Impact Investing Messaging Playbook

2026 Edition
For use by GIIN Members

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Dear GIIN Members,

Impact investing has grown from a niche idea into a dynamic market with trillions of dollars in motion to build a better world. **And yet, as our industry has grown, so has the challenge of talking about it clearly and consistently.**

Too often, the language we use gets lost in translation between the boardroom, the newsroom and the living room, so to speak. This gap makes it harder for our work to be understood, prioritized and scaled.

That gap carries real cost right now. As scrutiny of impact investing intensifies and the lines between related fields blur in public conversation, inconsistent messaging leaves individual members exposed and makes it harder for the industry as a whole to defend what makes this work distinct. A shared foundation for communicating about impact investing isn't a nice-to-have at this moment — **it's a way to ensure our collective credibility keeps pace with our collective growth.**

This playbook is the result of over a year of discussion and deliberation with the GIIN's Investors' Council Impact Messaging Taskforce. Its purpose is simple: to give every GIIN member a shared, tested foundation for talking about impact investing; one that is clear, credible and true to what our industry does.

This playbook speaks only to how members communicate about their work. **It has no bearing on, and is not intended to influence, any member's independent investment decisions.**

Inside, you'll find core messages, sector-specific language and practical guidance for adapting your communications to different audiences, whether you're speaking with LPs, GPs, investees, prospective hires, media or the public.

None of it is meant to replace your own organization's voice. It's meant to strengthen it — giving you a common thread to draw from as you tell your own story, in your own way, to the people who need to hear it.

I hope this becomes a resource you return to often, whether you're drafting a pitch deck, briefing a new hire or explaining our industry to someone hearing about it for the first time. And, as always, if you have feedback, we'd love to hear it.

Thank you for the work you do and for being part of this network.

In community,
Sean Gilbert, Chief Network Officer

P.S. If your organization would like to be featured as an example in future versions of this playbook, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to comms@thegiin.org.

Purpose of this document

The Impact Investing Messaging Playbook, developed by the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) with support from the Soros Economic Development Fund in the spring of 2026 represents a culmination of meetings with the Investors' Council Impact Narrative Taskforce.

The taskforce has convened for over a year to deliberate around clear, concise and unified messaging that elevates the purpose, work and aspirations of impact investing to solve systemic problems facing people and the planet.

With the development of singular streamlined messages that communicate the role of impact investing in our society and world, we can, as a network, reinforce our industry's purpose and goals to both seasoned practitioners and those new to the field and expand access and opportunity to new participants.

How to use this document

This playbook is available exclusively to GIIN members to:

- Strengthen existing marketing and communications content
- Support organizational storytelling to key audiences
- Explain the industry of impact investing to those unfamiliar with it
- Use in hiring practices
- Improving communications skills across the industry

Audience considerations

This playbook is intended to provide a general communications framework for various audiences, but it isn't a one-size-fits-all. Please use your judgement to tailor the messaging and framing for your intended audience.

Examples of some of the audiences that this playbook can be used for and how to position them:

- <u>LPs/GPs</u>: Calibrate to client framing. For some clients, lead with the financials to communicate the competitive advantage of your product in the marketplace. For others, lead with language that focuses on how you solve problems that matter.
- <u>Prospective employees and new hires:</u> Lean into values-based messaging to emphasize the shared goals and values of those working in impact investing.
- <u>Media:</u> Highlight proof-points and case studies for specific sector messages as much as possible to "show not tell" how impact investors are achieving their social, environmental and financial goals.
- <u>General public:</u> Uplift the overarching and core messages that explain what impact investing is, how it works and what the goals, vision and outcomes for the field are.

Guiding principles for impact investing messaging

Do:

- Reference real-world problems
- Be mindful of your audience's expectations about financial returns and performance, and make sure that's reflected in your messaging
- Distinguish impact investing from other sustainable investing strategies by reinforcing the core characteristics specifically intentionality and IMM
- Spotlight "kitchen table" issues that affect people and how impact investing addresses them (i.e. good jobs, financial security, affordable housing, cost of living)
- Highlight specific human-centric stories and case studies to demystify impact investing and foster understanding
- Be consistent. Consistency drives memorability, which drives understanding
- Remember, there's no way to be bulletproof, the goal is to be defensible

Don't:

- Use unnecessary words, jargon or cliches
- Use acronyms if possible

Impact investing core story

The who:
Investment managers, pension funds, insurance companies, family offices, foundations, development finance institutions, advisors and corporations are all deploying capital to companies, funds and projects that solve problems like housing, healthcare, food security, education access, improving energy resilience, and more. Some investors are private-market-focused while others are public-market-focused; some have dual mandates while others are impact-only; some have return expectations that are market-rate, some are below-market-rate.

