

Press Release

Copenhagen Calling: Government Must Do More to Stimulate Green and Ethical Investment

London, 10 November 2009 – In the run up to the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit, new research released today at Westminster has found that private investors want the Government to do more to stimulate green and ethical investments in the UK.

The poll, conducted by YouGov on behalf of National Ethical Investment Week, found that half of investors (50%) agreed that the Government should encourage greater disclosure and transparency from the financial services industry to improve understanding and awareness of green and ethical investments. Moreover, 47% of investors said that the Government should introduce education in schools so that people know about the likely impact of their investments from an early age.

The research was unveiled at a Parliamentary Reception attended by the Rt. Hon Stephen Timms, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, to celebrate National Ethical Investment Week (NEIW). The week runs from 8 – 14 November 2009 and aims to raise awareness of the green and ethical options available to investors. NEIW is coordinated by UKSIF – the sustainable investment and finance association, and sponsored by Aviva Investors, CCLA Investment Management, The Co-operative Financial Services and Henderson New Star.

Penny Shepherd MBE, chief executive of UKSIF, said:

“Investors can play a key role in financing the transition to a low carbon economy, helping the Government achieve its challenging climate targets. As we seek to re-built trust in financial services and reform the financial system so that it serves the long-term interest of the real economy, society and the environment, there is a major role for green and ethical investment.



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“But, both the financial services industry and the Government need to work together to improve transparency and disclosure. The leading providers of these investments do demonstrate the positive effects that they can have on the world. However, we want to encourage others in the financial services industry to join them. Our research shows this will attract significant further money into green and ethical investments.”

The research also found that:

- A third of investors (31%) believe that levels of ethical investment should be a key economic indicator, reported at Budget time.
- Just under half (44%) of investors said that the financial services industry needs to work much harder to provide clearer evidence of the green and ethical impacts of investments to attract more money.
- Longer term, 2 in 5 (40%) believe that the Government should ensure people fully understand and are offered green and ethical investments as part of their overall pension saving.
- Just under a third of investors (27%) believe that the Government should introduce rules to ensure financial advisers ask investors if they are interested in green and ethical investments.

Penny added:

“More than two thirds of people now describe themselves as either very or fairly green and ethical. But, at the moment, only 8% of investors hold green and ethical investments.

“Education remains fundamental to improve understanding and awareness of green and ethical investments. Much progress has been made in financial education in schools and colleges. But far too often people are taught that the stock market is just about making a quick buck, but not about being part owner of a business.”

According to EIRiS, there is more than £7 billion invested in green and ethical funds in the UK – up from £1.5 billion 10 years ago. And the IMA’s most recent statistics show that quarterly net sales of ethical funds increased three-fold year-on-year to £59m – the highest level since 2007.

The survey was carried out online by YouGov plc, among 2092 GB adults aged 18+. Data is weighted to be representative of the GB population. Fieldwork ran from 23 to 26 October, 2009.

Contact

Simon Maule/Keith Brookbank, Linstock Communications
020 7089 2080
neiw@linstockcommunications.com



Notes to Editors

About National Ethical Investment Week

National Ethical Investment Week (NEIW), the campaign to raise awareness of green and ethical investment options, is coordinated by UKSIF – the sustainable investment and finance association, and sponsored by Aviva Investors, CCLA Investment Management, The Co-operative Financial Services and Henderson New Star. It is supported by the Association of Independent Financial Advisers (AIFA). For more information, visit www.neiw.org.

About UKSIF

UKSIF, the sustainable investment and finance association, promotes responsible investment and other forms of finance that support sustainable economic development, enhance quality of life and safeguard the environment. It also seeks to ensure that individual and institutional investors can reflect their values in their investments. Founded in 1991, it has over 200 members including financial advisers, asset managers, research providers, pension funds, banks and non-governmental organisations. For more info, visit www.uksif.org.

