estimates that the study covers over 95 per cent of the sustainable investment market in Switzerland. The study was sponsored by the following institutions: Bank Sarasin, Bank Vontobel, Ethos, Inrate, Kaiser Partner, Raiffeisen Schweiz, SAM Group, Swisscanto and Zürcher Kantonalbank.
Further information is available at: www.forum-ng.org and www.onvalues.ch.
The study 'Sustainable Investments in Switzerland' can be downloaded free of charge at: http://bit.ly/HLGNfx.

Contacts:
Dr. Ivo Knoepfel, Managing Director of onValues GmbH, knoepfel@onvalues.ch, tel. +41 43 344 94 93.
Sabine Döbeli, Vice-Chair of FNG and head of FNG Switzerland, doebeli@forum-ng.org, tel. +41 58 283 62 16.

FNG Switzerland is part of the Sustainable Investment Forum (Forum Nachhaltige Geldanlagen, FNG), which covers German-speaking Europe. This specialist association for sustainable investments in Germany, Austria and Switzerland currently has around 160 members and is committed to promoting a more sustainable approach to business within the finance industry. FNG awards a transparency logo for sustainable public funds and is a founding member of the European Sustainable Investment Forum (Eurosif).