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ISSUE 287 30 March 2022

The time is now

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Countdown to T+1

Broadridge's David Smith discusses moves to next-day settlement

Nordic Focus

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Ready for Next

Deutsche Börse acquires Kneip

Deutsche Börse has acquired Luxembourg-based fund data specialist, Kneip Communication S.A. (Kneip), as part of its efforts to expand its fund services and data solutions as a central component of its growth strategy.

The transaction is expected to be completed by the end of March this year.

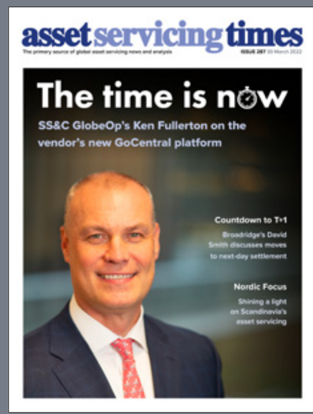
As part of the mandate, Deutsche Börse intends to connect Kneip's services with its established fund services platforms. The focus will be on significantly simplifying the process of data management and services for asset managers and other market participants across the fund ecosystem.

Established in 1993, Kneip manages investor disclosure and data publication for more than 10,000 funds in over 40 countries.

Kneip aims to expand its range of services inside Deutsche Börse Group, including data and post-trade services provided by Clearstream, Deutsche Börse's post-trade services platform.

Commenting on the acquisition, Philippe Seyll, head of investment fund services at Deutsche Börse, says: "Through Kneip's global reach and broad range of services, we will be able to further develop our product and service offerings and add value for fund clients at every stage of their business. This is also a unique opportunity to create a leading European fund data champion based in Luxembourg."

Enrique Sacau, CEO at Kneip, comments: "We are excited about accelerating our investment in our teams and in Kneip's growth as part of the Deutsche Börse Group. Clearstream has a long history of driving innovation within the financial sector and shares our vision, values and commitment to customer service. Deutsche Börse's scale and resources will broaden our portfolio and boost our ability to deliver more value to clients faster." ■



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Published by Black Knight Media Ltd

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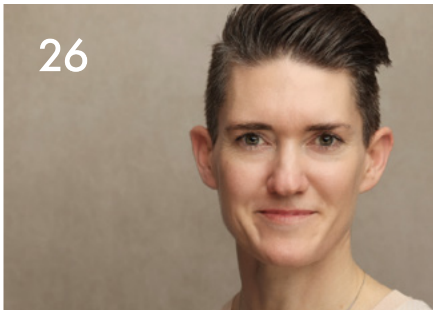

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HSBC appoints Laura Trimble as Ireland CEO

BNP Paribas partners with CACEIS to combine issuer services

BNP Paribas Securities Services has partnered with CACEIS to combine issuer services in a joint venture to be owned equally by the two banks. The transaction is expected to complete at the end of 2022, subject to regulatory approval.

As part of the mandate, the two groups intend to create a provider of services to share issuers, covering operational services such as shareholder recordkeeping, organising and centralising general meetings, setting up and centralising financial operations, and managing employee shareholding plans. This partnership would mark an important step in the development of services to corporate clients, say BNP Paribas Securities Services and CACEIS, allowing both banks to pool their investments and offer clientele a renewed and enhanced service offer.

Issuer services will continue to be provided separately by BNP Paribas Securities Services and CACEIS, until the operational start of the joint venture. Other service offerings of BNP Paribas Securities Services and CACEIS will not be affected.

Patrick Colle, general manager of BNP Paribas Securities Services, says: “We are delighted with this plan to join forces with CACEIS to create a leading service provider dedicated to share issuers. In a complex and constantly changing environment, securities issuers need evolving services. This ambitious project underlines our commitment to our issuer clients.” ■

BIS Innovation Hub validates prototype for multi-CBDC platform for international settlements

The Bank of International Settlements (BIS) Innovation Hub has finalised the design of prototypes for a shared platform that will enable international settlements using multiple central bank digital currencies (mCBDCs).

Developed under its Project Dunbar initiative, which is led by the BIS Innovation Hub’s Singapore Centre, this project has verified that financial institutions are able to use CBDCs issued by participating central banks to conduct transactions with each other on a shared platform.

The Innovation Centre has validated the operation of the prototype using CBDCs issued by the Reserve Bank of Australia, Bank Negara Malaysia, the Monetary Authority of Singapore and the South African Reserve Bank. This, the centre notes, will reduce reliance on financial intermediaries and the costs and time taken to process financial transactions.

Project Dunbar has operated through three workstreams; one focused on developing the high level functional requirements and design for the project, and two parallel technical streams that have developed mCBDC prototypes for different blockchain technology platforms, specifically Corda and Partior.

Following testing of the platform prototype, the Project Dunbar team advises that participating central banks should be allowed to retain control of the application rules on a jurisdictional and currency level, ensuring that the platform operates a governance structure that is acceptable to each participating central bank.

Andrew McCormack, head of the BIS Innovation Hub Centre in Singapore, says: "A common platform is the most efficient model for payments connectivity, but is also the most challenging to achieve. Project Dunbar demonstrated that key concerns of trust and shared control can be addressed through governance mechanisms enforced by robust technological means, laying the foundation for the development of future global and regional platforms."

