



For Immediate Release

Impact Reporting and Investment Standards (IRIS) and FIELD Announce Data Sharing Partnership

Data exchange will result in increased transparency and comparability across U.S. domestic microenterprise and the broader impact investing industry

February 27, 2012 – The Impact Reporting and Investment Standards (IRIS) and FIELD at the Aspen Institute announced a partnership today that enables data from 803 U.S. microenterprise organizations to be shared with the IRIS initiative. The partnership also includes ongoing collaboration to ensure coordination between the IRIS and FIELD standards and data analytics efforts. This announcement closely follows the launch of FIELD’s microTracker platform, a comprehensive online data resource for analyzing the performance of the U.S. microenterprise industry. IRIS, the performance measurement initiative of the Global Impact Investing Network, will use the data in cross-sector analyses of the impact investing industry, which includes all investment made with the intention of generating social and environmental benefits alongside a financial return. The partnership represents a continued focus on unifying the currently fragmented landscape of social and environmental performance measures and data for a growing set of investors who seek to finance global solutions.

“This partnership with FIELD provides access to an important set of performance data from domestically-focused U.S. microenterprise programs receiving and seeking impact investment capital,” said Sarah Gelfand, Director of IRIS. “Alignment of the IRIS and FIELD performance metrics benefits both the impact investment and U.S. microfinance communities, and through this partnership we hope that U.S. microenterprises will become more visible within the broader impact investment industry.”

“We’re very excited that IRIS will now be able to provide U.S. microenterprise data alongside international microfinance,” said Tamra Thetford, Program Manager at the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program. “Impact investing in U.S. microenterprise is in its beginning stages, and we think this partnership has the potential to introduce and educate impact investors about U.S. microenterprise while continuing to strengthen the performance of the field through transparent data sharing.”

FIELD, an initiative of the Aspen Institute, seeks to identify, develop, and disseminate best practices, and to educate funders, policymakers, and others about microenterprise as an anti-poverty strategy. IRIS is a set of universally-defined metrics that can be used to describe an organization’s social, environmental, and financial performance.

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About the Aspen Institute: [FIELD](#) is an initiative of the [Aspen Institute](#), a nonprofit whose mission is to foster values-based leadership, encourage individuals to reflect on the ideals and ideas that define a good society, and provide a neutral and balanced venue for discussing and acting on critical issues. FIELD seeks to identify, develop, and disseminate best practices, and to educate funders, policymakers, and others about microenterprise as an anti-poverty strategy. FIELD focuses on the U.S. microenterprise industry - exploring innovation, evaluating new ideas, helping to build the industry's infrastructure, disseminating best practices to practitioners, and serving as a resource to donors interested in microenterprise. MicroTracker, FIELD's new microenterprise data website, is designed to increase the industry's viability and enable microenterprise practitioners to use data analytics to improve performance. For more information, please visit www.microtracker.org

About the Global Impact Investing Network: [IRIS](#) is an initiative of the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the scale and effectiveness of impact investing. Impact investments are direct investments, including those into funds, made with the intention of generating positive social and environmental impact and a financial rate of return. The GIIN builds critical infrastructure and supports activities, education, and research that help accelerate the development of a coherent impact investing industry. This work is informed by the GIIN [Investors' Council](#), a diverse membership group comprised of leading impact investment institutions. To serve the needs of the greater impact investing community, the GIIN also oversees the development of IRIS and [ImpactBase](#), an online global directory of impact investment funds and products designed to reduce search and transaction costs across the impact investing industry. For more information, please visit www.thegiin.org.

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