

# ICMA

## Driving the Agenda in the International Bond Markets

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**For more than 50 years, ICMA has made a significant contribution to the development of the international capital market by facilitating the interaction between all sides of the international bond markets including issuers, intermediaries, investors, and market infrastructure providers, among others.**

ICMA, representing around 620 member firms from 66 jurisdictions globally, performs a crucial central role in the market by providing industry-driven standards and recommendations for issuance, trading and settlement in international fixed income and related instruments. ICMA engages closely with regulatory and governmental authorities, both at the national and supranational level, to help to ensure that financial regulation promotes the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the capital market.

ICMA members have a real voice in shaping market development, innovation, best practice, and effective regulatory advocacy across fixed income primary, secondary (both term and short end) and repo and collateral markets through ICMA's committees, forums and working groups. Sustainable finance and the digitalisation agenda are firmly embedded as key industry drivers in all of the market areas in which we operate.

Members actively contribute to the leading role played by ICMA in the international capital markets by helping to:

- Design and promote international market standards and development initiatives.
- Formulate the basis on which ICMA conducts a close strategic dialogue with regulators and responds to regulatory consultations.
- Advance technology and digitalisation initiatives across all areas of market activity.

ICMA is where solutions to industry challenges and issues are sought, advocacy is mobilised, best practices are developed, innovation is implemented and networks are formed to deliver increased efficiency to the entire market, while supporting sustainable economic development.

**Key features of ICMA's impact across all its areas of operation and focus are as follows:**

### Primary Markets

- The ICMA Primary Market Handbook includes over 400 pages of guidance and standard language for use in new issues.
- The ICMA Primary Market Practices Committee and the ICMA Legal & Documentation Committee are the representative bodies for the primary debt markets, composed of firms active in lead-managing cross-border syndicated issues. They are supported by several ICMA forums and working groups in different centres and regions.
- ICMA brings together sovereign, supranational and agency issuers globally through the Public Sector Issuer Forum; corporate issuers through the Corporate Issuer Forum; and financial institution issuers through the Financial Institution Issuer Forum.
- ICMA has played a pivotal role, working with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Bank of England, in the transition from LIBOR to risk-free rates in the international bond market.

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## Secondary Markets

- ICMA's rules and recommendations for the secondary market, including the rules governing the buy-in process and recommendations to improve settlement efficiency, continue to support efficient cross-border secondary markets. They have also served as the foundation for dispute resolution.
- The ICMA Secondary Market Practices Committee, composed of sell-side and buy-side member firms, is firmly established as the key representative body for the international, cross-border secondary bond markets.
- ICMA launched a Bond Market Liquidity Taskforce in early 2023, using its various initiatives related to fixed income market structure and liquidity to take a more holistic market view and address market participants' concerns around bond market quality and liquidity. The Taskforce is looking at the interdependencies of different markets to help identify potential risks and vulnerabilities.
- ICMA has led the industry in the successful campaign to oppose mandatory buy-ins under the EU Central Securities Depositories Regulation (CSDR).
- ICMA, through its buy and sell-side members, has led the industry in reaching a consensus and advocating a balanced and appropriate transparency regime framework for bond markets.
- ICMA was an early advocate and continues to play a key role in ongoing advocacy for a single EU consolidated tape for corporate and sovereign bond markets.
- ICMA's Electronic Trading Council has provided market definitions and best practice for electronic bond pricing distribution.
- Working closely with members, ICMA has published numerous reports on bond market developments, trends, and structures, covering both Europe and Asia.

## Repo and Collateral

- Since the early 1990s, ICMA's *Global Master Repurchase Agreement (GMRA)* has become the principal master agreement for cross-border repos globally, as well as for many domestic repo markets. ICMA commissions and makes available to its members, on an annual basis, legal opinions for nearly 70 jurisdictions globally on the enforceability of the GMRA and its netting provisions.
- The ICMA European Repo and Collateral Council (ERCC) is the main industry representative body for cross-border repo and collateral markets in Europe.
- ICMA has recently launched a Global Repo and Collateral Forum (GRCF) which brings together repo market practitioners to discuss repo and collateral developments from a global perspective.
- ICMA maintains the *ERCC Guide to Best Practice in the European Repo Market*, which sets out detailed standards for the orderly trading and settlement of repos.
- The ERCC's biannual *European Repo Market Survey* remains the most authoritative source for the size, structure, and dominant trends in the European repo market.
- ICMA has engaged with regulators on various regulations to avoid detrimental impacts on the efficient functioning and liquidity of the repo market, both globally and at EU/UK level, covering both prudential requirements as well as various market regulations (e.g., CSDR, MiFID/R etc).
- ICMA has coordinated the industry's effort to implement detailed reporting requirements under the Securities Financing Transactions Regulation (SFTR). Since the go-live in July 2020, ICMA has collected and aggregated the SFTR public data points on a weekly basis.
- ICMA is working closely with other stakeholders to develop and support repo markets globally, including by providing guidance related to the GMRA but also by providing other related resources, such as the recent *ICMA Guides to Asian Repo Markets* series (covering ten Asian markets).