Venture capital platform OurCrowd picks Apex for fund services

Global venture capital investment platform OurCrowd has appointed Apex to provide fund services, transfer agency and custody services to its recently launched global venture capital fund, OurCrowd 50 (OC50).

Formed in 2013, OurCrowd is based in Israel and has deployed over US$1.8 billion in committed capital to date.

OC50 is an investment vehicle giving investors exposure to global venture-backed assets across a mix of sectors.

Apex's mandate with OurCrowd follows a series of fund administration mandates by Apex in the Oceania and Asia Pacific regions, including Perennial Partners and New Forests.

These mandates come after the acquisitions of Australia-based Mainstream Group, and New Zealand-based MMC.

Commenting on the mandate with OurCrowd, Nick Bradford, head of business development, Oceania at Apex, comments: "We are delighted to be working with a fund of OurCrowd's pedigree and outstanding performance record."

"As we see alternative assets continuing to attract investment from wholesale and high net-worth investors, our clients need administrators with the experience and technology to meet the varying reporting requirements of a larger number of investors." ■

Saphyre completes Series A funding round to accelerate product development

Fintech company Saphyre has completed a Series A funding round of US$18.7 million, which will be used to accelerate Saphyre's product development initiatives in its pre- and post-trade solutions. The funding, which was led by HCAP Partners, will also support Saphyre's ongoing expansion of interoperability initiatives with other fintechs and vendor solutions.

Global banks J.P. Morgan and BNP Paribas also participated in Saphyre's Series A funding round. Saphyre's artificial intelligence-powered platform enables direct collaboration between multiple financial parties related to the same client. The platform digitises all pre-trade data and documents, eliminating redundant manual processes and allowing for secure access to data throughout the trade lifecycle.

Established in 2017, Saphyre has since received 104 issued patents and has been integrated with seven different platforms as part of its interoperability design.

Gabino Roche, CEO and founder of Saphyre, says: "It is an honour to be strategically supported by HCAP, J.P. Morgan and BNP Paribas."

"This funding will accelerate the rollout of our firm's offerings and ability to further prove that, in leveraging Saphyre's patented technology in pre-trade wins, you instantly gain post-trade competitive advantages as well as operational benefits."

Euronext lists SEBA Bank's digital asset-based Exchange Traded Products

Euronext has listed SEBA Bank's digital asset-based exchange-traded products (ETPs) on its European exchange, connecting European economies to global capital markets. SEBA Bank's current ETP offering consists of single-coin tracker certificates with Bitcoin, Ether and Polkadot as underlying instruments as well as the SEBAX Crypto Asset Select Index.

As part of the mandate, these products will be listed in USD at Euronext Amsterdam and in EUR at Euronext Paris.

Euronext operates other regulated exchanges in Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Norway and Portugal.

Listed at the SIX Swiss Exchange since April 2021, SEBA Bank's ETPs are designed to provide investors with secure and cost-effective means to access digital assets without the associated custody and security challenges.

Cowen launches digital asset division

Cowen has launched a digital asset division to offer full-service trade execution and custody solutions to institutional investors.

The new division, named Cowen Digital, will be headed by Drew Forman, Cowen's former managing director and head of equity derivatives.

Cowen Digital will enable institutional investors to access Cowen's aggregated liquidity through a central counterparty and give them the access to post-trade reporting capabilities.

Through Cowen Digital, investors will be able to trade directly from Standard Custody's cold storage solution, avoid pre-funding requirements, and receive flexible net settlement arrangements.

They will also be given access to analysis from Cowen Research.

Cowen's digital custody solutions will be provided through Cowen's strategic partnership with Polysign's Standard Custody & Trust.

Cowen has said that future functionality for Cowen Digital will include derivatives and futures, as well as institutional decentralised finance and non-fungible token access.

Newly-appointed head of Cowen Digital, Forman has more than 15 years' experience in derivatives and trading, having held other senior industry roles at JP Morgan Chase and Nomura Securities.

Commenting on the new division, Jeffrey Solomon, chair and CEO of Cowen, says: "Through Cowen Digital, our clients now have access to the crypto and digital asset markets with our institutional quality, fully integrated end-to-end execution, and custody capabilities." ■

Commenting on the listing, Gregory Mall, senior portfolio manager at SEBA Bank, says: "Collateralised ETPs are a key development for investing in crypto assets. As an emerging asset class which constantly matures, we see more demand for reliable, easily-accessible and liquid investment vehicles."

He adds: "Listing our products at Euronext will significantly increase our distribution capabilities and will also mark another step in our mission to provide a secure and cost-effective alternative to dealing with private keys and cryptocurrency exchanges."

SmartStream Technologies launches regulatory solution for MiFID II compliance

SmartStream Technologies has launched a new regulatory solution to help firms comply with the rulings of the second Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II), including assisting non-over-the-counter trading venues to fulfil MiFID II transparency requirements.

The solution, Trading Venue Quantitative Reporting Outlier Reconciliation, is designed to alleviate the burden for a trading venue when submitting a single daily file of instrument quantitative data to SmartStream Air (AI Reconciliations).

