



## Newsletter January 2025

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### VOICES



#### **Joint Interview with [Lamia Merzouki](#), WAIFC's Chair, and [Hubertus Vãth](#), WAIFC's Vice-Chair**

[Lamia Merzouki](#) emphasizes that as the new Chair of the WAIFC, her priority is to align the organization's vision with the needs of its members. Vice-Chair [Hubertus Vãth](#) complements this vision, underscoring the WAIFC's role as a global platform for collaboration, innovation, and shared solutions.

**As the new Chair with an extensive experience within international institutions, what are your priorities for the WAIFC, and how do you see the WAIFC evolving through these priorities?**

I am deeply honored to be elected Chair of the WAIFC. I sincerely thank our members for their trust and support. I look forward to working closely with [Hubertus](#), [Lynn](#) and [Jochen](#), and all our stakeholders to drive the alliance forward. The WAIFC is a member-based association, and that is why it is essential to align its vision with the needs of its members. To ensure this alignment, we are about to hold a strategic workshop within the Strategic Committee in Casablanca.

This workshop will focus on renewing our vision and developing a strategic roadmap that best serves and benefits all members. That being said, our priorities should focus on:

- Driving sustainable finance: Leading on ESG, green finance, and the low-carbon transition.
- Fostering innovation: Embracing fintech, promoting digitalization, and developing key skills and talent.
- Enhancing global cooperation: Strengthening member collaboration and building impactful international partnerships.

I am confident that our network, thanks to its clustering effect, can play a pivotal role in shaping a sustainable and inclusive future for the global financial system.

**As an active board member since the WAIFC foundation, what do you see as your main mission as Vice-Chairman, and how do you envision your role alongside the new Chair of the WAIFC?**

It is a great honor to be elected as Vice-Chairman of the [World Alliance of International Financial Centers](#) (WAIFC), and I deeply appreciate the trust and confidence placed in me by my fellow board members and colleagues. As Vice-Chairman, I see my role as complementing and supporting the leadership of our new Chair [Lamia Merzouki](#). Together, we can strengthen WAIFC's role as a catalyst for collaboration, ensuring that financial centers not only adapt to the changing global landscape but actively shape the future.

Furthermore, I see our mission to ensure that we continue to create value with limited resources by identifying shared priorities. I envision WAIFC as a global platform that serves three essential purposes: a hub of ideas to inspire the future of financial innovation, a platform for shared solutions to common challenges, and an inspiring network of likeminded people. Looking ahead, I would like to warmly extend an invitation to all WAIFC members to join us at the 2025 AGM in Frankfurt at the time of the prestigious Sibos conference. I assure all that these events will be worth your while.

## OPINIONS



### **Opinion of Thomas Krantz, WAIFC's Advisor to the Managing Director**

[Thomas Krantz](#) highlights the vital role of international networks in his opinion piece for WAIFC, emphasizing their value during geopolitical tensions and economic crises. Drawing from historical examples like Coca-Cola's Cold War strategy and Hong Kong's resilience during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, Krantz demonstrates how global connections enhance risk management, market access, and adaptability.

Krantz concludes that leveraging these connections is essential for resilience and strategic growth, urging businesses to embrace global collaboration as a tool for navigating uncertain times.

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## NEWS



## Lamia Merzouki Appointed Chair of WAIFC and Hubertus Vãth Named Vice Chair

[Lamia Merzouki](#), Deputy General Manager at [Casablanca Finance City](#), has been elected Chair of the WAIFC Board, succeeding [Keiichi Aritomo](#) of [FinCity.Tokyo](#). [Hubertus Vãth](#), Managing Director at [Frankfurt Main Finance](#), is the new Vice Chair, bringing experience as a co-founder of WAIFC.

The leadership team aims to accelerate the agenda for innovative, sustainable, and inclusive financial centers globally. Merzouki emphasized WAIFC's growth to 29 members over six years, fostering collaboration and economic development. Vãth highlighted the responsibility to address challenges and advance finance as a force for peace and prosperity. Together, they seek to elevate financial centers' roles in global economic growth.

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## WAIFC at the AFF 2025 in Hong Kong

The [Asian Financial Forum](#) (AFF) 2025 in Hong Kong brought together global financial leaders to address critical issues in finance and sustainability.

WAIFC played a pivotal role, participating in high-level discussions on topics like transition finance, digital assets, and green bonds. Collaborating with the [Financial Services Development Council](#) (FSDC) and other key stakeholders, WAIFC contributed to fostering global partnerships and driving innovation. The event underscored the importance of collective efforts in shaping the future of finance, with WAIFC at the forefront of these vital conversations.