The what:
Official definition for impact investments is investments made with the intention to generate positive, measurable social or environmental impact alongside a financial return.

The where:
Impact investors are headquartered in and deploy capital in high-, middle- and low-income markets.

The when:
The term impact investing was coined in 2007. It's since grown to a $1.571 trillion market.

The why:
Because impact investing is about solving problems, and many of the world's biggest problems require far more capital than philanthropy or public funding alone can provide.

Impact investing key messages

Overarching message to complement the dictionary definition of impact investing

Impact investing helps build a better future where financial returns go hand in hand with benefits for people and the planet.

Core message to explain the "how" of impact investing

Impact investing channels capital into solutions that tackle real challenges for people and the planet.

Core message to underscore the objective

Impact investing aims to deliver measurable social and environmental progress with financial returns.

Core message to underscore the vision

Impact investing fuels a sustainable and resilient future by funding solutions to society's most pressing social and environmental problems.

Core message to underscore what we mean by "outcomes"

Impact investing generates financial returns while driving solutions that create jobs, boost economies and safeguard the planet for future generations.

Sector message for energy industry and investments

Impact investing in energy solutions creates cleaner air, better jobs and healthier populations by addressing energy demand and affordability.

Examples of GIIN members in this sector:

- LeapFrog Investments
- Camco Clean Energy
- ResponsAbility

Examples of IMM indicators, per IRIS+:

- Greenhouse gas emissions avoided
- Energy produced for use and sale
- Energy stores, transmitted, and/or distributed
- Clients accessing quality products and services
- Clients with savings on energy expenditures
- Decent jobs supported at or above a living wage
- Investee revenue growth

Sector message for affordable housing

Impact investments in affordable housing build safe and accessible homes which contributes to strong communities, families' financial stability and positive health outcomes.

Examples of GIIN members in this sector:

- Turner Impact Capital
- Nuveen
- Calvert Impact

Sector message for education

Impact investments broaden access to quality education which improves literacy and helps expand economic opportunity while reducing social inequities.

Examples of GIIN members in this sector:

- Fundación INICIA Educación
- World Education Services
- Acumen

Sector message for sustainable agriculture

Impact investments in sustainable agriculture help ensure fair wages for farmers, clean soil and water, and healthy, affordable food.

Examples of GIIN members in this sector:

- Root Capital
- BlueOrchard
- Incofin Investment Management

Examples of IMM indicators, per IRIS+:

- Farmers accessing responsible agriculture products, services and trainings
- Agricultural MSMEs financed responsibly
- Change in farmer income
- Sustainably managed land
- Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated
- Decent jobs supported at or above a living wage
- Investee revenue growth

Sector message for healthcare

Impact investments expand accessibility, productivity and quality of healthcare to improve health outcomes and save lives.

Examples of GIIN members in this space:

- Quadria Capital
- Medicines for Malaria Venture
- Medical Credit Fund Kenya

Examples of IMM indicators, per IRIS+:

- Patients receiving treatment
- Increasing access of medical products and services for patients
- Patient savings premium experienced by the patient
- Patient satisfaction: net promoter score
- Employees provided with healthcare training
- Decent jobs supported at or above a living wage
- Investee revenue growth

Sector message for water and sanitiation

Impact investments in clean water and sanitation help protect public health and ensure safe drinking water and food products for all communities.

Examples of GIIN members in this sector:

- Water.org
- Kenya Innovative Finance Facility for Water
- Aqua for All

Sector message for climate adaptation

Impact investments in climate change adaptation and mitigation protects people, land and infrastructure, while making communities more resilient against extreme weather.

Examples of GIIN members in this sector:

- Lightrock
- Green Climate Fund
- Climate Asset Managers

Sector message for small business

Impact investments in small businesses expands economic opportunity, creates jobs and helps communities to grow and flourish.

Examples of GIIN members in this sector:

- Accion
- Community Investment Management
- Triodos Investment Management

Sector message for financial inclusion

Impact investments in financial inclusion services ensure that more people have access to safe, responsible financing.

Examples of GIIN members in this sector:

- Oikocredit
- Enterprise Community Partners
- GAWA Capital

Examples of IMM indicators, per IRIS+:

- Clients actively using responsible financial services
- Clients accessing financing for basic services
- Clients with an increase in their savings balance
- Clients' satisfaction ratio
- MSMEs financed responsible
- Decent jobs supported at or above a living wage
- Investee revenue growth

Global Impact Investing Network, Inc.

About The GIIN

The Global Impact Investing Network, Inc. (GIIN) is the leading industry body for impact investing. Since 2009, the GIIN has worked to increase the scale and effectiveness of impact investing to solve systemic problems facing people and the planet. With approximately 450 members across six continents, the GIIN serves as a hub for innovation, ideas and information to help investors build a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient world. Learn more at thegiin.org.

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