The reconciliation solution reconciles the single daily file or instrument reference data for the trading venue, consumed directly from the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA).

SmartStream Air also deploys instrument classification of financial instruments

codes from the SmartStream Reference Data Utility, which it uses to check that the instrument included on the reference data report is not one reportable under the quantitative transparency reporting regime.

The reconciliation solution has been designed in an effort to help clients comply with ESMA's increased data continuity checks post-Brexit.

ESMA now outlines that trading venues must perform increased data checks when reporting instrument reference and quantitative data.

Any irregularities must be accounted for and mistakes re-reported, so that ESMA can meet its timelines in publishing instrument liquidity and large-in-scale calculations.

At present, trading venues typically check their records retrospectively, on a three-month basis.

The launch of the reconciliation solution comes after SmartStream's Reference Data Utility (RDU) and SmartStream Air were combined to create Transaction Reporting Reconciliation and Reporting Decision Control, a solution to provide disclosure capabilities for compliance with MiFID II.

Commenting on the launch of the Trading Venue Quantitative Reporting Outlier Reconciliation, Jethro MacDonald, product manager, innovations lab at SmartStream, says: "Financial authorities' appetite for delving into trading venues reporting is growing, and they are doing so with an increasingly critical eye."

He adds: "Complying with the data continuity checks of ESMA is both complex and costly, and this is placing a real strain on trading venues."

"In response, market participants should take advantage of the sophisticated tools now available, including artificial intelligence-enabled reconciliation solutions and regulatory reference data." ■

Ken Fullerton
Head of GlobeOp hedge fund services
SS&C Technologies

The time is now

SS&C GlobeOp's Ken Fullerton sits down with Jenna Lomax to discuss the launch of the company's GoCentral platform and why it has never been more important to streamline the processes around NAV generation

SS&C Technologies Holdings has launched its GoCentral platform in an effort to optimise SS&C's fund administration offering. How will GoCentral achieve SS&C's desired optimisation?

We look at this initiative through two lenses: leveraging various artificial intelligence concepts, such as machine learning and big data analytics, and focusing on business process reengineering (BPR). This two-pronged approach enables us to quickly identify operational exceptions and anomalies and understand how they were handled previously.

We look at elements such as trade processing errors or corporate actions and pricing deviations, among other areas.

These efforts mean the net asset value (NAV) production process becomes more efficient and transparent to the client. As clients have firmly intertwined with the NAV production process, outcomes are tremendously impactful and beneficial to clients and to us.

As you have mentioned, the intelligent web platform leverages BPR. How does it do this and what benefits does this introduce to fund administrators?

From the client's perspective, there tends to be scope creep across various processes due to changing client and investor requirements.

Therefore, before we embarked on the GoCentral project, we did not want to assume that all the steps we were performing were critical and essential to strike the NAV.

Therefore, we analysed the various processes going into the NAV production to determine those required and whether we could automate them.

Then, after much research, we looked to execute specific processes essential to the ultimate goal of producing NAVs and automating them — resulting in an efficient, timely, transparent solution available to SS&C and our clients.

"We recognise that clients are under continual pressure from investors for more timeliness, transparency, and data. The GoCentral platform ultimately delivers the visibility and clarity they need"

Why is it so important to streamline the NAV process for fund administrators?

As an administrator, we cover many facets of our client's operations, but ultimately producing the NAV represents a culmination of many other activities throughout the month — everything from capital activity to valuations, corporate action processing and asset servicing.

We want to make sure we are the team to deliver the most accurate and timely NAV products to our clients and provide the utmost visibility and transparency. We recognise that clients are under continual pressure from investors for more timeliness, transparency, and data. The GoCentral platform ultimately delivers the visibility and clarity they need.

Will the increased transparency available through leveraging the GoCentral platform ease the regulatory burdens for fund administrators and alternative asset manager clients?

Ultimately, if we can produce the NAV quicker, other downstream deliverables can commence sooner, one of those being regulatory filings. Also, we will be able to deploy a lot of these technology solutions to many, if not all, of the regulatory compliance services we perform on behalf of our clients.

The benefits of the GoCentral platform offering the ability to review historical patterns and trends quickly means the asset manager can react or respond with a decision based on this information, and this method can also be applied to many other components or businesses — regulatory systems being one example.

SS&C also has a strong presence in the data and treasury management spaces. What other developments has SS&C been working on in these two areas?

We have another strategic initiative we are working on and have already deployed to benefit the operational processes around natural language processing. First, it enables us to look at both structured and unstructured data received in disparate formats and from various sources. Then, it interprets and translates that data into easily consumed performance processes.

We receive thousands of notices from various administration banks in the loan administration space, all in different formats. The platform enables us to extract the most salient and pertinent information to process it. As a result, it has already created tremendous efficiencies within the loan processing group.

