

A Common Language for Sustainable Finance

A look at the world's first set of financial accounting data on firms' sustainable activities

Though sustainable investing has been popular for more than a decade, defining and measuring sustainability remains remarkably elusive. Trillions of assets have been invested according to various environmental criteria, such as analyst ratings, carbon emissions, and more. However, these measures are often insufficient, relying on qualitative analysis or failing to quantifiably relate to a firm's operating performance. But now, for the first time, investors can analyze financial accounting data on firms' sustainable activities. Based on the European Union's Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities (the "EU Taxonomy"), these data follow standardized and transparent criteria for quantifying the percentage of a firm's revenues and expenditures that align with sustainable activities. In our recent paper "Corporate Alignment with the EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities," we explore this novel data set for ~327 European firms for fiscal year 2022, the first year of mandated reporting.

First, we analyze patterns in the reported data and find that:

- **The EU Taxonomy data is not predicted by existing data (such as Bloomberg estimates for eligible revenues).**
- **Because of the strict technical criteria set forth by the EU Taxonomy, only a small percentage of business activities align with the taxonomy.** Over time, we might expect this gap to shrink as companies transition their investments and products.
- **Aligned operating expenditures are associated with aligned revenues.** Over time, we might expect this relationship to strengthen as firms translate aligned expenditures into long-term revenues.

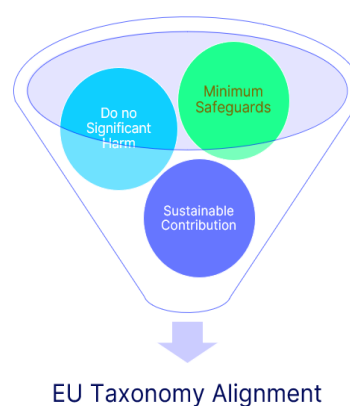
Then, we explore the relationship between firms' aligned activities and fundamentals. **We find that the firms with higher alignment exhibit no significant difference in operating performance or valuations.** However, this may change in the future, if product and capital markets reward alignment with sustainable activities.

Finally, we evaluate a key objective of the taxonomy, which is to prevent "greenwashing" by firms. To that end, we evaluate the correlations between environmental scores ("E-scores"), carbon intensity, and taxonomy alignment of a firm. **Notably, we find that many firms with high E-scores have fairly low alignment under the EU Taxonomy framework.**

Overall, this suggests that investors and regulators, alike, may benefit from the EU Taxonomy data. For investors, it can help identify investment opportunities, support due diligence, and identify discrepancies between different sustainability frameworks. For regulators, it can help set better public measures and standards for "green" activities and products.

For more on this topic, see our 2023 working paper: **"Corporate Alignment with the EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities: First Evidence from Financial Accounting Data"** by Alexander Cheema-Fox, Megan Czasonis, Piyush Kontu and George Serafeim

Exhibit 1: EU Taxonomy Framework




Note: For illustrative purposes

State Street Associates

Our goal is to bridge the worlds of financial theory and practice with innovative investment research for asset managers and owners. We focus on two fundamental drivers of performance to help State Street's clients exceed their performance goals and manage risk:

INFORMATION ADVANTAGE: Our extensive indicator suites provide investors with powerful and practical market intelligence.

RESEARCH ADVANTAGE: We partner with renowned academics to develop impactful new ideas for portfolio construction, risk management, and investment strategies.

Learn more about our thought leadership, publications, interactive tools and indicators at  **Insights**

Disclaimers and Important Risk Information [2024.01]

This communication is provided only to professional clients or eligible counterparties or their equivalent by State Street Bank and Trust Company or, where applicable and permissible, its bank and non-bank affiliates ("State Street"). State Street Bank and Trust Company is authorized and regulated by the Federal Reserve Board, registered with the Commodity Futures Trading Commission as a Swap Dealer, and is a member of the National Futures Association. State Street Bank International GmbH ("SSBI") is regulated by the European Central Bank ("ECB"), the German Federal Financial Supervisory Authority ("BaFin") and the Deutsche Bundesbank. Details about the extent of SSBI's regulation by the ECB, the BaFin and Deutsche Bundesbank are available from us on request. Products and services described herein may not be available in all jurisdictions or through all State Street entities. Activities described herein may be conducted from offshore. Information provided is of a general nature only and has not been reviewed by any regulatory authority.

This communication is intended for general marketing purposes, and the information contained herein has not been prepared in accordance with legal requirements designed to promote the independence of investment research. It is for clients to determine whether they are permitted to receive research of any nature. Market commentary provided by trading desks is not investment research. This communication is not intended to suggest or recommend any transaction, investment, or investment strategy, does not constitute investment research, nor does it purport to be comprehensive or intended to replace the exercise of an investor's own careful independent review and judgment regarding any investment decision.

