

Private Capital Sustainability Conference 2026

21 April 2026

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Conference Agenda

Tuesday, 21 April 2026

08:30-09:20

Registration & networking breakfast

09:20

Welcome address

Host: Karim Palant, Director of External Affairs, UK Private Capital

09:30

Political Keynote

Mary Creagh CBE MP, Minister for Nature, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

09:45

Sentiments v reality – can ESG really die? *Panel*

ESG is under pressure, but is it really in decline? Hear from investors and sustainability leaders as they explore what's actually changing on the ground and what these shifts mean for capital allocation, compliance and the future of responsible investment in private capital.

Moderator: Harriet Assem, Head of Sustainability Policy, UK Private Capital
Hannah Gilbert, Director of Sustainability on Wider ESG Landscape, British Business Bank
Lucie Mills, Partner, NorthEdge
Matthew Sumner, ESG and Sustainability Lead, Scottish Equity Partners
Patricia Volhard, Partner, Debevoise & Plimpton



Conference Agenda

11:20

Investing for tomorrow: Will net zero remain central?

Panel

Explore whether net zero still guides investor decisions, or if economic and political pressures are shifting priorities. Hear from GPs and LPs, and sustainability leaders on the trade-offs between short-term returns and the long-term costs of climate inaction.

Moderator: Sarah Adams, Director of Policy, UK Private Capital
Jeremy Brown, Head of Climate Strategies and Investment Principal, Anthemis
Bill Esterson MP, Sefton Central and Chair of the Energy Security and Net Zero Committee, Labour Party
Jonathan Pollock, Chief Executive and Managing Partner, Elbow Beach
Rachael Reid, Senior Investment Manager - Direct and Co-Investment, DeepTech, British Business Bank

10:55

Networking break

11:20

Innovative finance mechanisms: Tools for unlocking capital for climate and nature – what is working?

Panel

Blended finance promises to mobilise private capital into impactful sectors. In this session, practitioners and policymakers will critically examine the effectiveness of innovative finance structures, and explore how policy, public finance tools and regulation can unlock scalable, investable structures.

Hear what's working, what's emerging, and what needs to change to better align public and private interests.

Moderator: Alex Shadbolt, Investment Manager and Impact Lead, Future Planet Capital
Stefanie Fairholme, Managing Director and Chief Investment Officer, Capital Solutions, British International Investment
Beverley Gower-Jones OBE, Managing Partner, Clean Growth Fund
Sandy MacDonald, Executive Director, Head of Impact, Scottish National Investment Bank
Georgina Thomas, Head of Impact, Cibus Capital



Conference Agenda

11:50

Do GPs and LPs mean the same thing when they say 'Impact'... and does it matter?

Panel

"Impact" is used across private capital, but do GPs and LPs interpret it the same way? This panel will unpack how impact is defined, measured and applied in practice. We'll explore why clarity matters for capital deployment, reporting and long-term trust, and how shared language, or deliberate divergence – can shape the future of sustainable investing.

Moderator: Maggie Loo, Partner, Bridges Fund Management

Sofia Bartholdy, Responsible Investment Integration Director, Church Commissioners

Ravi Bhatt, Managing Director and Head of Responsible Investment (ESG/Impact), Apis Partners

Alex Shadbolt, Investment Manager and Impact Lead, Future Planet Capital

Caroline Truong, Impact and ESG Manager, Lightrock

12:25

Networking lunch

13:25

Welcome back

Host: Harriet Assem, Head of Sustainability Policy, UK Private Capital

13:30

Keynote

Akshat Rathi, Senior Reporter, Bloomberg News

13:45

10 Years of the iCI: achievements and ambitions

Fireside

Moderator: Elsa Palanza, Global Head of Sustainability, ICG

Graeme Arduis, Head of Sustainability, Triton Partners

Eimear Palmer, Partner and Global Head of Sustainability, Pantheon



Conference Agenda

14:05

Pitching value creation in the Dragon's Den Panel

Four firms will pitch their value creation story that's truly material to their business. Using participant questions to shape the discussion, the panel will explore how they think about value, the frameworks they use, what's material across portfolios, how value is measured and how this is communicated to their investors.

Moderator: Michelle Lamprecht, Head of Corporate Affairs, Cambridge Innovation Capital
Marco Bartholdy, Sustainability Director, CVC
Alex Bexon, Director, ESG – Value Creation Partners, LDC
Owen Lewis, CFO, Cambridge GaN Devices

14:30

Closing remarks

Host: Harriet Assem, Head of Sustainability Policy, UK Private Capital

14:35 - 15:20

Masterclass 1 - Stream 1

Communicating sustainability performance and value creation Sponsored by Novata

Sustainability only creates value when it's measurable. In this masterclass, led by Novata, attendees will learn a practical five-step framework to turn sustainability strategy and metrics into strategic outcomes and financial performance. Move beyond reporting and build a clear, defensible value creation narrative grounded in high-quality data.