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## NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS



مركز قطر للمال  
Qatar Financial Centre

## QFC wins two awards at the 2024 Global Economic Awards

The [Qatar Financial Centre](#) (QFC) won the Outstanding CEO in Driving National Economic Growth and Best FDI Strategy and Development Initiatives awards at the [2024 Global Economic Awards](#).

In 2024, QFC achieved over 760 firm registrations, a 130% increase from 2023, expanding its community to 11,750 employees. QFC also launched the [Digital Assets Lab](#) and a regulatory framework for digital assets, supporting innovation in blockchain solutions. These milestones reflect QFC's commitment to Qatar's economic diversification and sustainable growth. CEO Yousuf Mohamed Al-Jaida reaffirmed QFC's dedication to positioning Qatar as a global business hub.

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### **Abu Dhabi Finance Week 2024 Draws Over 20,000 Participants from Across the Globe to Shape the Future of Finance**

[Abu Dhabi Finance Week](#) (ADFW) 2024, hosted by [ADGM](#) and with over 20,000 participants, concluded as a leading global financial event.

The theme "Welcome to the Capital of Capital" explored diverse aspects of capital and attracted over 600 influential speakers. Strategic discussions focused on economic transitions, sustainable finance, and innovation, with ADGM playing a key role in forums like the Abu Dhabi Sustainable Finance Forum and Fintech Abu Dhabi. ADFW also saw over 44 MoUs signed, solidifying Abu Dhabi's status as a global financial hub and enhancing its partnerships across industries.

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## **KIFC Positions Rwanda as a Top Financial Hub in Africa**

Rwanda, led by the [Kigali International Financial Centre](#) (KIFC), has ranked among the top three jurisdictions for investment vehicle domiciliation, as highlighted in a [MEDA report](#).

KIFC drives capital mobilization and inclusive growth, solidifying Rwanda's position as a leading financial hub. At key investment forums in South Africa, KIFC advanced discussions on co-investment frameworks, gender-lens investing, and ESG strategies. These initiatives reinforce KIFC's pivotal role in shaping sustainable and innovative financial ecosystems across Africa.

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## **Presidents of Kazakhstan and Guinea-Bissau visited the Astana International Financial Centre**

The Presidents of Kazakhstan and Guinea-Bissau visited the [Astana International Financial Centre](#) (AIFC) during an official visit to Kazakhstan.

AIFC Governor [Renat Bekturov](#) highlighted collaboration opportunities in investments, green and Islamic finance, and professional training. The AIFC, which has attracted \$14 billion in investments, hosts over 3,400 companies from 85 countries, including six from Africa. The leaders were briefed on AIFC's key features, including its court system, arbitration center, and green finance initiatives.

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## CFCA and CVTI Forge Partnership for Regional Growth

[Casablanca Finance City Authority](#) (CFCA) and [Cabo Verde TradeInvest](#) (CVTI) signed an MoU to enhance collaboration and investments between Morocco and Cabo Verde.

The partnership will foster joint ventures, support key economic initiatives, and promote sustainable growth. CFCA's role as a regional financial hub aligns with such efforts to drive economic integration across Africa.

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## Stuttgart Financial Partners with Boerse Stuttgart to Empower Youth

[Stuttgart Financial](#), in partnership with [Boerse Stuttgart Group](#) and [JOBLINGE](#), hosted a self-presentation workshop for young job seekers.

Sixteen Boerse Stuttgart mentors guided 26 participants in preparing for job interviews, while 15 laptops were donated to support their future readiness. This initiative highlights Stuttgart Financial's commitment to empowering youth through education and mentorship.

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International  
Finance &  
Innovation  
Centre

## TRIFIC Celebrates KEPSA's 20th Anniversary and Kenya's Economic Growth

[Two Rivers International Finance & Innovation Centre](#) (TRIFIC) celebrated [KEPSA's](#) 20th Anniversary, highlighting its role in Kenya's economic transformation.

TRIFIC showcased its commitment to investment and innovation, engaging with industry leaders to promote a dynamic ecosystem linking global markets with Kenya's potential. CEO [Brenda Mbatji](#), as KEPSA Vice Chair, emphasized the collaboration driving Kenya's business agenda forward.

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FinanceMalta

## FinanceMalta's 17th Annual Conference charts Malta's ambitions as a financial hub

[FinanceMalta's 17th Annual Conference](#) showcased Malta's ambitions as a financial hub, drawing over 740 delegates and 38 sponsors under the theme "Empowering Financial Services."

Discussions highlighted opportunities in FinTech, AI, the blue economy, and aircraft leasing finance, alongside challenges like skills shortages and trust enhancement. FinanceMalta Chairman [George Vella](#) emphasized simplifying processes and attracting sustainable finance, while Joseph Zammit Tabona outlined plans for modernizing infrastructure and enhancing global competitiveness in capital markets and FinTech.