This communication is not intended for retail clients, nor for distribution to, and may not be relied upon by, any person or entity in any jurisdiction or country where such distribution or use would be contrary to applicable law or regulation. This communication or any portion hereof may not be reprinted, sold or redistributed without the prior written consent of State Street. This communication and the information herein does not constitute investment, legal, or tax advice and is not a solicitation to buy or sell securities or any financial instrument nor is it intended to constitute a binding contractual arrangement or commitment by State Street of any kind. The information provided does not take into account any particular investment objectives, strategies, investment horizon or tax status.

The views expressed herein are the views of State Street as of the date specified and are subject to change, without notice, based on market and other conditions. The information provided herein has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable at the time of publication, nonetheless, we make no representations or assurances that the information is complete or accurate, and you should not place any reliance on said information. State Street hereby disclaims any warranty and all liability, whether arising in contract, tort or otherwise, for any losses, liabilities, damages, expenses or costs, either direct, indirect, consequential, special, or punitive, arising from or in connection with any use of this document and/or the information herein.

State Street may from time to time, as principal or agent, for its own account or for those of its clients, have positions in and/or actively trade in financial instruments or other products identical to or economically related to those discussed in this communication. State Street may have a commercial relationship with issuers of financial instruments or other products discussed in this communication.

This communication may contain information deemed to be forward-looking statements. These statements are based on assumptions, analyses and expectations of State Street in light of its experience and perception of historical trends, current conditions, expected future developments and other factors it believes appropriate under the circumstances. All information is subject to change without notice.

Participating in trading any financial instrument, including but not limited to foreign exchange, equities, futures, fixed income or derivative instruments, or investments in non-liquid or emerging markets, or digital assets, or participating in securities lending, repurchase transactions or other collateral services present risks, which may include but are not limited to counterparty, collateral, investment loss, tax, and accounting risks. Where applicable, returns may increase or decrease as a result of currency fluctuations. Derivatives may be more volatile than the underlying instruments. Certain foreign exchange business, including spot and certain forward transactions, may not be regulated in all jurisdictions. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Please contact your State Street representative for further information. To learn how State Street looks after your personal data, visit: <https://www.statestreet.com/utility/privacy-notice.html>.

© 2024 State Street Corporation – All Rights Reserved

6205803.1.1.GBL.

Expiration date: January 9, 2025

Global Markets Research Disclaimer Supplement [2024.01]

Australia: This communication is provided to wholesale clients by State Street Bank and Trust Company (Australian Business Number 70 062 819 630, Australian Financial Services License 239679).

Brazil: The products in this marketing material have not been and will not be registered with the Comissão de Valores Mobiliários - the Brazilian Securities and Exchange Commission ("CVM"), and any offer of such products is not directed to the general public within the Federative Republic of Brazil ("Brazil"). The information contained in this marketing material is not provided for the purpose of publicly soliciting investments from

investors residing in Brazil and no information in this marketing material should be construed as a public offering or unauthorized distribution of the products within Brazil, pursuant to applicable Brazilian law and regulations.

Israel: State Street Bank and Trust Company is not licensed under Israel's Regulation of Investment Advice, Investment Marketing and Portfolio Management Law, 1995. This communication may only be distributed to or used by investors in Israel which are "eligible clients" as listed in the First Schedule to Israel's Regulation of Investment Advice, Investment Marketing and Portfolio Management Law 1995.

Japan: This communication is made available in Japan by State Street Bank and Trust Company, Tokyo Branch, which is regulated by the Financial Services Agency of Japan and is licensed under Article 47 of the Banking Act.

Oman: State Street Bank and Trust Company is not a bank or financial services provider registered to undertake business in Oman and is not regulated by the Central Bank of Oman or the Capital Market Authority.

Qatar: The information in this communication has not been reviewed or approved by the Qatar Central Bank, the Qatar Financial Markets Authority or the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority, or any other relevant Qatari regulatory body.

Singapore: This communication is made available in Singapore by State Street Bank and Trust Company, Singapore Branch ("SSBTS"), which holds a wholesale bank license by the Monetary Authority of Singapore. In Singapore, this communication is only distributed to accredited, institutional investors as defined in the Singapore Financial Advisers Act 2001 ("FAA") and its regulations. Note that SSBTS is exempt from Sections 27 and 36 of the FAA. When this communication is distributed to overseas investors as defined in the FAA, note that SSBTS is exempt from Sections 26, 27, 29 and 36 of the FAA. This advertisement has not been reviewed by the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

South Africa: State Street Bank and Trust Company is authorized in South Africa under the Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act, 2002 as a Category I Financial Services Provider; FSP No. 42671.

United Arab Emirates: The information contained within this communication is not intended to lead to the conclusion of any contract of whatsoever nature within the territory of the United Arab Emirates.

United Kingdom: State Street Bank and Trust Company is authorised and regulated by the Federal Reserve Board of the United States, authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority ("PRA") and subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and limited regulation by the PRA. Details about the extent of our regulation by the PRA are available from us on request.

State Street Bank International GmbH is authorised and regulated by the European Central Bank and the BaFin, deemed authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority, and subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Details of the Temporary Permissions Regime, which allows EEA-based firms to operate in the UK for a limited period while seeking full authorisation, are available on the Financial Conduct Authority's website.