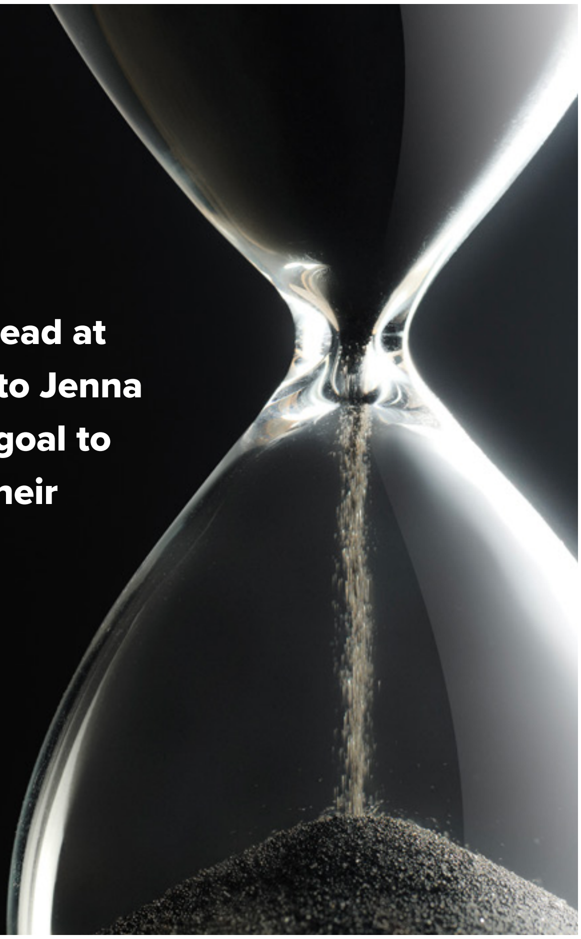
Additionally, we are substantially expanding our treasury management capabilities with SS&C Treasury Management. We feel this is an area our clients are looking to take advantage of in terms of optimising their cash balances, optimising returns or reducing what they are paying for financing positions.

We see clear operational benefits in terms of efficiency risks and risk mitigation for SS&C in expanding these two areas and tangible benefits for our clients.

What will SS&C's main priorities be for the remainder of the year, aside from developing the GoCentral platform?

What is paramount to us is leveraging the technology we have available, underpinned by the personnel and talent on our team to provide quality client service. We want to ensure our clients' experience with SS&C is enriched and our clients are delighted — that is what it is all about. ■

Up against the clock



David Smith, capital markets practice lead at Broadridge Consulting Services, talks to Jenna Lomax about Broadridge's continuing goal to help clients reduce the complexity in their technology stacks

How is Broadridge approaching the current capital market landscape, bearing in mind the increase in trading volumes, combined with the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic?

We had very little disruption in handling the elevated volumes that occurred at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The limited disruptions our clients experienced during the spikes in volatility greatly increased their confidence in our platforms' resiliency and led more to select Broadridge as a technology partner.

Those clients who had their own operational disruptions due to the pandemic were able to rely on Broadridge to provide the additional resources they needed to maintain key business functions.

How has Broadridge applied its consultancy and technology solutions to guide its clients through the past two years of global volatility?

COVID-19 accelerated digital transformation to unlock actionable insights from data and inform decision making. Our clients are focusing on digitalising workflows, improving client experiences, and refining data intelligence analytics.

We talked to our clients about core themes such as the digitalisation of assets and workflows and the benefits of service mutualisation — especially around the ever-changing backdrop of regulatory compliance, along with the democratisation of those services. All of those key themes are currently happening within the capital markets space and are much more front-of-mind now than pre-pandemic.

In the capital markets consulting space, we are currently focused on helping our clients navigate the transition of moving to a shortened settlement cycle as a way to help alleviate volatility risk. We are asking clients to think about their business model and what they want to be doing over the next two to five years. With that view in mind, we are then able to help them on the right path from a technology and operational perspective.

Right now, and generally speaking, many industry systems are still very fragmented. Even though we hear a lot about straight-through processing (STP) and automation, there is still a lot of room for improvement required to move to a true state of STP.

Asset servicing is a great example of where processes are not really centralised or consolidated; there is more room for efficiency. Many clients are still experiencing problems with their existing infrastructures, and are turning to Broadridge, asking: "What can we do better?" They are asking about our next generation solutions and what we can offer them now to improve their automation and operational efficiency going forward.

Do you think operational innovation will be the main industry talking point of 2022?

Yes, operational innovation will be a major theme in 2022. Overall technology modernisation and front-to-back simplification will be the main talking point: How can the industry achieve greater operational efficiencies while reducing costs?

As we know, shortening the settlement cycle to T+1 has been announced in the US, as well as in Canada, to be in place by the first half of 2024. As of now, Europe will still maintain a T+2 model but I cannot imagine an announcement to move Europe to T+1 will be far away, especially as cross-border transactions, along with foreign exchange implications, will make those types of transactions more complex due to different settlement windows.

We have talked to clients at length about this. From the first half of 2021, broadly speaking, we were not having many conversations about it with clients. But in the last few months, we have been inundated with calls — clients are now really starting to initialise their plans toward the move.

> *"Asset servicing is a great example of where processes are not really centralised or consolidated; there is more room for efficiency"*

They are asking us what they need to do and are interested to know what impacts the move to T+1 could have on their business lines. Conversations about T+1 will only increase as it is a mandatory industry change that requires a great deal of effort to achieve.

