



GETTING STARTED WITH IRIS

HOW TO SELECT IRIS METRICS
FOR SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL
PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT





Background

IRIS is an initiative of the GIIN, a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the scale and effectiveness of impact investing.

The GIIN promotes impact measurement as an essential part of impact investing and offers IRIS as a free public good to support transparency, credibility, and accountability in impact measurement practices across the impact investment market.

Recognizing that many impact investors are new to impact measurement broadly and resources like IRIS more specifically, the GIIN developed this practical guide to address the specific question of “how to” use IRIS metrics to evaluate the performance of a portfolio of companies. This guide is offered as part of an ongoing effort by the GIIN to promote and support impact measurement as a defining practice of impact investors. Additional materials and resources will be released in line with this effort.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to IRIS	1
How IRIS Works (and other things you should know)	3
Creating a Metrics Framework that Uses IRIS	11
Appendices	30
APPENDIX 1: Directory of impact measurement toolkits	30
APPENDIX 2: Directory of IRIS-aligned impact measurement tools and platforms	31
APPENDIX 3: IRIS Use Cases	33
APPENDIX 4: FAQs (and some other things you never thought to ask)	34



WELCOME
TO IRIS



Welcome to IRIS.

IRIS is *your* free, online catalog for selecting performance metrics.

In this guide, we'll first cover all the basics, like how IRIS works (and how it will help you do your job). Then we'll get into the more hands-on details, like how to choose metrics for your IRIS-based performance measurement program. Keep in mind, however, that even though selecting metrics is core to developing an impact measurement program, impact measurement doesn't start and stop there.

In this guide, you'll learn:

- How IRIS works
- How to select metrics that matter to you
- How to avoid common mistakes

This guide is designed with special consideration for the needs of fund managers and other investors managing a portfolio of companies. However, the concepts, tips, and practical examples will be useful to any organization looking to get a basic understanding of IRIS-based performance measurement.

There's no previous experience or specific expertise required to choose impact performance metrics. You only need to answer three questions.

1. Why do you want impact data?

2. What do you really want or need to know about your investees?

3. How do you want to use data once you have it?"

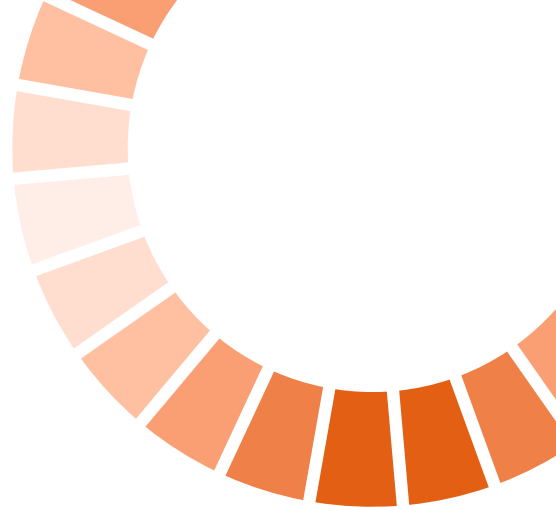
Once you answer these questions, *selecting your IRIS performance metrics is not difficult.* This guide will walk you through these questions, and once you are through, you will be able to create a set of IRIS metrics that meet your needs.

Now, let's get started!



HOW IRIS WORKS

(AND OTHER THINGS
YOU SHOULD KNOW)



How IRIS Works (and other things you should know).

You are here because you have heard that impact investors use IRIS to understand the social and environmental performance of their investees. Before you can start using IRIS to track and report the performance of your investees, you need to know how IRIS works, what it does and doesn't do, and how it fits into a broader impact measurement practice. Here's some information every IRIS user should know.

IRIS was designed with you in mind.

Just as a financial report that simply states “Things are going well” or “It was a good year” would not provide enough information for you to be comfortable with the financial performance of an investment, the same rigor should apply when you consider the non-financial results of an investment. In other words, you want to review concrete social and environmental performance data alongside financial performance data in order to fully understand the performance of your investees and your investment choices.

You are not alone. You are part of a growing community of impact investors—those who deliberately invest for social and environmental impact alongside a financial return—who acknowledge they can't fully evaluate impact investments with financial data alone. Standardized metrics bring credibility to impact reporting, while enabling data comparability and other efficiencies.

The IRIS catalog provides those industry standard metrics, giving you a single source for measuring the whole performance of your investees.



What is IRIS?

IRIS is the catalog of generally accepted performance metrics that leading impact investors use to measure social, environmental, and financial success.

THIS IS AN IRIS METRIC

Target Beneficiary Socioeconomics

Socioeconomic groups of *beneficiaries* targeted by the organization's operations. Choose all that apply.

- VERY POOR
- POOR
- LOW INCOME
- OTHER

ID: PD2541

COMMON TERMS INCLUDED IN IRIS GLOSSARY

STANDARD DEFINITION

IRIS ID FOR VERIFIABILITY AND REPORTING CITATION

THESE ARE ALSO IRIS METRICS

Health Related Well Visits

Number of *well visits* or screenings, including immunization visits, conducted by the organization during the *reporting period*.

ID: PI3424

Permanent Employees

Number of people employed by the organization at the end of the *reporting period*. This is the sum of all paid *full-time* and *part-time* employees.

ID: 018869

Potable Water Produced

Amount of *potable water* produced during the *reporting period*. Footnote assumptions.

ID: PI8043

Certifications

Indicate third-party *certifications* for products/services that are valid as of the end of the *reporting period*. List *certification* name, certifying body, and date since which the product/service has been continuously *certified*.

ID: PI8043

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gases emitted through organization's operations in tonnes of CO2 equivalent during the *reporting period*. Refer to the International Panel on Climate Changes (IPCC) emission factors. Leverage Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidance for this calculation. Footnote calculations and assumptions.

ID: 011479

IRIS measures the performance of an organization.

In the IRIS catalog, you will find metrics for:

- **Financial performance**, including standard financial reporting metrics such as [current assets](#)¹ and [financial liabilities](#)²
- **Operational performance**, including metrics to assess your investees' governance policies, employment practices, and the social and environmental impact of their day-to-day business activities
- **Product performance**, including metrics that describe and quantify the social and environmental benefits of the products, services, and unique processes offered by your investees
- **Sector performance**, including metrics that describe and quantify impact in particular social and environmental sectors, including agriculture, financial services, and healthcare
- **Social and Environmental Objective performance**, including metrics that describe and quantify progress towards specific impact objectives such as [employment generation](#)³ or [sustainable land use](#)⁴.

IRIS TIP

IRIS includes qualitative and quantitative metrics. IRIS includes quantitative metrics that help you measure multiple dimensions of your investees' social, environmental, and financial performance. IRIS also includes qualitative descriptors to help you put your investees' performance in context.

IRIS is a catalog.

There is no single combination of metrics that is right for everybody; that's why IRIS is designed as a catalog that you can browse to find the most appropriate metrics for your work. IRIS includes metrics tailored to specific sectors, as well as metrics that can be used by companies irrespective of their social or environmental goals and the sector and regions in which they work. This means that IRIS is a useful resource for impact investors working around the world, in different sectors, and with a variety of social and environmental impact objectives. IRIS metrics can also be selected to complement and sit alongside any proprietary impact metrics your organization tracks.

Because IRIS is a catalog, you can choose as few or as many metrics as you deem necessary to describe the performance of your investees.

IRIS TIP

You are not required to track all or even certain IRIS metrics. As an IRIS user, you will select a set of IRIS metrics specific to your own activities, sectors, impact objectives, or stakeholder requirements.

1 IRIS, 2011. (FP6926) Current Assets. v.2.2.

2 IRIS, 2011. (FP6094) Financial Liabilities. v.2.2.

3 IRIS, 2011. (OD6247) Social Impact Objectives—Employment Generation. v.2.2.

4 IRIS, 2011. (OD4108) Environmental Impact Objectives—Sustainable Land Use. v.2.2.

IRIS is built on best practices.

