

# Webmaster recommends

## – Focus on financial markets, ESG, social lending and sustainable investment practices

### BIS focuses on international banking stability

[www.bis.org](http://www.bis.org) under Publications and research

On 14 September 2009, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) issued its *Quarterly Review* for September 2009 with seven articles focusing on international banking and financial market developments.

### Measuring and monitoring the economic well-being of Australians

[www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr](http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr) (available in English)

In early 2008, the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress was established in France, with the aim of identifying the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress, including problems with its measurement.

On 14 September 2009, the Commission (which includes five Nobel prize-winning economists — Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, Kenneth Arrow, James Heckman and Daniel Kahneman) released a report, which contained a number of recommendations relating to the measurement of economic performance and social progress including:

1. look at income and consumption rather than production;
2. consider income and consumption jointly with wealth;
3. emphasise the household perspective;
4. give more prominence to the distribution of income, consumption and wealth; and
5. broaden income measures to non-market activities.

Immediately following the release of the Commission's report, the OECD announced its readiness to play a key role in helping to implement the Commission's recommendations.

### Oikocredit announces results of social audit

How to measure the economic performance and social progress of our economies? The debate on the macroeconomic indicators is animated since the latest report of the commission headed by the Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz. On a micro level, tools and indicators are now in the process of being developed and tested. In October 2009, Oikocredit, a leading private investor in microfinance, released the results of its social audit, the first audit of its kind, with the aim of discovering whether Oikocredit really fulfils its social mission and maintain its values.

### EDHEC position paper on proposed revision to IAS 19

[www.edhec-risk.com](http://www.edhec-risk.com) under EDHEC Publications

In a new position paper produced as a response to the proposed revision to IAS 19 by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), Samuel Sender, Applied Research Manager with EDHEC-Risk, postulates that the immediate recognition of the volatility of pension surpluses and deficits in the profit and loss accounts of the sponsor may lead pension funds to shed risky assets.

According to EDHEC, the IASB proposal gives pension funds no incentives to manage risk properly; instead, by suggesting that pension assets and liabilities can be considered held for trading, pension funds are given incentives to shed these liabilities.

## Gender issues in employment and superannuation

[www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au) under About the Commission

In September 2009, the Australian Human Rights Commission published an issues paper titled *Accumulating poverty? Women's experiences of inequality over the lifecycle*, which examines the gender gap in retirement savings.

[www.business.curtin.edu.au](http://www.business.curtin.edu.au) under Research

In April 2009, the Women in Social & Economic Research Unit at Curtin University of Technology published a report titled *Women's employment in the context of the economic downturn*. The report noted that lower superannuation accumulations among women is widely recognized and the issue is largely one of policy priorities.

## Encouraging ESG disclosure

[www.eiris.org/files/research%20publications/StockExchanges&ESGNov09.pdf](http://www.eiris.org/files/research%20publications/StockExchanges&ESGNov09.pdf)

EIRIS recently published a briefing, *Taking stock: how leading stock exchanges are addressing ESG issues and the role they can play in enhancing ESG disclosure*, at the link above. This includes an analysis of how well stock exchanges manage ESG issues and also makes certain recommendations to stock exchanges.

[www.eiris.org/publications.html](http://www.eiris.org/publications.html)

EIRIS has also published two Climate Change Trackers, one for North America and one for Asia, as well as a Climate Change Compass for 2009 leading up to the Copenhagen meeting in December 2009.

## Social lending

Social Lending (also known as P2P loans, peer-to-peer lending, person-to-person lending or community borrowing) matches individuals with money to invest with individuals who need money to fund certain personal or business interests and needs. Webmaster offers an update to the coverage in JASSA Issue 1, Autumn 2007.

<http://lendinghub.com.au>

Lending Hub is Australia's first online loan service providing a marketplace for person-to-person lending and borrowing with a unique focus on rapid loan application processing and strict compliance and security. Lending Hub revolves around people, communities and user-features to create a social way for real people to lend to other people.

[www.lendingclub.com](http://www.lendingclub.com)

Lending clubs offer lower-cost loans through an online financial community that eliminates the high cost and complexity of traditional banks. They are starting to be an alternative to banks able to give personal loans at better rates. This site shows some comparative US personal loan base rates.