Laura Callaghan, Head of Advisory, EMEA, Novata
Laurie Cameron, Director of Sustainability, PAI Partners



Conference Agenda

14:35 - 15:20

Masterclass 1 - Stream 2

Sustainability Regulation – Turning Compliance into a Competitive Edge *Sponsored by Simpson Thacher & Bartlett*

EU and UK sustainability regulation is entering an execution phase. With the EU Omnibus largely settled and new requirements coming into focus, including EU Pay Transparency, Deforestation and Forced Labour rules, ESG Ratings regulation and UK SRS, attention is shifting from rule-making to implementation. For PE- and VC-backed portfolio companies, the priority is applying these requirements in a practical, commercially robust way that supports long-term value creation.

Led by Matt Feehily, Sustainability Partner at Simpson Thacher, this masterclass will map the key regulatory developments expected over the next 12–18 months and their implications for investors and portfolio companies. The session offers practical, actionable steps to build reporting readiness, engage management teams and embed regulation into day-to-day operations as a source of differentiation and value.

Matt Feehily, Partner, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett



Conference Agenda

14:35 - 15:20

Masterclass 1 - Stream 3

Demystifying FINZ for private equity: From misconceptions to implementation

As private equity firms face growing expectations to align with net-zero, many are grappling with how the SBTi's Financial Institutions Net Zero Standard (FINZ) applies in practice. This interactive masterclass cuts through common misconceptions and focuses on what FINZ actually requires and where flexibility exists for private capital.

Using live polling and real-world scenarios, participants will explore key questions around portfolio coverage, data limitations, investment horizons, and influence over portfolio companies. The session will surface how FINZ is being interpreted across the market and provide clear, practical guidance on how private equity firms can move from ambition to credible, science-based action.

Designed for investment and sustainability professionals, this session offers a candid, practitioner-focused discussion on how to operationalise net zero commitments in a private markets context without oversimplifying the challenges or overstating the constraints.

Marco Swan, Financial Institutions Engagement Manager, SBTi

15:20

Networking break



Conference Agenda

15:40 - 16:25

Masterclass 2 - Stream 1

The intersection of defence investing and responsible capital allocation
Sponsored by Malk Partners

As UK national security priorities evolve, the defence sector is increasingly drawing the attention of private capital. Yet, this shift is raising critical questions for investors committed to responsible and sustainable capital deployment, in terms of how they can enable such investments in their current responsible investment frameworks. This masterclass will explore how investors can navigate the ethical, regulatory, and reputational dimensions of defence-related investments while supporting innovation in areas such as cybersecurity, dual-use technologies, and resilient supply chains.

Robyn Kotze, Europe Engagement Manager, Responsible Finance, Malk Partners
Chase Wisnowski, Senior Vice President - Europe, Malk Partners

15:40 - 16:25

Masterclass 2 - Stream 2

The rise of responsible AI and its implications for governance

AI is transforming the investment landscape, bringing both innovation and responsibility. This session will explore how responsible AI is reshaping governance and risk in private capital, offering practical insights into managing AI-related risks, while aligning with sustainability goals. It will explore how to integrate responsible AI into investment decisions and governance processes, ensuring that innovation and responsibility are balanced with sustainability and long-term value creation.

Oliver Nixon, Research Lead, Reframe Venture



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15:40 - 16:25

Masterclass 2 - Stream 3

Holding the line on DEI: Standing firm amid a shifting global political landscape

As global political dynamics shift, some diversity and inclusion initiatives are facing increased scrutiny. This masterclass will explore how private capital firms can take practical steps to maintain a consistent and credible commitment to inclusion in the face of regulatory uncertainty, cultural pushback, and evolving stakeholder expectations.

Drawing on Diversity VC's work with over 100 funds and insights from its 10-year impact report, the session will focus on the systems and structures that enable firms to move beyond intention to implementation, from hiring and decision-making to governance and culture.

Participants will engage in candid discussion on the risks of regression, the business case for inclusive practices, and the leadership required to build resilient, high-performing organisations in a changing environment.

Meghan Stevenson-Krausz, CEO, Diversity VC

16:25

Networking drinks reception

17:30

Event close



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Contact us

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