IRIS metrics don't reinvent the wheel. IRIS lines up with widely accepted standards wherever possible, which is why you see many familiar metrics referenced in the catalog. With IRIS, you'll find in one place metrics that have been vetted, approved, and are the most widely used from across the field. Instead of searching many different metrics systems—say, agriculture metrics for one part of your portfolio, microfinance metrics for another, and health services for a third—you can find the performance metrics already used in these different sectors *all in IRIS*. Not only does IRIS provide a single reference point for performance metrics by pulling best practices in impact measurement from many areas of focus, it also equips you to build an informed system that produces data that can be compared with your peers. Additionally, the IRIS initiative actively collaborates with many different standards-setting bodies to create continued unity and coordination across various performance measurement metrics providers.

EXAMPLES OF FRAMEWORKS LEVERAGED IN THE CREATION OF IRIS:



IRIS is built on existing standards whenever possible. However, when standards do not exist, the IRIS expert advisory committee convenes subject-specific working groups composed of specialists to recommend new metrics. The IRIS initiative also relies on input from users, so we encourage you to [propose feedback](#) where you find that IRIS metrics could be improved.

IRIS is only one component of an impact measurement program.

Though deciding which IRIS metrics you will use is critical to developing an impact measurement program, impact measurement doesn't stop with metrics selection.

When we say "impact measurement program" we mean the processes and activities that your organization implements in order to manage investee performance and track progress toward desired social and environmental objectives. These activities include determining what to measure, collecting and analyzing the related information, and using the results in decision-making and reporting.

Steps in an Impact Measurement Program



IRIS complements other performance measurement tools.

When considering which metrics to use, IRIS is your go-to for selecting metrics that are industry-approved and used by your peers. IRIS does not, however, address the other elements of creating an impact measurement program, including how to collect, analyze, or verify the resulting data. But, IRIS metrics can be used in conjunction with a range of tools and resources that do support these steps. For more information about some of the existing assessment tools, data platforms, and other methodologies used by impact investors, like the [Global Impact Investing Rating System \(GIIRS\)](#), [Social Return on Investment \(SROI\)](#), and others, see the appendix.

What does it mean to use IRIS?

IRIS metrics are available for free so you can browse or download the metrics and simply start using those that are relevant to you. Additionally, you are encouraged to register your IRIS use on the [IRIS Registry](#) and to appropriately cite IRIS metrics in external reports and communications. (See “A note about reporting” on page 27.)



How IRIS is used.

IRIS can be used by professionals across the full investment value chain. Here are a few examples:



THE INVESTOR

An investor wants to put five percent of her portfolio into companies developing clean energy products. She finds two funds reporting similar rates of financial return. Because both funds report their environmental performance using IRIS definitions, she can fairly compare the [number of households](#) that have gained [access to clean energy](#)⁵ as a result of the investee companies' activities. Though more households are reached through investment in the first fund, the second fund's portfolio companies primarily serve rural areas with no prior access to electricity. Because [rural access](#)⁶ is a priority for this investor, she moves five percent of her assets into the second fund.



THE FUND MANAGER

A sustainable trade fund manager receives inconsistent performance data from his portfolio companies, which are local farming cooperatives in developing countries. One cooperative in Argentina reports that his investment of USD 500,000 has created 115 new jobs. Another cooperative in Ecuador reports that an investment of the same amount has supported 80 new jobs. The fund manager knows from prior visits that new jobs in Ecuador are mostly year-round jobs, and that many of the new jobs in Argentina are seasonal. But, because each cooperative uses its own definition for counting new jobs created, the fund manager cannot use the reported data to fairly compare the two investments, nor can he combine data from the two businesses to describe the fund's overall impact to his investors. By adopting IRIS as the reporting standard across his portfolio, the fund manager will get comparable data across his portfolio, and will be able to compare them to [aggregated data from the field](#). This helps him manage the performance of his investments, inform investors about his activities, and guide future investments.



THE ENTREPRENEUR

An entrepreneur in Africa is raising capital to expand a healthcare business providing physical examinations and low-cost nutritional supplements to [rural](#)⁷ [poor](#)⁸. Prospective investors are asking for information about the expected financial return and social impact of an investment in the company. The entrepreneur decides to use IRIS definitions to track how many people met with a doctor or nurse, and how many received the nutritional supplement. This makes investment in his company more attractive to funders because investors are able to easily evaluate the performance of this investment compared to IRIS benchmarks and other investments they have made in healthcare businesses in the region.

To see a list of leading organizations that use IRIS—and the metrics they use—check out the [IRIS Registry](#)

5 IRIS, 2011. (PI2822) Clients Individuals Provided New Access v.2.2.

IRIS 2011. (PD1634) Client Type: Individual/Household. v.2.2.

6 IRIS, 2011. (PI1190) Client Individuals: Rural. v.2.2

7 IRIS, 2011. (PD6384) Target Beneficiary Setting. V.2.2

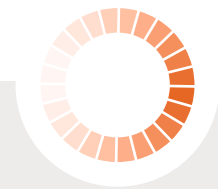
8 IRIS, 2011. (PD2541) Target Beneficiary Socioeconomics—Poor. V.2.2.

IRIS doesn't certify whether you are good or bad... and other common misconceptions about IRIS.

So, we now know what IRIS is, but what is it not? In short:

- *IRIS is not an evaluation tool.* It doesn't offer a "certification" or "seal of approval" and it does not rate users as having high or low impact.
- *IRIS is not a data management platform.* It does not provide a system to help you collect and store your performance data.
- *IRIS is not a reporting framework.* It does not provide reporting guidelines nor require reporting of a specific set of information.

IRIS is designed to be used with and by performance measurement tools and systems that offer guidance in the areas above, including the [Progress out of Poverty Index \(PPI\)](#), [Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade \(FAST\)](#) [Social Impact Assessment Methodology Toolkit \(SIAMT\)](#), and many others.



The bottom line: How IRIS works

IRIS is an industry-recognized and curated catalog of metrics that provides a starting point for measuring your social and environmental results. If you are still unsure if IRIS is right for you, keep in mind that IRIS helps you:

Take the guesswork out of finding or creating performance metrics.

By cataloging the most useful metrics from across the industry in one place, IRIS makes it easier to create informed performance measurement systems and avoid mistakes that affect results and credibility.

Compare your performance data within your own portfolio and against your peers.

By providing a common language to talk about results, IRIS makes it easier to compare investments and communicate performance with the entire industry.

Grow your credibility and the credibility of the impact investing industry.

IRIS bolsters impact investing by creating a credible set of industry-wide data that present a clear picture of the impact our investments are having.



CREATING
A METRICS
FRAMEWORK
THAT USES
IRIS



Creating a Metrics Framework that Uses IRIS.

Getting started with IRIS means creating a *metrics framework* for your organization and then selecting relevant metrics from the IRIS catalog. Of course, what is relevant to one organization may be very different from what is relevant to another. In this section, you'll find tips for creating a metrics framework, including assembling sets of IRIS metrics that make sense for your portfolio.

DEFINITION

A *metrics framework* is a blueprint for how specific metrics are used within an organization's impact measurement program. It includes both the metrics and the logic for how they are applied across a portfolio.

IRIS TIP

Creating a metrics framework is not hard. When considering your organization, keep the following questions in mind: Why do you want impact data? What do you really want or need to know about your investees? And, how do you want to use that data once you have it?

Follow the four steps below to create a metrics framework based on your organization's informational needs.

Create a metrics framework that uses IRIS in four easy steps:

- STEP 1** START WITH THE END IN MIND
- STEP 2** CREATE A "DATA-WANTED-LIST"
- STEP 3** ORGANIZE YOUR PORTFOLIO
- STEP 4** CHOOSE YOUR METRICS

On the importance of knowing where you want to get to before you get started.

