

The World Alliance of International Financial Centers (WAIFC) Concludes a Landmark Year in 2025

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BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, January 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Alliance concluded 2025 as one of its most impactful years to date, marked by membership growth, expanded engagement, and tangible progress on its strategic priorities of innovation, sustainability, talent development, and inclusion. Throughout the year, the Alliance strengthened its position as a leading global platform for collaboration between established and emerging international financial

centers. It welcomed Nairobi International Financial Center (NIFC) as a new member, taking the total membership to 21 international financial centers worldwide, alongside 6 observers. This expansion has further reinforced the World Alliance's footprint across 5 continents and reflects the growing importance of collective action in an increasingly complex global financial system.

A key milestone of 2025 was the Alliance's [Annual General Meeting \(AGM\), a week of high-level engagements in Germany](#), hosted by Frankfurt Main Finance and Stuttgart Financial. With record attendance, over 60 members, observers, and partners convened around the AGM, participating in strategic discussions alongside global industry leaders and policymakers, and organizing a panel at SIBOS, SWIFT's annual global conference. These engagements underscored the Alliance's role as a trusted convener on critical topics shaping the future of finance, including artificial intelligence, sustainable finance, digital currencies, and the fight against financial crime.

During the AGM, members advanced several collaborative initiatives, including workstreams on



Members, Observers and guests of the WAIFC Annual General Meetings in Frankfurt

artificial intelligence, sustainable finance, diversity, and talent development. Two new members were also elected to the Board of Directors: Hortense Mudenge, CEO of the Kigali International Financial Centre, and Pawel Widawski, President of Future Finance Poland, further strengthening the Board's diversity and global representation.



The Alliance also progressed thought leadership activities in 2025. Launching a paper led by Luxembourg for Finance, “International Financial Centers “Strategies for Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Talent”. The paper provides a global perspective on the changing talent landscape

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*Lamia Merzouki, Chair of the
WAIFC Board of Directors*

in financial services, examining key challenges in recruitment, the impact of emerging technologies, and the best practices already in place. By championing innovative strategies in talent acquisition, training, and retention, the report aims to ensure that the financial sector remains resilient and well-equipped to navigate the shifting landscape.

Members also agreed to publish a report stemming from the Alliance’s flagship 2025 project that explores the evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the financial industry. Drawing on insights from international financial centers worldwide, the report assesses AI adoption and

sourcing, regulatory implications, and the broader opportunities and challenges shaping the sector. This collaborative effort aims to strengthen global understanding of AI’s role in transforming finance and to support the development of effective and forward-looking governance frameworks.

The Alliance also continued to advance dialogue on sustainability and digital transformation. Engagements with institutions such as the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB), central banks, and leaders in financial market infrastructure enabled members to exchange views on corporate sustainability reporting, digital currencies, stablecoins, and the evolving regulatory landscape.

Supporting the next generation of leaders remained a priority throughout the year. The Alliance delivered the fourth edition of its Young Academic Award, which attracted 57 submissions from 20 countries, reflecting strong global interest in applied research addressing climate finance, social finance, and digital assets. Finalists presented their research to members during a

dedicated ceremony in Frankfurt, reinforcing the Alliance's commitment to bridging academic insight and industry practice.

The Alliance also made tangible progress on its long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion. Building on the Gender Equality Pledge launched in 2023, additional international financial centers joined the initiative in 2025. Members continued contributing to the Women in Finance - Compendium of Good Practice, sharing practical approaches to attracting, retaining, and advancing women across financial services. This work reinforces the Alliance's belief that inclusive financial centers are essential to long-term resilience and sustainable growth.

Regional engagement was further strengthened through focused roundtables and exchanges. European members discussed EU competitiveness in financial services, Open Finance, and the Savings and Investments Union, while African financial centers explored pathways to growth, capital mobilization, and international positioning. These targeted discussions allowed members to address shared challenges while recognizing regional dynamics and priorities.

2025 also marked the first full year under the leadership of Chair Lamia Merzouki, alongside Vice Chair Hubertus V  th and Treasurer Lynn Robbroeckx. Together with the Board of Directors, they guided the Alliance through a year of growth and consolidation, reinforcing the Alliance's vision for the financial centers of the future, centers that are innovative, sustainable, inclusive, and globally connected.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Alliance will continue to advance its global agenda through key meetings and thought leadership initiatives. Members will meet for a Board Meeting and Extraordinary General Meeting in Malta on 3 and 4 March, followed by the Annual General Meeting in Busan, South Korea, from 14 to 18 September. The Africa Roundtable will also convene in January during the Asia Financial Forum for an Investor Roundtable. In the first quarter of 2026, the Alliance will also publish its report on the evolution of Artificial Intelligence in the financial industry.

Lamia Merzouki, Chair of the WAIFC Board of Directors, stated:

"2025 has been a defining year for the Alliance, marked by continued growth in our membership, deeper global engagement, and tangible progress on our priorities of innovation, inclusion, and sustainability. Through strong collaboration between established and emerging financial centers, we are reinforcing the role of international financial centers as drivers of growth and impact in our ever increasing and diverse alliance."

Hubertus Vath, Vice Chair of the WAIFC Board, added:

"The momentum we have built in 2025 reflects the strength and diversity of our Alliance. By convening globally and advancing practical initiatives from thought leadership to regional dialogues, the Alliance continues to provide a trusted platform for financial centers to address

shared challenges and shape the future of the industry together.”

Dr. Jochen Biedermann, Managing Director of WAIFC, added:

“We thank our members, observers, and partners for their strong engagement and commitment, which have been critical in sustaining our trajectory and delivering against our mission. Our collective contributions ensure we can strengthen our alliance as a global platform for collaboration between international financial centers”.

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