## Responsible Investment Benchmark Report 2009

[www.responsibleinvestment.org](http://www.responsibleinvestment.org)

In November 2009, the Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA) launched the ninth annual *Responsible Investment Benchmark Report* for 2009, which includes the inaugural Cleantech in Australia Benchmark Report. The research was carried out by Corporate Monitor, led by Michael Walsh. The report presents updated figures for the 2008–2009 financial year for the various types of responsible investment; analysis of its areas of growth and decline; comparisons with the total managed investment market; and a summary of the latest reported comparable overseas figures.

The Cleantech report shows benchmarks for clean technology investment and maps the main publicly available clean technology investment activity in Australia.

## Social Investment Forum (SIF) Survey

[www.socialinvest.org/documents/ESG\\_Letter\\_to\\_SEC.pdf](http://www.socialinvest.org/documents/ESG_Letter_to_SEC.pdf)

In July 2009, more than 50 major investment firms and professionals joined the Social Investment Forum (SIF) in calling on the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to help strengthen financial markets and foster sustainable business practices by requiring publicly traded companies to report annually on a range of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) matters.

The organizations are asking the SEC to require companies to report annually on a cohesive set of sustainability indicators in accordance with the most up-to-date reporting framework of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI); and on other material ESG matters as they come to light.

## Sustainability Challenge Foundation

[www.scfoundation.org/](http://www.scfoundation.org/)

Sustainability Challenge International (SCI) works collaboratively with groups of skilled professionals and partner organisations to develop, distribute and deliver the unique Sustainability Challenge. SCI's team of experienced consultants have developed a wide range of successful tools used in businesses and government for diagnostics, development and strategy. The Sustainability Challenge, launched nationally in November 2009 in association with Baker & McKenzie and Models for Success and Sustainability (MOSS), is a training, auditing and strategic planning tool that offers an innovative, highly engaging workshop to build a team approach and encourage serious action towards sustainable living.

## Swinburne University of Technology National Centre for Sustainability

[www.swin.edu.au/ncs/Innovation/grand\\_green\\_plan.html](http://www.swin.edu.au/ncs/Innovation/grand_green_plan.html)

Swinburne TAFE, through the National Centre for Sustainability (NCS), is commencing a series of projects, under the broad title of the Grand Green Plan (GGP), to effectively position Swinburne to meet the emerging needs of the green economy. The GGP has been developed to acknowledge and address the challenges faced by Swinburne TAFE in responding rapidly to the education and training implications of sustainability – and in particular the urgency of climate change.

## Global peak oil monitoring

[www.crudeoilpeak.com](http://www.crudeoilpeak.com)

Matt Mushalik (MEAust, CPEng) has just launched a new website monitoring global peak oil levels and focusing on the potential for impact on oil dependent investments. The online archive reaches back to November 2004, and there is an RSS feed available. Articles cover seven different topic categories.

## Web Business Age

<http://webbusinessage.com>

Web Business Age, an industry engine for Web business and the online marketing industry, was launched in November 2009 to help business owners and executives think about, build, run, market and measure their online business and marketing.

This online resource offers essential reading and useful resources to business and marketing managers, small business owners and other online professionals.

The most prominent feature is a directory of products, service providers, technical platforms, and reading & learning resources. Selected by experienced editors and categorised in several practice areas, listings are continuously updated to keep up with the fast changing online marketplace.

## FlowingData

<http://flowingdata.com>

FlowingData is an interesting website that has been in existence for three years. It explores how designers, statisticians and computer scientists are enhancing the understanding of data by non-experts through data visualisation. An archive gives access to the site's most popular posts, and there is a beginner's guide. Forums cover five main topic areas: data visualization, statistics and data, events, finding a job, and your.flowingdata. A projects section offers a view of the site's creator's ongoing projects that are available for subscription, and posts can be subscribed to via email, RSS or Twitter.

## Financial Times Lexicon

<http://lexicon.ft.com/>

The lexicon offers access to thousands of words and phrases selected by *Financial Times* editors and offers the opportunity to suggest new terms for the glossary. There is a term of the day and an RSS feed.

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