'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?' 'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat. 'I don't much care where-' said Alice. 'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

LEWIS CARROLL, *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*

Why do you want to track impact performance data?

The most useful metrics frameworks are created when organizations like yours start by defining their motivations for tracking impact data. To help you get started, we've outlined a few common reasons and considerations. In practice, most organizations use impact information for a combination of purposes. The most important thing is that *you* understand and then prioritize *your* reasons before you start choosing IRIS metrics so that you only select the metrics that are best fit for *your* purposes.

For example, do you want:

- To communicate with stakeholders and/or satisfy specific reporting requirements?
- To gauge progress toward specific social or environmental objectives?
- To gather basic data to track the evolution of your investees' performance?

A

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

If you want to communicate the performance of your investees to your stakeholders as part of your transparency and impact reporting commitments, for marketing purposes, to facilitate fundraising efforts, or if you are here because an investor told you to report IRIS metrics, choose metrics that are relevant to these stakeholders.

B

PROGRESS AGAINST IMPACT OBJECTIVES

If you have a specific investment strategy that is designed to address one or more social or environmental objectives then you will want to choose metrics that are related to those objectives.

C

INVESTEE PROGRESS

If your motivation for tracking social or environmental data is to better understand the overall business performance of your investees, you will want to choose metrics that are specific to each investee in order to monitor their performance changes over time.

IRIS TIP

Creating a metrics framework is an iterative process, so it's okay to start small and get more sophisticated over time. Selecting and curating your metrics is an iterative process, as is developing an impact measurement approach that works for your organization. Your metrics will evolve over time. You will add some new ones and remove others as you see them in action and learn which metrics give you better information than others. Don't worry about designing a perfect system right away. Start small. A potential pitfall for a new impact measurement program is that if it feels too cumbersome, the complexity ultimately spoils the intention to develop a program that works!

What do you really want or need to know about your investees?

The easiest way to answer this question is to start making a “data-wanted-list.” This list can be created in an Excel spreadsheet, Word document, or even on the back of a napkin. The purpose is for you to start considering the performance information you may be interested in capturing.

Consider your answer(s) from Step 1 as you make your data-wanted-lists:

A

To track performance for **COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- i. Create a list of your stakeholders’ information needs.
- ii. Create a second list of the data that each of your investees is able to produce based on their business model, sector, and offering. At this point, it’s okay if neither list is based on IRIS metrics. We’ll align them later in STEP 4.

B

To track progress toward **SPECIFIC SOCIAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES**

- i. Define a goal(s) for social or environmental impact that is achievable and specific. What problems do you want to address or what things do you want to change through your investments? Make a list of a few tangible milestones or specific examples that would indicate progress or success relative to those goals. Don’t worry if these milestones or examples aren’t yet quantitative.
- ii. If you already have investments, make a second list of what each of the companies in your portfolio is doing or could do—based on their sector, products, or business model—to address the goal(s) you defined. It’s okay if you end up with multiple objectives or invest in multiple sectors. Like many IRIS users, you may decide to choose groups of metrics that apply to a particular peer group of investees within your portfolio that share a common social or environmental objective. Or, if you have a narrowly-focused portfolio, the metrics you choose can measure performance related to the overall objective of your entire portfolio.

C

To track the ongoing and relative **SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS OF YOUR INVESTEES**

- i. Create a list of the basic data each investee in your portfolio could track to help manage their day-to-day business operations. This list should be specific to each investee. For example, if you invest in a company whose products reduce greenhouse gas emissions, then you may include information that could help you gauge the annual [greenhouse gas emissions offset/mitigated](#)⁹ as a result of sales of their products.

⁹ IRIS, 2011. (PI5376) Greenhouse Gas Offset/Mitigated. v.2.2.

CREATE A 'DATA-WANTED-LIST'

Next, combine the lists you just created.

See if there is any overlap between stakeholders, objectives, investees, and so forth. If so, make sure to match and merge the requirements in order to narrow down your list. You will use this single master list to align your data needs with IRIS metrics that can help produce that data. (See the sample table below for an easy way to keep it organized.)

Sample: Organizing your master list

DATA	STAKEHOLDER 1	STAKEHOLDER 2	OBJECTIVE 1	OBJECTIVE 2	INVESTEE 1	INVESTEE 2
EMPLOYMENT	X		X		X	
PRODUCTION VOLUMES	X	X	X		X	
SALES VOLUMES		X	X			X
CLIENTS IN TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	X			X	X	X

How do you want to use the data once you have it?

Once you are settled on the purpose for tracking social and environmental performance and have created a list of the basic types of information you want or need, you'll want to consider how you are going to analyze the resulting information. As part of this, you should decide how you want to apply the metrics to your portfolio. Do you want to use:

- The same set of metrics across your entire portfolio?
- Different sets of metrics for different clusters within your portfolio?
- A little bit of both?



SAME SET

If you have a narrowly focused portfolio in terms of your sectors of focus or your impact objectives, and you want to compare performance among your investments or you want to aggregate the performance of all your investments, then you likely will want to create one set of IRIS metrics. No need to worry about segmenting your portfolio by sector, geography, impact objective or otherwise, since all your information rolls up to the same goals every time.



DIFFERENT SETS

If you have a diverse portfolio in terms of impact objectives, sectors, or target demographics, you may seek more granular information about the performance within segments of your portfolio. If this sounds like you, you will likely want to create multiple metrics sets that are focused on tracking performance for each portfolio segment.



A LITTLE BIT OF BOTH

If you have goals that apply to your entire portfolio but invest in many different sectors, you may want to create one set of cross-portfolio metrics, as well as several sector-specific sets. For example, if you care about [sustainable energy](#)¹⁰ you may want to track [greenhouse gas emissions](#)¹¹ across your entire portfolio, while choosing different and specific metrics to measure the performance of energy efficiency service companies, biofuels companies, and green buildings. This same principle can be applied the other way around: If you only invest in one sector—[health](#),¹² for example—but care about increasing access to [clean water](#),¹³ [improving global health](#),¹⁴ and serving poor and vulnerable populations—you may want to select a set of sector-specific metrics for your entire portfolio and create specific metrics sets for each of these impact objectives. Organizing your framework in this way ensures you won't bother the biofuels company with green building metrics and you won't bother the mobile clinic company with water metrics. And, of course, you can request data using cross-portfolio metrics with all of your investees.

10 IRIS, 2011. (OD4108) Environmental Impact Objectives – Sustainable energy. v.2.2.

11 IRIS, 2011. (O11479) Greenhouse Gas Emissions. V.2.2.

12 IRIS, 2011. (OD7481) Sector Activities—Health. V.2.2.

13 IRIS, 2011. (OD6247) Social Impact Objectives—Access to clean water. V.2.2.

14 IRIS, 2011. (OD6247) Social Impact Objectives—Health improvement. V.2.2



Truestone Impact Investment Management: “a little bit of both” metrics framework example

Truestone Impact Investment Management (TIIM) is an investment manager focused on delivering market-rate returns by investing globally across a range of asset classes in diverse social and environmental sectors, including microfinance, forestry, agriculture, and renewable energy. Its investments are made mainly in emerging and frontier markets, with an emphasis on funds and companies that have the potential to generate transformational improvements to lives and livelihoods of disadvantaged individuals and communities.

Truestone monitors the performance of its investments against specific social and environmental parameters. Truestone’s metrics framework includes a set of core cross-portfolio metrics—which they chose from the IRIS catalog—that can be applied to every investment across the portfolio. Because the portfolio is diverse in terms of sectors, Truestone also selected and created sector-specific metrics sets that can be applied to relevant investments.