I would say the preparations needed for T+1 need to be made by June 2022, so market participants can allow enough time to not only become T+1 compliant, but also identify additional opportunities to streamline their processing.

What other areas do you think will be heavily discussed or assessed this year and beyond, particularly with capital markets in mind?

Technology is going to be the big driver. Many organisations still rely heavily on batch processing — especially large institutional firms. The real change and evolution that we expect to see in the future is mainly the move from batch processing to either intraday, near real-time or to real-time; the ultimate goal ahead is to achieve real-time.

"An area that has been overlooked in shortening the settlement cycle is the impact on an organisation's treasury management"

The path from batch to real-time is going to be interesting. The industry may continue with a batch or make batches more event-driven — where an application programming interface can bring in the relative data you need to know — or we could see an intraday batch system with more frequent intervals. Those are the factors that are now starting to formalise and be considered.

Another area that has been overlooked in shortening the settlement cycle is the impact on an organisation's treasury management — understanding your cash flow, understanding your funding requirements, how much cash you need to raise and from where. The time to forecast is being condensed for such a critical function.

Typically, today under a T+2 marketplace, you have almost another day to figure all that out. With T+1, that time shrinks down to just hours. That factor could be problematic when considering T+1. So that is why it is a very important focus point — to understand how that process is going to really affect the organisation. That is just one detail of the overall impacts, but it is the most important factor for running the entire firm's business.

What has Broadridge's capital markets team got planned for the year ahead?

Our product teams will focus on ensuring our current suite and next generation products will be T+1 compliant. We are looking to develop new solutions based on the feedback received from our clients.

In addition, last year Broadridge acquired Itiviti, a provider of principal and agency trading solutions and manager of the NYFIX network, for US$2.5 billion, our largest acquisition to date.

We are focused on integrating Itiviti into Broadridge so we can help our clients accelerate trade lifecycle simplification, which will be critical in achieving T+1 compliance.

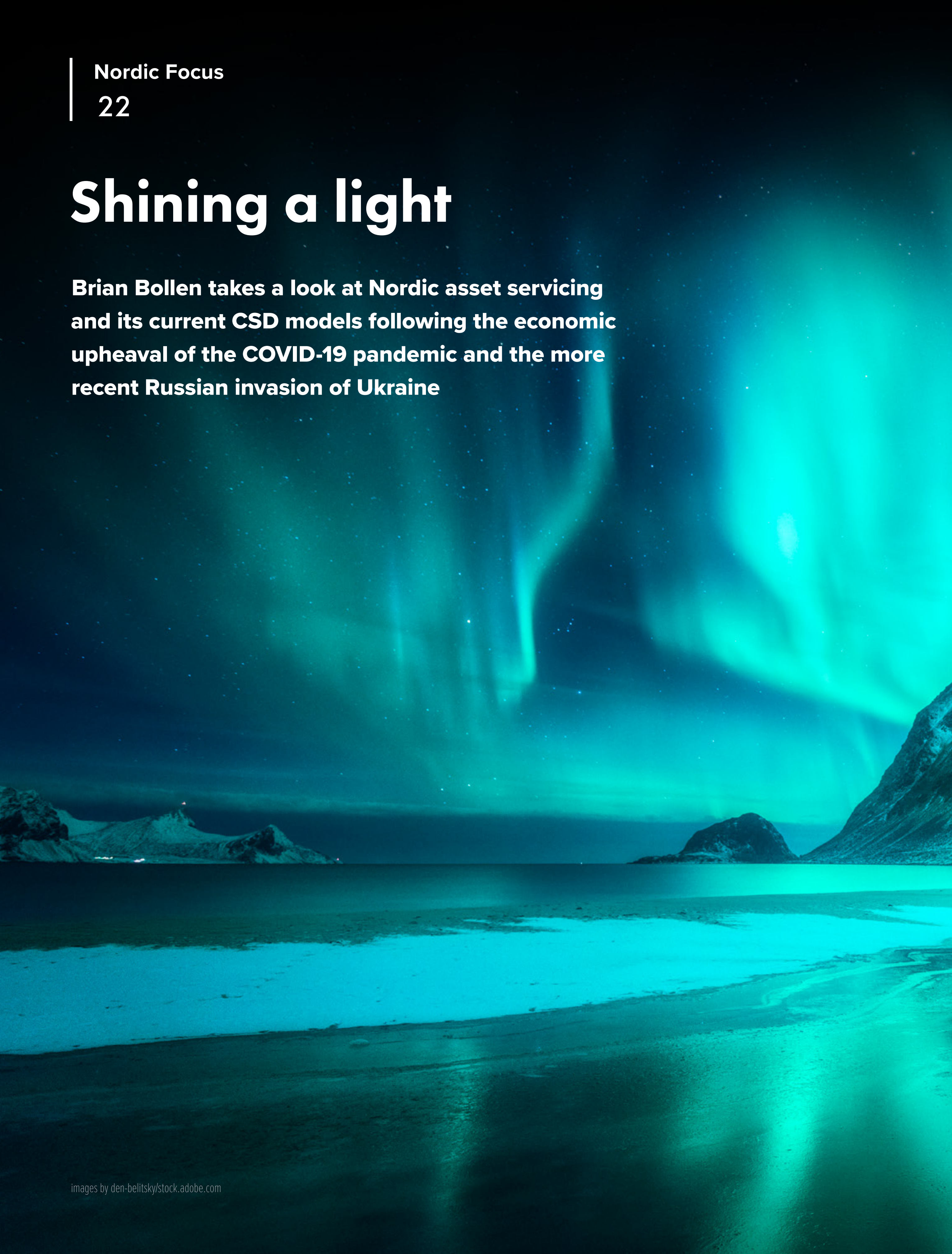
We are also focused on continuing our goal to help clients reduce complexity in their technology stack to increase their agility and lower their total cost of ownership and risk.