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## Sustainable Finance

### ICMA is providing the de-facto global market standards for sustainable bonds

- Since 2014 ICMA had been providing the Secretariat to the *Principles* (the Green, Social, Sustainability and Sustainability-Linked Bond Principles). The *Principles* have become the de facto voluntary global market standard for sustainable bonds referenced by over 97% of issuances globally and representing over USD3 trillion of securities in stock. It is the largest source of debt capital finance available for sustainable projects and transition finance, and a strategic market for ICMA members and market participants. The *Principles* are complemented by guidance documents such as handbooks on impact reporting, climate transition finance etc. [Working Groups](#) under the [Executive Committee](#) of the Principles, supported by ICMA, bring together various stakeholders in the sustainable bonds market.
- ICMA also engages with other organisations to provide thematic guidance. Examples are collaborations with multi-development banks and UN institutions on two practitioner guides related to bonds to finance gender equality (*Bonds to Bridge the Gender Gap: A Practitioner's Guide to Using Sustainable Debt for Gender Equality* in Nov 2021) and bonds to finance economic activities that rely or impact on the use of coastal and marine resources (*Practical Guide to Finance the Sustainable Blue Economy* in Sept 2023). As well as work with the European Leveraged Finance Association (ELFA) to publish [practical recommendations](#) for high-yield sustainability-linked bonds (May 2023).

### ICMA is involved in market and policy initiatives as well as regulatory dialogues

- ICMA responds to consultations on behalf of its members and keeps a regular dialogue going with regulators mainly in the EU, the UK and Asia but also other global jurisdictions. In the EU, ICMA was the only trade association to be a member of the high-level expert group (HLEG) and the technical expert group (TEG) as well as the EU Platform on Sustainable Finance. Among others, this is reflected in the EU Green Bond Standard being based on the Green Bond Principles (GBP).
- In December 2022, ICMA jointly with the IRSG took on another Secretariat role for the drafting of a voluntary Code of Conduct for ESG Ratings and Data Product Providers. The [draft Code](#) has been published in July 2023 and will be finalised in December 2023.

### ICMA's publications, events, podcasts, education and other initiatives in sustainable finance

- Contributing to the discussion on greenwashing, in 2022 and 2023 ICMA published a series of [podcasts](#) focusing on market integrity in sustainable finance.

## Asset Management

- Buy-side members of ICMA have a distinctive voice through the Committee of ICMA Asset Management and Investors Council (AMIC), both on market-related issues and regulation.
- ICMA brings together its buy-side and sell-side members wherever possible to represent the views of the market as a whole on an international basis.

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## Fintech and Digitalisation

Fintech and digitalisation are well embedded in all the Association's work in primary, secondary, repo and collateral fixed income markets, with established working groups on Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) and blockchain in bond markets and market electronification. The ICMA Fintech Advisory Committee, which draws on experts from ICMA's diverse membership, provides guidance on the association's engagements on Fintech, including regulatory and legislative developments.

- Common standards play a critical role to avoid market fragmentation, enable end-to-end automation in traditional bond markets, and facilitate the emergence of a digital or DLT-based ecosystem.
- ICMA's Bond Data Taxonomy (BDT) provides a common language for key bond information. It is available in machine-readable format and can be used to automate the bond issuance process and also represent digital ie DLT-based debt instruments.
- The Common Domain Model (CDM), a joint initiative between ICMA, ISDA and ISLA, enables end-to-end automation of bond, repo, securities lending and derivatives trading as well as reporting. The CDM is available in Java and other programming languages.
- ICMA is working on fostering the development of scalable, liquid and efficient DLT-based bond markets. ICMA's DLT Bonds Legal Subgroup is focused on risk factors and disclosure in DLT bond offering documents. This analysis, in conjunction with ICMA's Bond Data Taxonomy and Common Domain Model, will form the basis for a framework for a standard end-to-end lifecycle of a DLT-based bond.
- Digitalisation of the GMRA is a crucial step towards achieving future automation and efficiencies in negotiating repo transactions. Recognising the need for consistent representation of legal data, the GMRA Clause Taxonomy and Library Project is one of the key transformational projects of ICMA.
- ICMA works closely with regulators to foster innovation, harmonise post-trade and facilitate reporting. ICMA has engaged with HM Treasury's proposal for a UK Digital Securities Sandbox and is a member of the Bank of England's Data Standards Committee. Furthermore, ICMA takes part in the Eurosystem's New Technologies for Wholesale settlement Contact Group (NTW-CG),

aimed at supporting the emergence of digital securities as well as the ECB's Securities Group (SEG), which is focused on post-trade harmonisation and innovation across the EU emergence of digital securities as well as the ECB's Securities Group (SEG), which is focused on post-trade harmonisation.