SAME SET

Applied to entire portfolio



CORE METRICS SET

Sample Metrics

- O18869 Permanent Employees
- P14060 Client Individuals
- P18330 Client Individuals - Female

DIFFERENT SETS

Applied to Specific Sectors Within Portfolio

-  AGRICULTURE
-  EDUCATION
-  HEALTH
-  ENERGY
-  ENVIRONMENT
-  FINANCIAL SERVICES
-  HOUSING / COMMUNITY FACILITIES
-  WATER AND WASTE

Find the IRIS metrics that are right for you.

BROWSE THE VIRTUAL CATALOG

If you already have a general idea of what you might want to track, you can go directly to the [online IRIS catalog](#) and start browsing for the metrics that align to your data needs and objectives. When you search for metrics, keep in mind that IRIS is designed to support a diverse community of users. Therefore, the catalog purposely uses general terminology to make it easier for you to apply metrics across your portfolio or for specific investees. For example, search for “clients” and you’ll find metrics that apply to any type of client category like patients, farmers, or depositors. So, the more general your search terms are, the easier it will be to find your relevant metrics.

As you browse IRIS, feel free to cut and paste the metrics you select into a tracking tool or download the entire [catalog](#) into Excel. Here are some tips to help you find *your* metrics in the catalog:

The screenshot shows the IRIS Catalog website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'About', 'Metrics', 'Resources', 'Data', and 'Registry'. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation bar. Below the navigation bar, the main content area is titled 'IRIS Catalog' and includes a brief description of the catalog. A callout box points to the search bar, stating: 'Use the keyword search to look for metrics related to general topics (e.g. women, poverty)'. Below the description, there is a section titled 'Browse an IRIS metric?' which includes a 'BROWSE IRIS' button and a link to 'Download IRIS as a Microsoft Excel document: English | Spanish'. A callout box points to the 'BROWSE IRIS' button, stating: 'Browse the full catalog (see screenshot on next page)'. Another callout box points to the download link, stating: 'Download the catalog in Excel and filter out the metrics you don't want.'. Below this, there are two columns of metric sets: 'Cross-sector Metric Sets' and 'Sector-specific Metric Sets'. A callout box points to these columns, stating: 'Review the cross-sector and sector-specific metrics lists to look for metrics that relate to focused areas for social or environmental impact (e.g. employment, education)'. An example metric card for 'Permanent Employees' is also visible, showing its definition and ID.

CHOOSE YOUR METRICS

TO NAVIGATE THE FULL CATALOG, FOLLOW THE TIPS BELOW:

Click on a sector icon to filter the list by the sectors you care about, such as education or health.

Click on any performance category to view all the metrics that apply to operational performance, product & service performance, or financial performance

Mouse over italicized terms to see the full glossary definition

Click on any metric name to view more detail, including the

A. Term
B. Definition
C. ID number
D. Reporting format
E. Performance Category
F. Relevant sector

Using your own metrics alongside IRIS metrics.

Because the impact investing field is still relatively young, metrics may not yet exist for some of the newer innovations in the market. It's expected that your organization may have niche performance measurement needs beyond the scope of the metrics included in IRIS. For this reason, you can supplement your selected IRIS metrics with qualitative or quantitative metrics you've designed to meet the specific goals of your organization.

IRIS TIP




Recommend your metrics for inclusion in the IRIS catalog. We encourage you to utilize the feedback forms available on each metrics page on the IRIS website to share your suggestions with the IRIS initiative for future versions of IRIS.



Truestone Impact Investment Management (A little bit of both)



Back to the example set by Truestone Impact Investment Management, a firm that has selected some metrics that can apply to all investments in the portfolio, as well as metrics sets specific to particular sectors within its portfolio. We provided a general picture of Truestone’s approach on page 16, and now we’ll show you the actual metrics that they chose for their framework. All measures listed in Truestone’s impact reports are compatible with IRIS when possible. Where IRIS does not have a suitable metric, Truestone created their own metrics, indicated in their reports with ID numbers that begin with “TIIM.” Each of Truestone’s investments must report on at least one nonfinancial measure to be included in the IM Truestone Global Impact fund. See their full report [here](#).

Truestone Metrics Framework

SECTOR	METRIC ID	IMPACT TYPE	METRIC NAME	MEASURE	DEFINITION
 AGRICULTURE	IRIS ID: PI1568	Social	Producer price premium	Decimal or %	Price premium obtained for the producer of goods, by selling to the organisation. This relative to the average price that would otherwise be obtained in the local area for a similar good during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI9991	Social	Supplier individuals: smallholders	Number of people	Number of smallholder farmers who sold to the organisation during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: OI6912	Environmental	Sustainable cultivated land area—Direct	Number of hectares	Hectares directly controlled by the organisation under sustainable cultivation. Report hectares cultivated at any point in the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI6796	Environmental	Sustainable cultivated land area—Indirect	Number of hectares	Hectares indirectly controlled by the organisation under sustainable cultivation. Report hectares cultivated at any point in the reporting period.
 EDUCATION	IRIS ID: OI5896	Social	Teachers employed	Number of people	Number of teachers employed by the organisation at the end of the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI2389	Social	School enrollment	Number of people	Number of students enrolled in school during the reporting period.
 ENERGY	TIIM1	Environmental	Installed energy capacity	kW	Potential energy conversion rate capacity installed over the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI5376W	Environmental	Greenhouse Gas offset/mitigation	Number of metric tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent	Greenhouse gas offset/mitigated during the reporting period by replacing traditional generation with renewable, modern, or more efficient power generation/use measured in metric tonnes of CO ₂ equivalents



Truestone Metrics Framework

SECTOR	METRIC ID	IMPACT TYPE	METRIC NAME	MEASURE	DEFINITION
 <p>HEALTH</p>	IRIS ID: OI5796	Social	Caregivers employed: Doctors	Number of people	Number of doctors, licensed or certified based on local requirements by the organisation at the end of the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: OI5796	Social	Caregivers employed: Doctors	Number of people	Number of doctors, licensed or certified based on local requirements by the organisation at the end of the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: OI5323	Social	Caregivers employed	Number of people	Number of caregivers employed by the organisation at the end of the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: OI3891	Social	Caregivers employed: Nurses	Number of people	Number of nurses (including nurse practitioners) licensed or certified based on local requirements employed by the organisation at the end of the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI3424	Social	Health related well visits	Number of visits	Number of well visits or screenings, including immunisation visits, conducted by the organisation during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI7699	Social	Health related curative visits	Number of visits	Number of curative visits conducted by the organisation during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI5647	Social	Procedures/ surgeries	Number of procedures	Number of procedures performed (i.e. surgeries) by the organisation during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI2194	Social	Immunisations	Number of treatments	Number of immunisation treatments provided by the organisation during the reporting period. Note this refers to unique immunisations not unique patients.
	IRIS ID: PI9636	Social	Medicinal/drug provisions	Number of treatments	Number of drug/medicinal treatments provided by the organisation during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI2576	Social	Attended newborn deliveries	Number of newborns delivered	Number of newborn deliveries attended by professional health personnel during the reporting period.
IRIS ID: PI7648	Social	Patient beds	Number of beds	Number of patient beds at the end of the reporting period for reporting by hospitals and clinics.	
 <p>ENVIRONMENT <i>(forestry, waste management)</i></p>	IRIS ID: PI4127	Environmental	Trees planted	Number of hectares	Hectares of trees planted during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI8325	Environmental	High conservation value forests preserved	Number of hectares	Hectares of high conservation value forests protected.
	IRIS ID: PI2012	Environmental	Land preserved	Number of hectares	Hectares of land designated as a strict nature reserve.





