

## Frequently Asked Questions: The SRI Conference on Sustainable, Responsible, Impact Investing

### 1. What is The SRI Conference on Sustainable, Responsible, Impact Investing?

The SRI Conference is the oldest and largest annual conference for responsible investors, SRI industry practitioners, and related organizations in North America. This event is designed to inform, inspire, and serve the needs of investment professionals, as well as institutional and high net worth investors.

### 2. What is the goal of The SRI Conference?

A professional conference, The SRI Conference (<http://SRIconference.com>) is a gathering place for people and organizations directing investment capital in positive, healthy, transformative ways. The conference offers attendees many opportunities to meet and learn from passionate, creative, socially conscious people from all corners of the responsible investment industry in the United States and around the world.

### 3. When and where will The SRI Conference be held in 2017?

The 28th annual SRI Conference on Sustainable, Responsible, Impact Investing will be November 1–3, 2017 at the Hotel del Coronado, San Diego.

### 4. Who hosts and produces The SRI Conference?

The conference is produced by First Affirmative Financial Network in collaboration with many other organizations that serve responsible investors. You can view the list of sponsor organizations here: <http://www.sriconference.com/sponsors/>.

### 5. Who attends The SRI Conference?

About one-third of the 700 participants who are expected to join us in San Diego will be licensed investment professionals serving investor clients; about a third will be representatives of SRI mutual fund companies, asset managers, social research organizations, and other product/service providers to the industry; and about a third will represent investors, non-profit organizations, community development financial institutions and credit unions, faith-based organizations, and other groups that collaborate with the SRI industry on various social change initiatives.

### 6. What's on the agenda? Who will be speaking?

The SRI Conference agenda covers a wide variety of topics of interest to responsible investors. In 2017, the agenda will include the following topic areas: ESG Integration, Governance, Community Impact Investing, Shareowner Advocacy, and Professional Education. We expect to provide 6–8 hours of Continuing Education (CE) credit for Certified Financial Planners (CFP), Chartered Financial Analysts (CFA), and professionals holding the CIMA certification.

**8. How do I submit an idea for a speaker or session?**

The conference agenda is developed with the assistance of a volunteer Agenda Committee. The Committee welcomes a broad range of [proposals](#) for speakers and session topics.

**9. Are there opportunities for small groups to gather around a topic of special interest?**

Yes. In addition to private meetings, and conversations during meals, a somewhat unique aspect of The SRI Conference is the Topic Table Breakfast. "Topic Tables" are conversation circles that provide an informal opportunity for participants to share ideas on a topic of mutual interest. Identify a topic, be available to lead a conversation, and others interested in engaging with you on that topic will sit down with you for breakfast!

**10. What is SRI? What is ESG?**

Sustainable, responsible, impact investing (SRI) is the process of integrating personal values, societal concerns, and/or institutional mission into investment decision-making. It's an investment process that considers the social and environmental consequences of investments, both positive and negative, within the context of rigorous financial analysis. SRI portfolios seek to invest in profitable companies which stand above their peers based on analysis of environmental, social, and corporate governance factors ("ESG").

**11. What are the approaches that investors typically utilize in SRI / ESG investment strategies?**

Generally, socially conscious investors seek to own profitable companies that make positive contributions to society. "Buy lists" may include enterprises with good employer-employee relations, strong environmental practices, products that are safe and useful, and operations that respect human rights around the world. ESG analysis seeks to identify profitable companies with superior environmental management capabilities, best-of-class relationships with employees and communities, and outstanding corporate governance. Responsible investors generally seek the lower risk and higher returns over time that such companies potentially offer.

**12. How much money is involved in SRI/ESG portfolios?**

US SIF's [2016 Trends Report](#) on Sustainable, Responsible, Impact Investing in the U.S. showed that overall SRI assets under management grew by 33% during the two preceding years to \$8.72 trillion in 2016. These assets involved one or more of the three primary responsible investment strategies — ESG integration, shareowner engagement, and community impact investing.

**13. How many SRI funds are in the marketplace?**

The 2016 US SIF Trends Report found 519 registered investment companies (mutual funds, ETFs, annuity subaccounts) being offered in the United States. Prominent SRI mutual fund providers include Calvert Investments, Domini Social Investments, and Pax World Investments. For a more complete list of funds and asset managers, see The SRI Conference [sponsor list](#), or the US SIF [Mutual Fund Performance Chart](#).

**14. How do SRI portfolios perform?**

An impressive body of academic evidence and real-world results has effectively refuted the stale notion that constructing investment portfolios based on ESG analysis (environmental, social, governance factors) automatically results in underperformance. There are a variety of sources of information on performance, which change regularly, including the [Mutual Fund Performance Chart](#) published by US SIF. *NOTE: Regardless of how well an investment strategy may have performed historically, past performance is no guarantee of future results.*

**15. What is “ESG Integration”?**

The practice of qualitatively analyzing investments based on environmental, social, and/or corporate governance factors (ESG criteria) is commonly known as ESG integration or qualitative screening. The outcome can be either positive (screening in) or negative (screening out). Qualitative screening combined with a traditional quantitative analysis of profit potential, provides the basis for designing investment portfolios aligned with a client's values and reflecting an investor's social priorities, while producing the returns needed to achieve specific financial goals.

**16. What is “Shareowner Engagement”?**

Shareowner engagement refers to a variety of advocacy efforts, including engaging in dialogue with company management, voting proxies, and submitting proxy resolutions. Action is focused on encouraging companies to be more responsible corporate citizens, improving impacts on society at large, and enhancing the common good. Socially conscious investors often work cooperatively to steer company management on a course that they believe will improve financial performance over time and enhance shareowner value.

**17. What is “Community Investing”?**

Many socially conscious investors earmark a percentage of their investment portfolios to community development financial institutions (CDFIs) that work to alleviate poverty, create jobs, provide affordable housing, and finance small business development in disadvantaged communities which tend to have very limited access to investment capital, or no access to capital. Community investment strategies are often the way an investor can have the greatest positive impact on society.

**18. What is First Affirmative Financial Network?**

First Affirmative is a Registered Investment Advisor offering Sustainable Investment Solutions process ([www.firstaffirmative.com](http://www.firstaffirmative.com)). Since 1988, First Affirmative has been providing consulting and investment management services designed to meet the unique needs of responsible investors through a nationwide network of investment professionals. First Affirmative has been a member of the US SIF: The Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investing (formerly the Social Investment Forum), since inception, and senior management has 25 years of cumulative service as directors of the industry membership association.