The Challenge of the Double Bottom Line: What Can Microfinance Investment Vehicles Learn from the SRI World?

Friday, May 6th, 2011
From 4.00pm to 5.30pm

At the Salles des Conseils (ground floor)
of the Warocqué Business School
Université de Mons - UMONS

Abstract:
The Microfinance Investment Vehicles industry is today at a bottleneck. In a context of a damaged reputation due to recent crises, the whole field of microfinance and especially the investment vehicles, funded by public money and by socially inclined investors, have to demonstrate and justify their commitment to social returns. We use a conceptual framework of impediments to SRI to identify the main impediments to the integration of social performance as a decision criterion for microfinance investments, by analyzing qualitative interviews of 9 microfinance fund managers. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to apply this framework to microfinance. The overall finding is that while social performance is recognized by respondents to be an important topic for the industry, fund managers still don't give a strong role to social criteria in investment decisions. We argue that this is linked to a number of major impediments such as the tendency to believe that microfinance is social per se, the lack of standardization in social performance tools and also a loose regulation regarding social reporting.

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Please confirm your presence by May 4th, 2011.