Truestone Metrics Framework

SECTOR	METRIC ID	IMPACT TYPE	METRIC NAME	MEASURE	DEFINITION
 <p>FINANCIAL SERVICES</p>	IRIS ID: PI4583	Social	New business created	Number of businesses	Number of new businesses created as a result of investments made during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: FP2630	Social	Loans Receivable Gross (US\$)	Currency, US\$	Value of outstanding principals due for all of the organization's outstanding loans to clients at the end of the reporting period. This includes current, delinquent, and renegotiated loans, but not loans that have been written off. It does not include interest receivable.
	TIIM2	Social	Number of loan clients	Number of people	The number of clients who have outstanding loans with the organisation at the end of the reporting period. Refer to client individuals PI4060 under cross sector.
	IRIS ID: PI6439	Social	Total voluntary savings accounts	Number of accounts	Number of voluntary savings accounts, including demand deposits and time deposits at the end of the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI3240	Social	Total value of voluntary savings accounts	Currency, US\$	Value of voluntary savings accounts, including demand deposits and time deposits, at the end of the reporting period.
	TIIM3	Social	SMEs supported	Number of businesses	Number of SME businesses supported by finance.
	TIIM4	Social	Micro-entrepreneurs supported	Number of businesses	Number of micro-enterprise businesses supported by finance.
	IRIS ID: PI3687	Social	Job created	Number of full time equivalent jobs	Net number of new full-time equivalent jobs at financed enterprises, as of the end of the reporting period and since first investment.
	IRIS ID: PI5691	Social	Jobs maintained	Number of full time equivalent jobs	Number of full-time equivalent jobs at the financed enterprise at the time of the investment.
 <p>WATER AND WASTE</p>	IRIS ID: PI2073	Environmental	Hazardous waste avoided	Number of kilograms	Hazardous waste avoided based on refurbishing/reusing/recycling, during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI9468	Environmental	Water produced	Litres	Amount of water produced during the reporting period. Footnote assumptions.
	IRIS ID: PI8043	Environmental	Potable water produced	Litres	Amount of potable water produced during the reporting period. Footnote assumptions.
	TIIM5	Social	Individuals provided with clean water	Number of people	Number of individuals provided with clean water as a result of the organisations activities during the reporting period.
	TIIM6	Social	Water treated	Number of litres	Amount of wastewater treated by the organisation within the reporting period.



Truestone Metrics Framework

SECTOR	METRIC ID	IMPACT TYPE	METRIC NAME	MEASURE	DEFINITION
 <p>HOUSING/ COMMUNITY FACILITIES</p>	IRIS ID: PI5965	Social	Number of housing units financed	Number of housing units	Number of individual family housing units projected to be constructed or preserved as a result of investments made during the reporting period.
	IRIS ID: PI8007	Social	Number of community facilities financed	Number of facilities	Number of community development facilities projected to be built, renovated, or purchased as a result of investments made the during reporting period.
	IRIS ID: P12640	Social	Number of people housed	Number of people	Number of individuals projected to be housed as a result of housing units constructed.
 <p>CROSS SECTOR</p>	IRIS ID: OI8869	Social	Permanent employees	Number of people	Number of people employed by the organization at the end of the reporting period. This is the sum of all paid full-time and part-time employees.
	TIIM7	Social and/or Environmental	Investment in social and/or environmental businesses	US \$ Invested	Amount invested in businesses that generate a social or environmental benefit.
	IRIS ID: PI4060	Social	Client individuals	Number of individuals or households	Number of individuals or households who were clients during the reporting period. For microfinance clients, this refers to active clients. For healthcare providers, this refers to patients.
	IRIS ID: PI8330	Social	Client individuals: female	Number of people	Number of women who were clients during the reporting period.

Compare your metrics with those of your peers in the IRIS Registry.

Do you want to see how the metrics you've selected compare with those of your peers? Or, do you want to see some examples of which metrics peer organizations are using before you select your metrics?

The IRIS Registry lists the metric sets selected by more than 60 IRIS users. You can filter according to the user type that sounds most like you, narrow the list by regional focus, sectors, and social or environmental objectives, or look for a particular peer. There, you can find information about each registered user including their sectors of focus, social or environmental objectives, and the metrics they track. For example, you can browse the metrics sets used by fund managers that invest in education and the environment. Here's a snapshot of the Registry and an example profile.

IRIS TIP

The Registry of IRIS users acknowledges organizations that have integrated IRIS into their social and environmental performance measurement practices. The IRIS Registry also highlights examples of IRIS use to serve as a resource for the growing community of organizations tracking their social and environmental performance with IRIS. Listed organizations include companies, investors placing capital directly into companies, investors into funds, and others. Each listing includes background about the organization as well as information about the specific IRIS metrics that the organization uses.

Registry BETA

The IRIS metrics catalog is available as a public good and organizations can use the metrics however they choose. This registry of IRIS users serves to acknowledge those organizations that are currently using IRIS metrics as part of their performance measurement practices. The registry also highlights these examples of IRIS use to provide a resource for the growing community of organizations interested in utilizing IRIS. In addition to the organizations listed on the registry, twenty nine leading impact investors signed a letter of support for IRIS, which you can view [here](#).

Listed organizations include companies, investors placing capital directly into companies, investors into funds and others. Each listing includes background about the organization as well as information about the specific IRIS metrics that the organization uses.

Neither the GIIN nor IRIS endorse any of the organizations listed in the IRIS User Registry, nor do they validate the information contained in the IRIS User Registry. Before using the IRIS User Registry, please review additional important information [here](#).

Name	Type	Sectors	Locations	Impact Objectives
3D International LLC	Company	Culture, Environment, Water	North America	Employment generation, Generate funds for charitable giving, Pollution prevention & waste management, Water resources management
Accion's Frontier Investments Group	Direct Investor	Financial Services, Information Technology and Communication	East Asia and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, South Asia, Sub-Saharan	Access to education, Access to energy, Access to financial services, Affordable housing

Accion's Frontier Investments Group

Accion's Frontier Investments Group (Frontier Investments) is an early stage equity fund sponsored by Accion International focused on catalyzing a new approach to financial inclusion. It invests in innovative technologies and disruptive business models that enhance the efficiency, reach, and scope of products and services for the unbanked. Accion is a global nonprofit dedicated to building a financially inclusive world, with access to economic opportunity for all, by giving people the financial tools they need to improve their lives, a world pioneer in microfinance, over the last 50 years Accion has helped build 62 microfinance institutions in 31 countries on 4 continents. Those institutions are currently reaching millions of clients. The Accion U.S. Network is the largest microfinance network in the country and, since inception, has served hundreds of thousands of clients with loans and support. In the area of investing, Accion provides early stage equity, quasi-equity financing and loan guarantees to help MFIs become independent of donor funds, build their capital base, attract deposits and allow financial leverage, and invests beyond microfinance to cultivate a financial ecosystem that will radically enhance the efficiency, reach and scope of financial services at the base of the economic pyramid.

IRIS Use

Frontier Investments has adopted IRIS as the basis for its performance metrics system, housed in PULSE, which is used for portfolio measurement and monitoring. Using the IRIS metrics provides a common language which Frontier Investments uses to measure and monitor performance across its diverse portfolio and to compare against potential investment opportunities. Frontier Investments supports investee companies to identify, collect and manage with performance metrics. Adopting IRIS improves Frontier's ability to communicate financial inclusion impact. For more information about Frontier's experiences designing and implementing its impact management program, read their [IRIS Use Case](#).

Other Impact Measurement Tools

Given Frontier Investments' financial inclusion focus and diverse portfolio that includes microinsurance, business process outsourcing, mobile payment systems and housing, Frontier has developed custom metrics specific to financial inclusion and the business model of investee companies that we use alongside complementary IRIS metrics to measure the impact on financial inclusion with respect to scale, quality of service, and clients. Accion uses PULSE to manage its portfolio impact data.

IRIS Metrics

This organization indicates using the following IRIS metrics. Click the metric name to view the definition.

