Impact Investing – Fast Facts

Impact investing “harnesses the force of entrepreneurship, innovation and capital, and the power of markets to do good.” Impact investing “has the potential to transform our ability to build a better society for all.”


At Morgan Lewis, we believe it’s our professional responsibility to support social enterprises, microfinance institutions and other impact investors. Our lawyers leverage our strengths in private equity, venture capital, structured and leveraged finance, investment fund formation and management, corporate and securities regulation, international and not-for-profit tax and international dispute resolution with the resources of offices in the U.S., Europe, Asia and the Middle East to meet the unique challenges of these clients. We assist firms to make sound decisions and implementations as impact investments are expected to generate both a financial return on capital and a social benefit.

Our clients in this space have included:
- Albanian-American Enterprise Fund
- Calvert Foundation
- DreamIt
- Enclude (formerly Shorebank)
- FINCA International
- GoodWorks Insurance
- GrainPro
- Grameen Foundation
- Habitat for Humanity
- International Finance Corporation
- MicroVest
- Oikocredit
- Small Enterprise Assistance Fund
- SJF Ventures
- StartUp Health
- StartUp PHL Seed Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Reinvestment Fund

Selected Representative Matters

- Over the last 7 years we have collaborated with the University of Michigan’s Law School’s International Transactions Clinic (ITC) and helped to supervise several transaction matters for the ITC, including a transaction involving a loan to a microfinance lender based in Tajikistan and the development of equity, debt and intercreditor documentations for a large, socially responsible investor based in the Netherlands. We have also advised on alternative forms of international dispute resolution for impact investors.

- Represented in conjunction with the ITC Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) on the establishment of the MicroBuild Fund with additional equity investments from the Omidyar Network and Triple Jump, the fund manager. OPIC, the U.S. government’s development finance institution, provided $45 million in financing to enable MicroBuild to expand housing microfinance lending and help thousands of low-income families around the world build, improve and maintain decent homes.

- Represented “GrainPro, Inc., a green, “not-only-for-profit” company, that provides safe, cost-effective solar drying and airtight storage products throughout the world, especially for areas with hot and humid climates, in financings, commercial contracts, corporate governance and tax matters. GrainPro aims to improve the quality of life by reducing world hunger, protecting public health, increasing small farmers’ incomes, and improving the environment.”
• Represented GoodWorks Insurance, a socially responsible insurance company that donates 50% of its operating profit each year to non-profits that support local education, healthcare, and public safety programs, in its formation, debt and equity financings and acquisitions.

• Performed fund formation work to create DVCRF Ventures I and II, SJF Ventures II and III and StartUp Health fund, each with dual mission objectives

• Represented SJF Ventures II and III in its formation with dual investment mission and job creation.

• Worked with the City of Philadelphia to create a Philadelphia focused fund with First Round Capital.

• Advised Kickstarter in relation to its commercial and regulatory issues regarding launching in UK

• Advised the Social Stock Exchange in relation to its commercial relationship with ISDX (a UK listing platform) and its crowdfunding platform and terms of investment with crowd investors.

Venture Capital and Private Equity Practice
Morgan Lewis understands the operations of venture capital firms, private equity firms, their investments, and their legal needs. Our attorneys have developed close professional relationships with venture capital firms around the world, acting as committed advisors with relevant experience during these competitive economic times. We regularly advise venture capital funds on a variety of legal matters, including portfolio investments and the formation of new funds. Our fund formation practice was ranked the #1 Most Active Law Firm globally based on the number of private funds worked on for issuers and limited partners in the Dow Jones Private Equity Analyst (2010-2013).

Tax Exempt Organizations Practice
Our lawyers help tax-exempt organizations structure mission-related and social investment funds and investment opportunities both domestically and abroad. We devise appropriate corporate and tax structures, draft fund formation documents, offering materials and related agreements and assist with investments in target companies. In addition, we advise our tax-exempt clients on investment management issues generally and our lawyers review and draft all necessary documentation to support our clients’ investment activities.

Firm Overview
With 29 offices in the United States, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, Morgan Lewis provides comprehensive legal services to clients of all sizes—from global Fortune 100 companies to startups—within the financial services industry.

• Approximately 2,000 lawyers firmwide

• Attorneys throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia and the Middle East who specifically focus on needs of emerging companies

• Named to BTI’s Client Service Hall of Fame

Pro Bono Initiative
For more than 100 years, Morgan Lewis attorneys have donated their time and resources to the public good. We work with dozens of legal services organizations in the cities in which we practice and last year recorded over 75,000 hours in the representation of indigent individuals and not-for-profit organizations, equaling an average of nearly 60 pro bono hours per attorney. We were recently honored with the following for our efforts: Lawyers Alliance – Cornerstone Award (2014); Corporate Pro Bono Project – CPBO Pro Bono Partner Award (2013); and ABA Death Penalty Representation Project - Exceptional Service Award (2013).
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