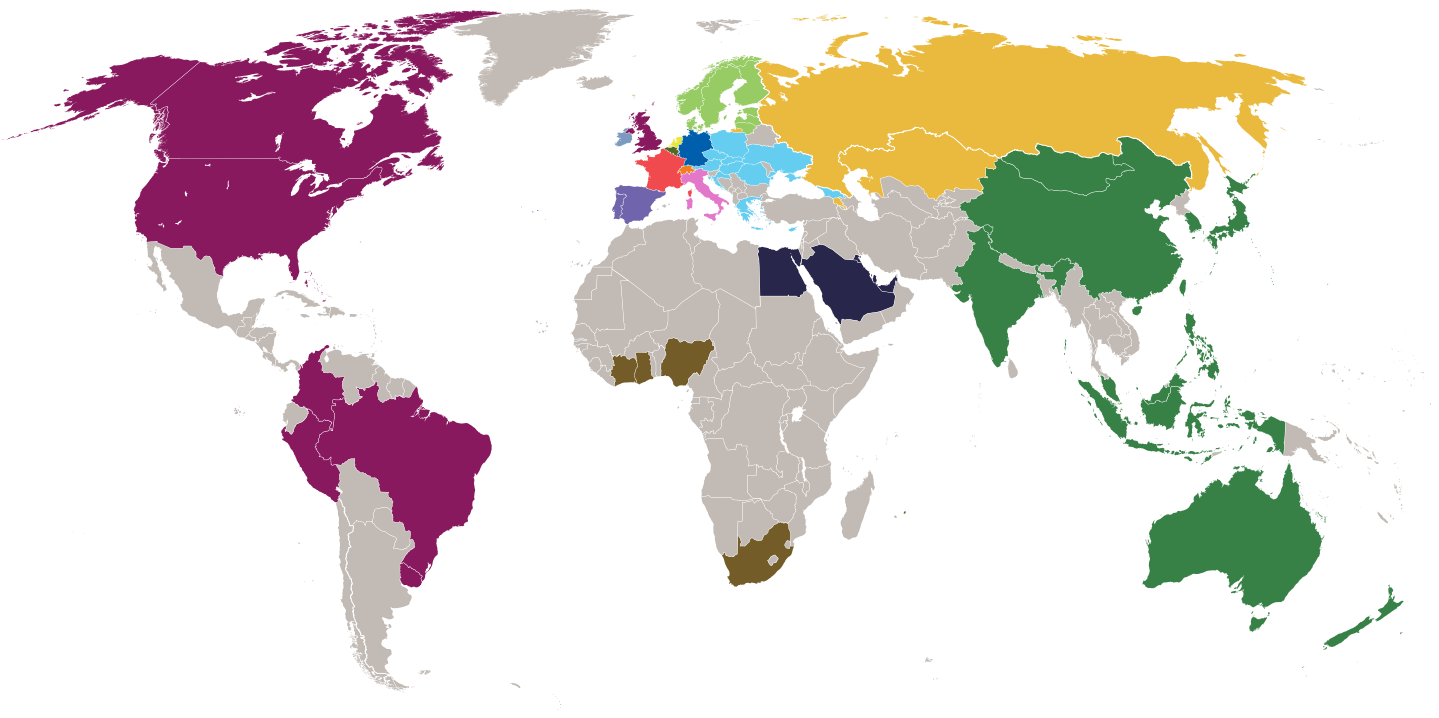
## Education and Training

- For close to 50 years, ICMA's educational offering has played a major part in its mission to raise standards in the international capital market, training staff from the regulatory and central banking community as well as a wide variety of other market participants globally.

ICMA supports and engages with members through dedicated helpdesks for legal, regulatory, and sustainable finance enquiries. ICMA also organises an extensive calendar of meetings, events, and webinars globally. ICMA provides insight into the capital markets through its reports, research papers, newsletters as well as podcasts with leading market practitioners.

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# ICMA's global reach – Over 600 members in 66 jurisdictions



## ICMA Regions

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| ■ Africa                                    | ■ Italy  |
| ■ Asia Pacific                              | ■ Luxembourg   |
| ■ Austria, Eastern and South Eastern Europe | ■ Middle East and North Africa                         |
| ■ Greece, Cyprus and Balkan States chapter  | ■ Netherlands  |
| ■ Belgium                                   | ■ Nordic   |
| ■ France and Monaco                         | ■ Russia and other CIS countries (currently suspended) |
| ■ Germany                                   | ■ Switzerland and Liechtenstein                        |
| ■ Iberia                                    | ■ United Kingdom and the Americas                      |
| ■ Ireland                                   |  |

## Contact Us:

To learn more about the work of ICMA and how Membership of the ICMA could benefit your organisation please get in touch:

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