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For Immediate Release

Soaring Green Demand: More help from UKSIF for Advisers to Go Green

The UK Social Investment Forum (UKSIF) has announced today that it will be delivering more support in 2007 to help advisers to “go green” and benefit from the soaring demand for advice on green and ethical investment.

UKSIF, which works with advisers and product providers to promote responsible investment, will be providing two new support services:

- A free online training course on green and ethical investment will be available from late February to help advisers to respond to the ISA season. This will build on UKSIF’s successful Responsible Investment Toolkit for Financial Advisers and on the training seminars run by UKSIF last year.
- “The IFA’s Guide to Going Green” will be launched at the same time. This will show the simple steps that advisers can take to green their business. It will help them to be more credible to the growing number of clients concerned about green issues as well as doing their bit for the environment. The guide will cover practical tips, such as how to choose greener cars, buy recycled and pick the best way to offset their carbon emissions.

This new support follows increasing consumer demand for ethical and green products and recent high profile initiatives by companies like Marks and Spencer and Tesco to “green” their business.

It also follows mounting evidence from IFA Promotion and others about the soaring demand for green investment advice. Last week, UKSIF announced new research that showed that its Responsible Investment Toolkit was already helping IFAs to respond to the rising demand for green and ethical investment.

The new support announced today is sponsored by leading providers of ethical and green investment Friends Provident, Henderson Global Investment, Jupiter Asset Management and Norwich Union. The government is helping too - the programme is supported by its “Sector Sustainability Challenge” that works with trade associations to help businesses that want to go green.

Taxbriefs, the leading training and support provider for the IFA market, will be developing the online course for UKSIF. Danby Bloch, Taxbriefs Chairman said: “*Marks and Spencer’s recent announcement of its ‘Plan A’ plan shows the growing commercial importance of addressing ecological and ethical issues. We are confident that the online training scheme we are developing with UKSIF will help ensure IFAs can offer the highest quality of advice in this increasingly important sector*”.

Penny Shepherd, UKSIF Chief Executive, commented: “*Busy IFAs can find it difficult to find time to ‘green’ their own practices. UKSIF will make this easier by signposting them to practical options with a big impact. At the same time, our new online training course will help them to advise on green investments*”.

Advisers can register for an email alert when the course and guide are available by contacting info@uksif.org.

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Editors Notes

About UKSIF

The UK Social Investment Forum (UKSIF) is the UK's membership network for socially responsible investment (SRI). UKSIF's primary purpose is to promote and encourage the development and positive impact of SRI amongst UK based investors. UKSIF believes that all material social, environmental and ethical (SEE) issues should be integrated into standard investment practice and that individual investors should be able to reflect their values in their investments.

The Forum was launched in 1991 to bring together the different strands of SRI nationally and to act as a focus and a voice for the industry. UKSIF's 200+ members and affiliates include retail and institutional fund managers, financial advisers, SRI research providers, consultants, trade unions, banks, building societies, community development finance institutions, NGOs and individuals interested in SRI. For information on the UK Social Investment Forum, visit www.uksif.org.

About UKSIF's Responsible Investment Toolkit for Financial Advisers

UKSIF's guide *Responsible Investment: A practical toolkit for financial advisers* is available free at www.uksif.org. The Toolkit includes a 5-step advice model, 24-page Technical Guide and two free personal fact-finds for use with clients. It tackles risk and performance concerns, outlines the different approaches adopted by fund managers and provides fact-finding pointers and examples.

Research released last week (16 January) found that 84% of financial advisers rated UKSIF's Toolkit on Responsible Investment as either "useful" or "very useful". The survey canvassed advisers who attended the UK Social Investment Forum's national training seminars on ethical and socially responsible investment last year.

Advisers said that the Toolkit materials and training had increased their understanding of ethical and socially responsible investment opportunities, their ability to fact-find in this area and their confidence in selling responsible investments to clients. In addition, almost all the respondents (98%) rated the training seminars as either "useful" or "very useful". For a copy of the press release on the research, contact andrea.krug@uksif.org.

About Increasing Demand for Advice on Green and Ethical Investment

In August 2006, IFA Promotion reported that the supply of ethical investment advice was growing with 10% of member firms focusing on ethical investments, rising from 8% in 2005 and 6% three years ago. They also reported a 100% increase in people searching for an ethical IFA with 1,933 people searching www.unbiased.co.uk for an ethical investment independent financial adviser (IFA) in Q2 2006 – an increase of over 100% over the same period in 2005. See 21 August 2006 press release at www.unbiased.co.uk.

On 11 January 2007, F&C Investments published new research from a survey done the previous month on the public appetite for green investing. They found that almost half of the public – some 48% of those surveyed – expressed an interest in investing ethically, demonstrating the opportunity for advisers. Avoiding companies operating in countries with poor human rights topped the list of concerns, followed closely by avoiding companies that damage the environment, according to the research. Details from Karolina.Adamkiewicz@fandc.com or sarah.deutscher@fandc.com.

About Increasing Consumer Demand for Ethical and Green Products and how Major Businesses are Responding

A third of British shoppers are prepared to spend more on 'ethical' foods, and in 2006 will spend more than GBP 2 billion on Fairtrade, free range, local or organic produce - up 62% on four years ago and still expanding (Mintel, October 2006).

The UK market for organic food is projected to rise to nearly £2.7 billion by 2010, up almost 69% from £1.6 billion (Datamonitor, November 2006).

On 15 January 2007, Marks and Spencer announced a business-wide £200m "eco-plan", committing the company to become carbon neutral, send no waste to landfill, extend sustainable sourcing, set new standards in ethical trading and help customers and employees live a healthier lifestyle. Details at <http://www2.marksandspencer.com/thecompany/mediacentre/pressreleases/2007/com2007-01-15-00.shtml>.

On 18 January 2007, Tesco unveiled new plans to cut carbon emissions and encourage customers to buy green (see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/6276351.stm>).

About the Government's Sector Sustainability Challenge

Recognising the continuing need to integrate sustainability into business practice and the products / services they provide, the government runs the Sector Sustainability Challenge, which helps business sectors to deliver practical actions addressing sustainable consumption and production. This forms part of its commitment to "doing more with less" reflected in its Sustainable Development Strategy "Securing the Future" and its drive for more sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The Sector Sustainability Challenge is supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/scp/actions/challenge.htm>)

About Responsible Investment

Recent years have witnessed considerable growth in ethical and green investment with funds under management in UK ethically screened retail funds (i.e. those open to the general public) up by 70% since 2003 according to EIRIS, the Ethical Investment Research Service.

Data from EIRIS shows:

- £6.1 billion held at 31 December 2005 - up from less than £1.5 billion in 1997.
- Held in about 500,000 accounts – up from c. 137,000 accounts in 1997.
- As of January 2007, there are 90 ethical retail funds available to UK investors, with more on the way.

Details at www.eiris.org/files/press%20releases/recordethicalinvestmentjul06.pdf, and <http://www.eiris.org/files/press%20releases/recordnumberofethicaloptions07.pdf>. Further data at www.eiris.org and then see "Key facts & figures".