Financial Performance

Revenue	775558	Earned Revenue	🔍
Cost of Goods Sold	775045	Cost of Goods Sold	🔍
Gross Profit	777623	Gross Profit	🔍

Adopt endorsed metrics sets

Many impact investing field builders, including network organizations and rating systems developers, have endorsed a set of IRIS metrics that they consider important. If you are looking for metrics that meet stakeholder reporting requirements or you want to use a set of metrics that is already approved by leaders in your sector or area of investment focus, you may want to first check one of these [pre-fab metrics sets](#).





Recommended Metrics Sets: IRIS Metrics for Early-Stage Enterprises Endorsed by Toniic

Toniic is a global network of impact investors diverse in their sector and regional activities, but unified in their focus on investing in early-stage organizations. In order to create a shared framework for its members to use when collecting and reporting the impact performance of their investees, Toniic worked with its members to identify a set of five core cross-portfolio IRIS metrics and an additional set of sector-specific IRIS metrics.

TONIIC'S E-GUIDE

In addition to proposing the use of these metrics, the Toniic Institute authored an E-Guide to help its members and others better understand some of the challenges and opportunities associated with the practice of impact measurement.

Toniic recommended cross-portfolio IRIS metrics

IRIS METRIC	METRIC ID	IRIS DEFINITION	TONIIC'S RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION
CLIENT INDIVIDUALS	IRIS ID: PI4060	Number of individuals or households who were clients during the reporting period. For microfinance clients, this refers to active clients. For healthcare providers, this refers to patients.	Measure the level of activity and the number of beneficiaries of the enterprise's operations.
JOBS MAINTAINED (IN FINANCED ENTERPRISES)	IRIS ID: PI5691	Number of full-time equivalent jobs at the financed enterprise at the time of the investment. Total across outstanding investment portfolio.	Monitor the relative size of the enterprise; growth in services; cost efficiencies. Depending on enterprise, demonstrates job growth for low-income populations.
EARNED REVENUE	IRIS ID: FP5958	Revenue resulting from all business activities during the reporting period.	Monitor the financial well being of the enterprise and relative level of activity; estimate marginal costs. Indicative of the health of the organization and the social impact that it creates.
NET INCOME	IRIS ID: FP1301	Net Income or change in unrestricted net assets resulting from all business activities during the reporting period and all Contributed Revenue. The organization's net profit.	The enterprise's bottom line; useful in monitoring the level of philanthropic support over time.
NEW INVESTMENT CAPITAL	IRIS ID: FP8293	Value of cash flows from the organization's financing activities (both loans and investments) during the reporting period.	Monitor the level of activity in attracting new capital and investment to the enterprise, essential for growth and expansion.



Toniic recommended sector specific IRIS metrics

SECTOR	IRIS METRIC	METRIC ID	IRIS DEFINITION
AGRICULTURE	SUSTAINABLE CULTIVATED LAND AREA—DIRECT	IRIS ID: OI6912	Hectares directly controlled by the organization under sustainable cultivation. Report hectares cultivated at any point during the reporting period.
	PAYMENTS TO SUPPLIER INDIVIDUALS	IRIS ID: PI1492	Value of payments made by the organization to individuals who sold to the organization during the reporting period.
EDUCATION	STUDENT TRANSITION RATE	IRIS ID: PI4924	Percentage of students advancing from one level of schooling to the next. For example, primary to secondary school or secondary school to higher education.
ENERGY	ENERGY PRODUCED	IRIS ID: PI8706	Energy produced during the reporting period. Include footnote about energy type(s). If the product uses a mix of fuel types, footnote energy produced by fuel type and other calculation assumptions.
	GREENHOUSE GAS OFFSET/MITIGATED	IRIS ID: PI5376	Greenhouse gas offset/mitigated during the reporting period by replacing traditional generation with renewable, modern, or more efficient power generation/use measured in metric tonnes of CO2 equivalents. Calculations should be made leveraging Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) guidelines/methodologies to the extent possible. Footnote assumptions.
ENVIRONMENT	LAND PRESERVED	IRIS ID: PI2012	Hectares of land designated as a strict nature reserved during the reporting period.
	LAND REFORESTED	IRIS ID: PI4907	Hectares of land that have been reforested during the reporting period.
FINANCIAL SERVICES	EFFECTIVE INTEREST RATE	IRIS ID: PI7467	The rate that a client pays based on the amount of loan proceeds the client receives. The rate converts all the borrower's financial costs for a loan into a single declining balance interest calculation. It includes the effects of interest rates, whether they are calculated on a flat or declining basis, payment schedules, commissions, fees, discounting, and compensating balances.
HEALTHCARE AND WATER	POTABLE WATER PRODUCED	IRIS ID: PI8043	Amount of potable water produced during the reporting period. Footnote assumptions.
SMALL AND GROWING BUSINESS	FULL-TIME WAGES	IRIS ID: OI5887	Value of wages (including bonuses) paid to all full-time employees during the reporting period.
	UNITS/VOLUME SOLD	IRIS ID: PI1263	Amount of the product or service sold by the organization during the reporting period.

A few other things to consider when choosing metrics.

Engaging your investees in the process (aka how not to overburden your investees)

Here's a reality check: If your investees can't actually produce the data that you request, all this work will be for nothing. And, if they don't see value in tracking this data, the quality of the data may suffer since impact measurement won't be seen as a core activity of their business. So, one of the most important things to keep in mind when choosing metrics is how practical and useful your metrics are for your investees. Any metrics you select should be relevant to your investees' business models and goals, and take into account their operations and offerings. In other words, it may not make sense to ask an agricultural company to tell you how many tons of CO₂ emissions their crop reduced since climate change mitigation is not core to their business model, and providing this information would likely require significant (and resource-intensive) learning.

Building an impact measurement program that works for you.

Of course impact measurement doesn't stop once you've selected your IRIS metrics. Collecting and managing IRIS performance data will need to fit into your broader portfolio management activities. Organizations approach this differently. With regards to staffing, some rely on a centrally-managed team to support data collection, reporting, and analysis. Others use a more decentralized approach and make impact measurement part of everyone's job. In terms of support tools, some use cutting edge data management and analytics technology, and others rely solely on Excel. To be successful in your impact measurement efforts, you will want to make upfront decisions about staff capacity and responsibilities, data system requirements, and budget considerations. Ultimately, the makeup of your program will depend on your unique organizational resources as well as the breadth and depth of your informational needs.

Goal setting.

You've heard a lot about choosing metrics based on your social or environmental objectives in this section. If you don't have specific impact goals, don't worry. However, if you want to base your metrics on your own social and environmental goals, but don't know how, here are some additional resources to get you started.

[*The Practical Guide to Measuring and Managing Impact*](#)

from the European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA)

[*A Guide to Social Return on Investment 201*](#)

from Social Return on Investment (SROI)

For more resources, check out the appendix.

A note about reporting.

At this point, you have a clearer understanding about how to use IRIS (hooray!) and now you are starting to think about next steps. Chances are, at some point, you intend to share the performance data that you collect using your IRIS metrics.

What your report looks like—the format, the structure, the information and analyses you include—are up to you. But, there are a few basic things that you'll want to incorporate to ensure that the report clearly communicates your use of IRIS metrics. These include:

- Data that is consistent with IRIS metrics definitions
- Appropriate citation of utilized IRIS metrics
- Clear start and end dates—or reporting period—for the data

Here's an example from Triodos Sustainable Trade Finance Fund

Profile—or *report context*—about the fund and/or investees including why the reader should care about the data presented

Relevant impact reporting focus

Sustainable Trade

Investing with impact in sustainable trade

This Impact Report 2011 shows our commitment to fulfilling the mission of the Triodos Sustainable Trade Fund, which aims to improve the lives of farmers and encourage sustainable agriculture as an alternative to conventional, chemical-intensive agriculture.

We have adopted the IFoAM principles to underpin our vision of what sustainable agriculture is about: these are the principles of health, ecology, fairness and care. For us, they present a philosophy of agriculture as a living ecological and social system.