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### **FSDC releases report “Internationalising China’s Carbon Market: The Role of Hong Kong as an International Financial Centre”**

The [Financial Services Development Council](#) (FSDC) released a [report](#), “Internationalising China’s Carbon Market: The Role of Hong Kong as an International Financial Centre”, emphasizing Hong Kong's potential as a leading global carbon trading hub.

The report outlines strategies to align Hong Kong’s financial expertise with Mainland China’s growing carbon market, projected to reach \$10 billion by 2030. Key recommendations include launching a Carbon Connect, enhancing governance with a carbon registry, and developing advanced technologies and professional services for carbon trading. These initiatives aim to position Hong Kong as a global leader in carbon markets while driving sustainability and innovation.

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For additional news articles on WAIFC and its members, please subscribe the [weekly newsletter](#) of our Managing Director.

**EVENTS**

## 国際金融都市・東京の「喜望峰」

1.24 2025 HYBRID  
[FRI] 14:00-19:35  
KABUTO ONE HALL&CONFERENCE

### FinCity Global Forum 2025

[FinCity.Tokyo](#) has the pleasure to announce FinCity Global Forum 2025. This event will bring together experts from Japan and abroad to discuss what is needed to further enhance Tokyo's value as a global financial city. In addition, in collaboration with the side event "Tokyo Asset Management Forum" to be held the same day, FinCity.Tokyo will provide a forum for in-depth discussion with stakeholders in the asset management field.

January 24, 2025. Kabuto One Hall & Conference, 7-1 Nihonbashikabutocho, Chuo City, Tokyo 103-0026, Japan.

▶ [More information](#)



TAMF  
Tokyo Asset Management Forum

## Tokyo Asset Management Forum 2025

1.24 2025 HYBRID  
[FRI] 9:00-13:50  
KABUTO ONE HALL&CONFERENCE

### Tokyo Asset Management Forum 2025

Following on from last year, this year's TAMF will hold an "EM Showcase" to introduce distinctive EMs and hold in-depth discussions with domestic and international experts on themes such as impact investment and the allocation strategies of overseas institutional investors to EMs. Through this, [FinCity.Tokyo](#) aims to further utilize and develop EMs in the Japanese financial market.

January 24, 2025. Kabuto One Hall & Conference, 7-1 Nihonbashikabutocho, Chuo City, Tokyo 103-0026, Japan.

▶ [More information](#)





### [Inclusive Fintech Forum 2025](#)

We are excited to announce the second edition of the Inclusive FinTech Forum, a premier global platform focused on financial inclusion and FinTech for good. This prestigious event is co-organized by our esteemed member, [Kigali International Financial Centre](#), the [National Bank of Rwanda](#), and [Elevandi](#).

February 24 to 26, 2025. Kigali Convention Centre, Kigali, Rwanda

► [More information](#)



### [Dubai Fintech Summit 2025](#)

Join the highly anticipated Dubai FinTech Summit 2025 in early May, building on the success of the 2024 edition. Organized by our member, the [Dubai International Financial Centre](#) (DIFC), this transformative event invites sponsorship from significant fintech players worldwide.

May 12 and 13, 2025. Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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## DOWNLOADS

### Publications

- [Whitepaper on Crafting the Digital Sustainability Reporting Ecosystem](#)
- [Report on Women in Finance - Compendium of Good Practice](#)
- [Report on Art - An Integral Ingredient for Financial Centers](#)

- [Whitepaper on Enhancing Supply Chain Finance for the Promotion of the Green Transformation](#)
- [Report on How Leading Financial Centers Advance Financial Inclusion and Literacy](#)
- [Report on Supporting Ecosystem for Sustained Recovery and Growth of SMEs](#)
- [Whitepaper on the Future of Financial Centers](#)

## Institutional

- [WAIFC Presentation](#)
- [WAIFC Presentation in Chinese](#)

The [World Alliance of International Financial Centers \(WAIFC\)](#) is a non-profit association registered in Belgium, representing 28 leading international financial centers. Its members are government agencies, associations, and similar institutions developing and promoting their financial centers. WAIFC facilitates cooperation between financial centers, exchanging best practices, and communication with the general public.

### **Chair:**

Lamia Merzouki

### **Vice-Chair:**

Hubertus V  th

### **Treasurer:**

Lynn Robbroeckx

### **Board of Directors:**

Yousuf Mohamed Al Jaida, Abdullah Al Rabiei, Alya Al Zarouni, King Au, Nick Barigye, Bernice Buttigieg, Miles Celic, Obi Ibekwe, Joe Moynihan, Temirlan Mukhanbetzhanov, Ken Poonoosamy, Myongho Rhee, Philippe Richard, Lynn Robbroeckx.

### **Managing Director:**

Dr. Jochen Biedermann



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