We are developing componentised solutions to enable our clients to modernise and rationalise their technology spend, and will continue to work with clients to expand the suite of next generation solutions we offer. ■

David Smith
Capital markets practice lead
Broadridge

Shining a light

Brian Bollen takes a look at Nordic asset servicing and its current CSD models following the economic upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic and the more recent Russian invasion of Ukraine



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Returning to write a feature about the Nordic custody market for the first time since 2010, mixing it with memories from similar adventures in 1998 and 2007, has proved to be a rather bizarre experience. Akin, perhaps, to how Rip van Winkle might have felt when he stirred after a 20-year nap in the Catskill Mountains.

How might a modern Rip van Winkle feel upon discovering that the companies that were born to serve their distinctly local market now bear the names of Euronext, Euroclear and Nasdaq?

There has indeed been a great deal of change in Nordic custody since 2010, reflecting a healthily developing market, observes Robert Vincent Leon Stenmark, head of Northern Trust's Norway branch. "If you are not changing and aligning with future demand, something is wrong."

He points to the impact of the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 on the financial industry and its service providers, singling out the waves of regulation that have followed since, aimed at enhancing transparency, harmonisation and investor protection. "Euroclear moved in on the central securities depositories (CSDs) in Sweden and Finland while Euronext followed suit in Norway (in 2019) and Denmark (2020)," he observes.

One obvious conclusion to reach while debate continues over whether these developments are a good thing or a bad thing is that further improvements in technology and advances in digitisation represent as much of a certainty as it is possible to discern in the context of the Russia/Ukraine conflict.

Norway

Some cynical long-term observers might go so far as to argue that nothing that mattered just a few weeks ago still matters in what threatens to become the worst of all possible worlds.

We can safely note, however, that Verdipapirsentralen ASA (Euronext Securities Oslo) was incorporated in 1985 in connection with the introduction of electronic securities registration to replace physical securities in Norway.

Euronext Securities Oslo is today the only CSD in Norway, providing an efficient infrastructure and services for the settlement of

"The CSDR license ensures our ability to offer a secure, transparent and efficient infrastructure with associated services to the Norwegian capital market"

Audun Bø, CEO of Euronext Securities Oslo

transactions in securities and the registration of ownership rights over securities. It delivers these services for investors and issuers through a network of investment banks, brokers, banks and fund management companies.

These entities, acting as account operators, are responsible for all customer relationships with investors and issuers, and manage day-to-day access to Euronext Securities Oslo services. Euronext NV owns 100 per cent of the shares in Euronext Nordics Holdings AS, which in turn owns 100 per cent of Euronext Securities Oslo.

Euronext Securities announced the appointment of Kristine Bastøe in 2021 as the new CEO of Euronext Securities Oslo, with effect from 1 March 2022, to lead its development and bring a decisive contribution to Euronext's strategy to pan-Europeanise and scale up Euronext Securities.

As part of the new strategy, over the next three years Euronext Securities says it will be expanding its service offering, converging platforms across markets, scaling up its activities across Europe, and improving the customer experience, with one united team.

Among other notable items of news, Euronext Securities Oslo obtained approval from the Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway on 28 January 2022 to operate as a CSD, in accordance with the EU's Central Securities Depositories Regulation, (CSDR).

Audun Bø, outgoing CEO of Euronext Securities Oslo, describes this as an important milestone for the exchange. "The CSDR license ensures our ability to offer a secure, transparent and efficient infrastructure with associated services to the Norwegian capital market, for the benefit of issuers, investors and market participants from all over the world."

Sweden and Denmark

Euroclear Sweden is the Swedish CSD, contributing to safe and efficient securities management in the Swedish market since 1971. It became part of the Euroclear group in 2008 and calculates that approximately 1,800 companies, including all listed Swedish public limited companies, are affiliated to its securities system.

Around 50 banks and other financial institutions use its system on a daily basis to manage and settle securities. Euroclear Sweden's latest development is a digital service for fund orders between fund companies and fund distributors.

Euronext announced in August 2021 that it had completed the settlement of shares under its offer launched on 23 April 2020 to acquire 100 per cent of VP Securities, the Danish CSD.

VP's primary business areas are CSD and securities services, and issuer services. VP's core activity is CSD services, supporting both the financial sector and its customers' need for secure securities issuance, clearing and custody services.

VP also ensures the effective intermediation of interest, repayments and dividends to investors. Issuer services comprises the issuing agent services and investor services activities, of which VP is the leading Danish provider.

