

9th April 2013

E-mail: strategicbarriers@unpri.org

Dear Principles for Responsible Investment,

Overcoming strategic barriers to a sustainable financial system

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your consultation *Overcoming strategic barriers to a sustainable financial system* on the new UN-backed Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) work programme. Although not a signatory to the PRI, we appreciate your opening up this consultation to others who are working towards the development of a sustainable financial system.

About UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association

UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association (UKSIF) is the UK's membership network for sustainable and responsible financial services. We promote and support responsible investment and other forms of finance that advance sustainable economic development, enhance quality of life and safeguard the environment. We also seek to ensure that individual and institutional investors can reflect their values in their investments.

UKSIF was created in 1991 to bring together the different strands of sustainable and responsible finance nationally and to act as a focus and a voice for the industry. UKSIF's 250+ members and affiliates include institutional and retail fund managers, pension funds, banks, research providers, consultants, financial advisers and NGOs. For more information about UKSIF, please visit www.uksif.org.

As part of our support for our members, UKSIF works to support and influence UK policymakers, regulators, financial services trade and professional bodies and other decision-makers on sustainable finance and investment issues. We also seek to influence EU policymakers through co-operation and co-ordination with Eurosif, as well as working in partnership with other autonomous regional and national sustainable investment membership associations at an international level through the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance (GSIA).

Our response

UKSIF has long been a supporter of the UN-backed Principles of Responsible Investment (PRI) initiative and welcomes its focus, as outlined in the PRI Strategy implemented in March 2012, on long-term factors which “drive value creation and investment performance, the operation of the investment chain, and the policy and regulatory environment within which signatories operate”.

We agree that there remain barriers within capital markets which undermine the interests of investors and that this is a systemic problem which requires a systemic solution.

Ideally, this solution cannot therefore be reached through the achievements of any one organisation or actor alone, but instead requires action at all levels: local, national, regional and international.

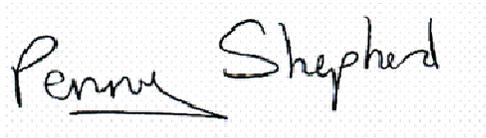
UKSIF believes that maximum effectiveness in the field of responsible investment requires having multiple voices operating at these national, regional and international platforms. We therefore feel that it is vital that the PRI works alongside organisations such as the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance (GSIA) at the international level, as well as Eurosif and others at the regional level.

Furthermore, we feel that the greatest impact comes from ensuring that these voices are – as far as is possible – well co-ordinated; it is important that the PRI and other organisations direct their efforts to where they will have most impact and do not duplicate action already undertaken by others, such as the work that UKSIF undertakes both in the UK and, to a lesser extent, at the European level in partnership with Eurosif.

We are pleased to note the recent focus of the PRI on keeping the channels of communication open between themselves and other organisations. UKSIF looks forward to continuing to work with the PRI on moving towards a more sustainable financial system and supporting the PRI’s efforts at a global level, complementing the work that UKSIF is already undertaking nationally to influence UK policymakers on the sustainable financial services agenda.

We would also like to highlight our continued support for both the aims and the activities of the PRI

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey dotted background. The signature reads "Penny Shepherd" in a cursive script. The first name "Penny" is written in a larger, more prominent style than the last name "Shepherd".

Penny Shepherd MBE

Chief Executive
UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association (UKSIF)