This second Impact Report continues the approach set out in the first report that we published in September 2011. It follows the line of the Impact Reporting Investment Standards (IRIS) as well as relating the Fund's objectives to the Millennium Development Goals. This report highlights our impact through financing activities and the role we play to promote fair and transparent commodity markets.

• EUR 2.2 million premium was paid to farmers obtained by selling their products to organisations financed by us, and
• 10.4 million malaria treatments can be produced from Artemisinin that we pre-finance.

A new feature in this report is that the data has been supplemented with background stories on the Producer Price Premium and on Female Suppliers, as we believe that data alone cannot tell the full story.

Reporting non-financial data is still a relatively new area that is undergoing development and in which we are active participants. We hope you enjoy reading our report, whilst appreciating that this is work in progress and that the data presented have not been verified by a third party.

Zeist, the Netherlands

Relevant performance information including:

- Social/Environmental performance
- Descriptions of relevant products and services

Impact through financing activities in 2011

Category	IRIS Indicator	2011	2010	YTY change			
Operational Impact	Environmental Performance						
Cultivated Land Area	O1937	No. of hectares	7	278,979	218,449	27.7%	
Sustainably Cultivated Land	O2605	No. of hectares	7	214,824	156,104	37.4%	
Employees	Permanent Employees	O8869	No. of people	1	2,715	2,720	-0.3%
Temporary Employees	O9028	No. of people	1	5,174	4,111	25.9%	
Product Impact	Quantity and Reach						
Units/Volume Exported: total	P11290	No. of metric tonnes	1	149,132	84,638	76.2%	
Units/Volume Exported: fair trade & organic	**	No. of metric tonnes	1	20,498	10,852	89.9%	
Units/Volume Exported: organic	**	No. of metric tonnes	1	49,452	43,121	14.7%	
Units/Volume Exported: fair trade	**	No. of metric tonnes	1	34,728	4,244	718.3%	
Units/Volume Exported: other	**	No. of metric tonnes	1	44,443	26,420	68.2%	
Units/Volume Exported: prefinanced by the fund	**	No. of metric tonnes	1	21,712	22,461	-3.3%	
Units/Malaria medicine equivalents	**	No. of treatments	6	-	-	-	
Quality and Performance	Producer Price Premium	P11568	EUR	2,209,217	1,438,081	53.6%	
Supplier Information	Supplier Individuals	P9350	No. of people	1	112,294	116,693	0.5%
Supplier Individuals: female	P11798	No. of people	1	18,960	12,774	6.8%	
Supplier Individuals: rural	P2566	No. of people	1	112,294	116,693	0.5%	
Supplier Individuals: smallholder	P9991	No. of people	1	112,232	115,455	1.5%	
Supplier Individuals: certified organic	**	No. of people	1	68,957	75,725	-8.9%	
Purchases from Supplier Individuals: smallholder	P17852	EUR	1	44,184,340	28,761,611	53.6%	

* United Nations Millennium Development Goals
** Indicators introduced by the Triodos Sustainable Trade Fund and not (yet)

List of IRIS metrics cited

Extra note: We assume that 75% of the sales amount of the contracts we finance goes to the farmers.

* Indicators introduced by Triodos Sustainable Trade Fund and not (yet) incorporated in the IRIS standards.

United Nations Millennium Development Goals	Millennium Development Goal
MDG 1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
MDG 6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
MDG 7	Ensure environmental sustainability
MDG 8	A global partnership for development

Related goals and other relevant performance information

Reporting period

Glossary

IRIS Indicators	Unit of Measure	IRIS Indicator
Unit of Measure	PD1602	
Target Beneficiary Setting	P06384	
Target Beneficiaries	P07990	
Product/Service Description	P07896	
Cultivated Land Area	O1937	
Sustainably Cultivated Land	O2605	
Permanent Employees	O8869	
Temporary Employees	O9028	
Units/Volume Exported	P11290	
Units/Volume Exported: fair trade & organic	*	
Units/Volume Exported: organic	*	
Units/Volume Exported: fairtrade	*	Amount of certified fairtrade product or service exported by the organisation during the reporting period.
Units/Volume Exported: other	*	Amount of non-certified product or service exported by the organisation during the reporting period.
Units/Volume Exported: prefinanced by the fund	*	Amount of product or service exported by the organisation during the reporting period that is prefinanced by the Fund.
Units/Malaria medicine equivalents	*	Amount of malaria treatments that can be produced by the amount of Artemisinin prefinanced by the Fund.



The bottom line: Creating a metrics framework that uses IRIS

The metrics you select and how you report the resulting data will be unique to your organization, and should be based on what you deem relevant to your specific goals. IRIS is designed to cover multiple sectors because the impact investing field is diverse. As a result, no single IRIS user is expected to employ the full IRIS catalog, so don't be overwhelmed by the number of metrics available. It's ok to start an impact measurement program with five IRIS metrics or with fifty IRIS metrics—whatever works for you. If you focus your metrics on your data needs and organize them for your portfolio, you will discover that it's easy to create a metrics set that makes sense for your portfolio.

To make it even easier to find metrics that are relevant to your goals, browse thematic lists of IRIS metrics, partner-endorsed metrics sets, and the IRIS Registry to find commonly-used metrics that may apply to you. But remember, these metrics should be relevant to you and to your investees. And before you ask your investees for their performance data, first determine how practical your metrics are for them so that you ensure an easy transition into data collection. Finally, if you are serious about collecting social and environmental performance data, it's important you consider how your organization will support and manage these data collection activities with staff resources and relevant tools.



APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Directory of impact measurement toolkits

ORGANIZATION	RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT VENTURE CAPITAL ALLIANCE (CDVCA)	CDVCA Measuring Impact Toolkit	A manual introducing a standard methodology for measuring the social impacts of developmental venture capital (VC) investing.
RESULTS FOR DEVELOPMENT	CHMI	A website, set of tools, and IRIS aligned metrics, built to inform and connect those who strive to improve the health of the world's poor.
EUROPEAN VENTURE PHILANTHROPY ASSOCIATION (EVPA)	EVPA Guide	A comprehensive resource that distills best practice in impact measurement into five easy-to-understand steps and provides practical tips and recommendations for how to implement impact measurement at the level of the social investor and in the social sector organizations that they support.
WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE (WRI)	GHG Protocol	The most widely used international accounting tool to understand, quantify, and manage greenhouse gas emissions.
GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE (GRI)	GRI Toolkit	A variety of resources to help both starter and experienced reporters, including templates for a basic GRI report, the GRI Checklist and GRI Content Index.
GRAMEEN	PPI	A poverty measurement tool for organizations and businesses with a mission to serve the poor.
SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSTS ASSOCIATION (SIAA)	SIAA	An association that connects and supports social impact analysts worldwide.
SOCIAL PERFORMANCE TASK FORCE (SPTF)	SPTF Guide	A set of tools to help organizations get started with social performance measurement.
SROI NETWORK	SROI Network Guide	A step by step approach to completing an analysis of social return.
SVT GROUP	SVT Library	A list of publications about impact measurement and accounting.
TONIIC	Toniic E-Guide	A guide that outlines some of the challenges and opportunities associated with the practice of impact measurement.
FOUNDATION CENTER	TRASI	A database of over 150 tools, methods, and best practices in impact measurement.
WORLD BUSINESS COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	WBCSD Guide for Measuring Socio-Economic Impact	A guide to support companies' efforts to measure their socio-economic impacts.