The services include issuance services, handling of corporate actions, shareholder register, annual general meetings, investor relations services, investor analyses and compliance and corporate governance services.

The Danish economy came back strongly in 2021 after the downturn in 2020, when the pandemic left its deep traces on economic activity, Nordea's celebrated group chief economist Helge Pedersen wrote at the end of February.

Thus, GDP increased by as much as 4.1 per cent over the year. This is the highest since 1994, when GDP rose by 5.3 per cent. But the progress must of course be seen against the background of the large drop last year of 2.1 per cent.

In the fourth quarter of 2021, growth was 1.1 per cent compared to the third quarter. The development follows a corresponding increase of 1.2 per cent in the third quarter.

Growth in the last quarter of the year was driven by a strong development in exports, which increased by as much as 6.2 per cent, with both exports of goods and services increasing markedly. As imports only increased by 2.6 per cent, net exports thus contributed significantly to growth.

In turn, domestic private demand declined; private consumption by as much as 2.7 per cent and gross investment by as much as 4.2 per cent. The fall in private consumption must be seen in relation to the lockdown of parts of the service sector as a result of the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the late autumn.

On the other hand — and perhaps as a result of the increase in cases — public consumption picked up again, as there was again a need to increase efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finland

Euroclear Finland is Finland's CSD, connecting issuers, investors and financial intermediaries with safe, secure and efficient issuance, settlement and asset services. By holding a digital register of ownership it gives clients reliable, real-time information on their assets. Euroclear Finland says it has more than 1.4 million digital book-entry accounts, and that its issuance and settlement system is TARGET2-Securities and CSDR-compliant.

Finnish assets have felt pressure lately, but increased Finnish country risk explains only a part of those moves, write Jan von Erich and Antti Koskivuo in a recent article on the Nordea corporate research site. Finnish economic links to Russia are larger than for the Eurozone as a whole, but energy dependency is not.

The landscape of Finland's political security has changed, with the majority of the Finnish people now supporting NATO membership. Finnish bonds have underperformed versus France, suggesting also that Finnish country risk has increased to some extent, state von Erich and Koskivuo.

"While Finnish assets could easily face more pressure going forward, especially as the tensions in the Russian war continue, any meltdown in Finnish assets is certainly not our baseline," they write. "We also note that as the focus has lately been on including Russian energy exports to the sanctions, Finland is unlikely to be among the worst hit Eurozone countries, if such measures are introduced."

Nordea analysts Dane Cekov, Kjetil Olsen and Lars Mouland say: "The domestic economy has been faring much better than foreseen by Norges Bank in December when Omicron clouded the outlook.

"Registered unemployment came in at 2.1 per cent at the end of February, a year sooner than Norges Bank expected. The unemployment rate will fall further ahead and the labour market will become even tighter – supporting higher wage growth and core inflation ahead.

"Core and headline inflation have been consistently higher than Norges Bank's forecasts over the past three months. Core inflation came above the 2 per cent target in February – a year sooner than expected – and will likely rise further in the month ahead.

"Given the global price pressure, rising energy prices and the tight labour market in Norway, inflation expectations and wage growth demands have risen hand-in-hand. Still, with wage growth approaching 4 per cent, as the team now expect, purchasing power will increase more than Norges Bank assumed in December even if headline inflation is higher. The higher real wage growth will continue to support private consumption and economic growth ahead," Cekov, Olsen and Mouland add.

"Core inflation above the target and a positive output gap warrant interest rates to come above a normal level which Norges Bank has estimated somewhat below 2 per cent," they conclude. ■

HSBC adds Laura Trimble as Ireland CEO

HSBC has appointed Laura Trimble as CEO and head of wholesale banking, Ireland. Trimble succeeds Alan Duffy, who has taken on a new role as head of sustainable finance for HSBC Europe commercial banking.

Based in Dublin, Trimble will be responsible for HSBC's commercial banking, global banking and securities services businesses in Ireland.

Trimble has more than 15 years of experience working in corporate and investment banking, notably in the equity capital markets, having most recently managed HSBC commercial banking's origination activity across Europe. Trimble has also taken a leading role in HSBC's inclusion strategies for the continent.

Commenting on her new role, Trimble says: "I am privileged to take on the leadership of HSBC's business in Ireland and to join an excellent team of colleagues based in Dublin."

"Ireland is a key corridor for global commerce because it connects Europe with the rest of the world."

"We are ambitious to grow our business further here and to become the preferred international banking partner for our clients, particularly in sustainable finance."

Andy Wild, CEO of HSBC Continental Europe, comments: "With her extensive corporate and investment banking background, Laura is well placed to lead the next phase of growth in our Irish business." ■

Bosonic, a real-time clearing and settlement service for crypto and digital assets, has appointed Paddy Boyle as global head of clearing and derivatives.

Based in London, and reporting to company CEO Rosario Ingargiola, Boyle will be responsible for building out the clearing capabilities for the firm and enabling optimal institutional investor adoption. Boyle has more than two decades of financial markets experience, with expertise in derivatives markets.