Appendix 2: Directory of IRIS-aligned impact measurement tools and platforms

WHAT IS IT?	WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES?	HOW DOES IT WORK WITH IRIS?	WHAT DOES IT DO?
ANALYTICS PLATFORM	The Microfinance Information Exchange (MIX) analytical platform, which uses the Social Performance Task Force indicators	The MIX provides a dataset and analytics platform that covers the financial and social performance of microfinance institutions globally. IRIS includes many performance metrics that are used by the MIX.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collects data on the performance of MFIs around the world Provides a platform for benchmarking and analysis
	GIIRS Analytics Platform	GIIRS Analytics provides a platform for analyzing and comparing the performance of GIIRS-rated companies and funds. Users of GIIRS Analytics can see individual and aggregate performance data across all the IRIS metrics in the assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains verified and comparable data on the social and environmental impact of GIIRS-rated companies and funds Provides a platform for benchmarking and analyses of these organizations.
	microTracker, a FIELD initiative	microTracker provides a dataset and analytics tool for assessing the performance of U.S. microenterprise. IRIS includes a core set of microTracker performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains a set of core performance measures for U.S. microenterprise programs Provides data collection and reporting and analysis tools
DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	PULSE	PULSE is a Salesforce.com-based data management tool that comes preloaded with IRIS metrics. PULSE can be used to collect, store, and report on those metrics across individual projects over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a streamlined way for organizations to track, benchmark, and report financial, operational, environmental, and social data across a portfolio.
	UNPRI Principles for Investors in Inclusive Finance (PIIF)	The PIIF outlines a set of principles for responsible investing in inclusive finance. IRIS usage is encouraged as part of the necessary actions for one of the Principles, which is focused on harmonizing standards for inclusive finance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a framework for responsible investment in inclusive finance
NETWORK OR TRADE ASSOCIATION STANDARDS	The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) metrics for small and growing businesses (SGBs) in developing markets	ANDE is a network of organizations that support SGBs. It promotes IRIS metrics as a standard for its members, and encourages them to use a core set of IRIS metrics that ANDE has selected for measuring the performance of SGBs in developing markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collects data from members for a set of common IRIS metrics Provides aggregated analyses and reports to help the sector build understanding and improve performance
RATING SYSTEM	GIIRS Impact Ratings	GIIRS Impact Ratings leverage IRIS to generate its ratings. The assessment includes questions that are based on IRIS metrics as well as other additional criteria. As such, organizations that go through the GIIRS rating process are required to provide data that is aligned with IRIS metrics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates the social and environmental impact and practices (but not the financial performance) of companies and funds

WHAT IS IT?	WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES?	HOW DOES IT WORK WITH IRIS?	WHAT DOES IT DO?
REPORTING METHODOLOGY / FRAMEWORK	Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade (FAST) Shared Impact Assessment and Measurement Toolbox (SIAMT)	FAST helped develop a standardized set of IRIS performance metrics for investments in sustainable agriculture SMEs. This core set of IRIS metrics is used in SIAMT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a common framework for investors, financial institutions, and SMEs to monitor and report the social, financial, and environmental performance generated from financing activities in sustainable agriculture value chains.
	Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)	GRI is a reporting framework focused on issues of corporate sustainability and citizenship. The framework provides guidance about which sustainability-related topics should be disclosed by organizations. IRIS metrics can be used to measure and report performance for many of the sustainability-related topics covered by the GRI framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a framework for an organization to report on their sustainability practices Includes reporting guidelines and specific indicators for areas such as an organization's governance structure, labor practices, and environmental footprint.
	Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI)	The PPI assessment is a simple and accurate tool that measures poverty at the household level. IRIS helps standardize poverty metrics within the PPI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a poverty measurement tool for organizations and businesses with a mission to serve the poor.
VALUATION METHODOLOGY	Social Return on Investment (SROI)	The SROI method is a multi-step process for assessing the social value of a project. IRIS can be used during the metrics selection phase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a methodology for accounting for the social, environmental, and economic value of an organization's outcomes

Appendix 3: IRIS Use Cases

IRIS Use Cases highlight key features of effective impact measurement programs of IRIS users.

INTERAMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK – OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MAJORITY (OMJ)

OMJ restructured its impact measurement program across its grant and investment portfolio, putting IRIS metrics at the program’s foundation. The team uses an integrated metrics framework to gain insight into its portfolio’s overall performance.

Read the [OMJ Use Case here](#).

ACCION – FRONTIER INVESTMENTS GROUP

Frontier Investments uses IRIS as the pillar of its impact measurement program and actively monitors the performance of its portfolio companies through attendance at company board meetings, monthly Frontier Investments’ governance meetings, and PULSE.

Read the [Accion Use Case here](#).

KL FELICITAS

Using IRIS alongside its own proprietary qualitative and quantitative metrics, KLF evaluates both the social and environmental dimensions of each investment relative to its expected financial return, and then makes an investment decision appropriate for the foundation.

Read the [KLF Use Case here](#).

NEW VENTURES MEXICO (NVM)

Business accelerators like NVM can incorporate impact measurement training and use of IRIS as a core part of their capacity-building curriculum. Adding this approach to its support services, NVM helps entrepreneurs manage business growth, attract investors, and capitalize on new market opportunities.

Read the [New Ventures Mexico Case here](#).

Appendix 4: FAQs (and some other things you never thought to ask)

How much does it cost to use IRIS?

It costs absolutely nothing to use IRIS. It is free to search the catalog online, download the IRIS Excel file, and start using IRIS metrics. To support this free public good, users are encouraged to register their IRIS use on the IRIS registry and to cite IRIS metrics in external reports and communications.

Is IRIS a rating system?

No, IRIS is a metrics catalog that helps you build an informed performance measurement system to measure your success and reduce mistakes that could affect your credibility.

Is there a template I am supposed to follow?

There is no “template” per se. There is no one “right” combination of metrics that every impact investor should or does track. IRIS is designed so that you can pick and choose from the catalog the standard metrics that are best suited to your needs and investment objectives.

Are IRIS metrics compatible with other standards?

IRIS metrics are aligned with widely-accepted standards promoted by many sector leaders and industry bodies, including the Global Reporting Initiative, the International Labor Organization, and the International Financial Reporting Standards among others. In addition to identifying and organizing the most useful and well-established metrics from across different sectors, the IRIS Initiative also collaborates with many different standards-setting bodies to help create more unity and coordination across these different efforts.

How do I cite IRIS in reports?

When citing IRIS metrics in public materials, including but not limited to impact performance reports, online dashboards, and other public analyses, clearly reference the IRIS metrics using the following style guidelines:

Reference String: IRIS, Year. (Metric ID) Metric Name. IRIS Version.

Reference Example: IRIS, 2011. (PI5920) Sales from Exports. v.2.2.

Include these references as footnotes, in a bibliography, appendix or reference index, or via other appropriate citations.

Who manages IRIS?

The IRIS initiative is managed by the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN®), a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the scale and effectiveness of impact investing. The IRIS metrics catalog is maintained and updated with support from an advisory body composed of experts in impact measurement and other related areas. Metrics are considered for inclusion in IRIS through a rigorous process that involves input and consultation from a broad and diverse group of stakeholders, including IRIS users and the general public through an open comment period.

How are the IRIS metrics selected and updated?

An advisory body of leaders in the impact investing industry oversees the evolution of IRIS. The metrics are updated every two years through an iterative review process that involves objective consideration of recommendations and comments provided by various stakeholders. This enables the IRIS catalog to evolve in line with industry best practices, at the guidance of expert advisors, and as partner taxonomies are updated.

Because new iterations of IRIS always build on preceding versions, users can adopt IRIS immediately without concern. Most frequently, new metrics are added in subsequent versions. Any changes to existing metrics are adapted into IRIS only after extensive consultations with experts and users.

How do I provide feedback on the metrics?

The ultimate success of IRIS depends on feedback and suggestions from a great number of individuals. The IRIS website has been designed to allow visitors to provide comments about any of the existing metrics and also suggest new ones. Comments provided through the website will be reviewed and, where appropriate, posted to the website to allow additional discussion. These comments will also be considered in planning for future IRIS versions.

Additionally, feedback can be sent directly to the staff at the IRIS initiative at any time by emailing irisinfo@thegiin.org.