Prior to Bosonic, Boyle was a managing director at the London Stock Exchange (LSEG) and global head of ForexClear, LSEG's FX clearing service.

He was also a partner and global head of FX options at Goldman Sachs for 16 years.

Boyle has had a number of FX market board and committee positions during his career which include sitting on the Bank of England Joint Standing Committee on FX.

Founded in 2016, Bosonic is a decentralised financial market company with offices in San Francisco, New York and London.

The Bosonic Network provides institutional clients with services enabling tokenisation of assets as well as collateral and liquidity aggregation. The network also runs real-time payment versus payment atomic execution and settlement, with cross-margining, cross-custodian net settlement and payments.

Commenting on Boyle's appointment, Ingargiola says: "We could not have asked for a more qualified individual to

Citi bolsters APAC leadership

Citi has appointed Julia Raiskin as Asia Pacific (APAC) head of markets, replacing Stuart Staley, who has been appointed as co-head of global FX.

Based in Singapore, Raiskin will report to Peter Babej, APAC CEO, as well as Carey Lathrop and Andrew John Morton, global co-heads of markets.

As part of her new role, Raiskin will also join the APAC executive committee.

Raiskin will be responsible for developing and implementing new strategies to improve product delivery to clients, lead senior regulatory relationships, and maintain strong risk management discipline across the region.

Raiskin was most recently APAC head of equities at Citi. Since joining Citi in 2007, she has held various APAC roles such as head of investor sales and relationship management, head of G10 rates sales, and head of fixed income retail structured product.

Commenting on Raiskin's appointment, Babej says: "Markets is a strategic pillar of our broader APAC strategy, and Julia's proven leadership will be key in advancing Citi's franchise across the region." ■

lead our charge into the fast-growing derivatives arena and Paddy brings a vital new dimension to our offering and value proposition. Bringing on someone with his calibre and proven track-record demonstrates our clear intent to be a leading player and the pent-up demand for what we have to offer."

Boyle comments: "Bosonic has built a unique and much-needed platform and I am excited to help build out the derivative and clearing functions of the business."

State Street's digital division, State Street Digital, has added three executives to its leadership team.

Katie Richards joins the firm as global head of operations while Marcus Grubb has been named global head of product. Both will report to Nadine Chakar, head of State Street Digital. Additionally, Derren Selvarajah has been appointed product lead for the product strategy team and will report to Grubb.

Based in Zurich, Richards will be responsible for driving the execution of the firm's strategy and developing sustainable and scalable operational solutions.

She brings more than 25 years of experience in developing strategy, delivering digital products and services, leading teams and transforming operational models across business functions.

Richards joins State Street from Cyber Capital, a crypto investment management company, where she was CEO. Prior to this, she held senior positions at Falcon Private Bank, UBS and Credit Suisse.

AFME appoints Caroline Liesegang

The Association for Financial Markets in Europe (AFME) has appointed Caroline Liesegang as managing director, head of prudential regulation and research. Liesegang succeeds Michael Lever, who retired at the end of 2021, after 10 years of service at the association.

Prior to joining AFME, Liesegang was the UK chief risk officer for the London branch of Commerzbank AG, where she headed the UK risk function.

Before working for Commerzbank AG, Liesegang was deputy head of the European Central Bank's soft systems methodology analysis and methodological support division.

Liesegang also worked for the European Banking Authority between 2013 and 2014 as a senior stress testing expert, coordinating EU-wide stress tests.

Before this, Liesegang worked as a senior banking supervisor for the Deutsche Bundesbank between 2004 and 2010.

Commenting on her new role, Liesegang says: "AFME is a well-respected voice within the regulatory and supervisory community on prudential issues, and I am delighted to be taking up the role and further developing AFME's contribution at this critical juncture."

Adam Farkas, chief executive at AFME, comments: "Given Caroline's extensive experience and strong relationships, she has the right skills to lead the work of our prudential division. Caroline's appointment comes at a key moment for our members as the final Basel 3 rules are negotiated and implemented in the EU and UK. We look forward to working with Caroline as she leads on this important work going forward." ■

Grubb will be responsible for developing and driving end-to-end product strategy at State Street Digital's London office. He brings expertise in business acquisition, transformation and strategic business development to the role.

Previously, he was CEO of BlockEx, a provider of white-label asset digitisation and trading technology, between 2020 and 2022. Grubb also served as director of market development and senior advisor for the World Platinum Investment Council and CEO of Swapstream, a derivatives exchange system.

Selvarajah will be based in London, where he brings experience in securities services, wholesale banking, financial markets processing and platforms across asset classes and geographies.

Before joining State Street, Selvarajah worked with Standard Chartered Bank as global head of securities service technology, innovation, digital transformation and delivery.

Speaking on the appointments, Chakar says: "We are thrilled to welcome Katie, Marcus and Derren to the State Street Digital team. All bring deep global expertise and proven track records in driving growth and strategy in the digital asset and crypto space, their leadership will be essential as we continue to expand our capabilities to serve the growing demand for digital custody solutions.

"We are committed to our mission to lead the evolution of digital markets and help our clients stay ahead of it, with Katie, Marcus and Derren on board we are even better positioned to achieve it." ■