

Luxembourg for Finance

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
OF THE LUXEMBOURG FINANCIAL CENTRE
Number 1 | 2009

DOSSIER.....P5

Myths and Realities: Luxembourg, a black hole in the international financial system?

ETHICAL FINANCE..P2

Socially Responsible Investment: towards sustainable growth

LEGISLATION.....P9

Modernisation of the SICAR regime

EDITORIAL.....

Dear reader,
You have in your hands the first edition of a Newsletter published by Luxembourg for Finance, the Agency for the development of the Luxembourg financial centre. Inside, recognised experts from the financial centre provide you with information on new financial products and services, developments in the legal sphere and promising business lines. We are confident it will

provide real added value for you, your company and your clients.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter.

Jean-Jacques Picard, Secretary General,
Luxembourg for Finance



SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT: TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The recent conference on Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) in Luxembourg provided an opportunity to shed light on a sector still in its infancy but with promising potential. Indeed, the assets managed under SRI criteria have doubled between 2005 and 2007, a rise that could still accelerate in the current conditions, boosted by a disoriented market seeking strong ethics, good governance and transparency. As the leading domicile for investment funds in Europe, Luxembourg intends to contribute fully to this growth.

Organised by the Association of the Luxembourg Fund Industry (ALFI), the SRI conference held on 15 January 2009 attracted around 120 attendees and gathered together a diversified panel of speakers including asset managers, bankers, academics and politicians.

But what does SRI really mean? In its broader sense, SRI is a generic term covering ethical investments, responsible investments, sustainable investments, and any other investment process that combines financial objectives with concerns about environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues.

SRI origins can namely be traced back to the 18th century when a community of Quakers decided to prohibit their members from financially participating in slavery and human trafficking activities. For a long time, SRI remained almost exclusively concentrated in the United States and it is only since the turn of this century that a significant geographical shift can be seen since, in less than five years, Europe increased its market share in SRI funds from 16% in 2003 to 53% in 2007,

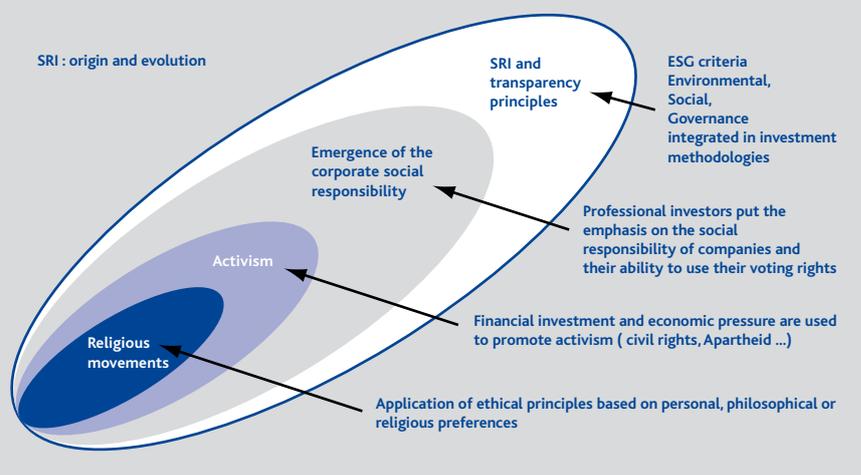


in a market worth around USD 5,000 billion euros under management. Furthermore, the share of SRI funds (broadly defined) within Europe is steadily rising and, according to European Sustainable Investment Forum (Eurosif) data, probably reached 17.6% of the asset management industry by the end of 2007.

In Europe, currently around 75 % of investment funds distributed in at least three countries are Luxembourg-domiciled. Hence we believe that Luxembourg is well placed to become a key player in the development and promotion of SRI funds. The financial centre has built its leadership on a solid banking presence, strengthened by a long tradition of regulatory innovation. In the SRI universe, this can be illustrated by the establishment in 2006 of the LuxFLAG agency, which grants a label to microfinance investment funds that meet pre-defined criteria. This government-backed initiative has proven very successful and today, Luxembourg is considered as one of the main European actors in this field, with over 800 million euros managed in Luxembourg-domiciled vehicles.

Apart from microfinance, ethical investment in Luxembourg is still in its infancy, as shown by the etika

SRI : origin and evolution



guide on responsible investment. This guide lists 109 Luxembourg-domiciled funds which take social and environmental criteria into account; a relatively low figure compared to the size of Luxembourg fund market. However, let us not forget that thematic funds are enjoying positive growth. These funds may focus on sectors such as water or energy, or issues such as the transition to sustainable development and a low carbon economy.

Nevertheless, if SRI remains a niche product that has not yet attracted all investment firms, the increasing interest by both institutional and private investors should help stimulate the sector. The current negative image of the financial world could also act as a catalyst - by stimulating the restoration of a climate of trust and transparency. What better way to achieve this than

by fostering the values of sustainable investment? Given that we believe the SRI sector's main constraint is its lack of visibility, increased willingness to promote it should help better exploit its potential.

Christophe Henry, Manager - Advisory & Consulting, Deloitte S.A

Isabelle Brion, Senior Manager - Advisory & Consulting, Deloitte S.A



LOOKING FOR A SAFE INVESTMENT? THINK ABOUT *LETTRES DE GAGE*!

Luxembourg has innovated by introducing moveable *lettres de gage* that are guaranteed by rights in or security interests over aircraft, boats or railway equipment recorded in a public register.

Traditionally guaranteed by rights in or security interests over real estate or claims against public entities, *lettres de gage* (in German: *Pfandbriefe*) have been considered for decades as a secure investment. Created in Prussia in 1769, *lettres de gage* seem to be perfectly safe financial instruments. Indeed, since their creation, no German *lettre de gage* has defaulted. This extraordinary track record is due to the particularly regulated legal framework for *lettres de gage* that, among other characteristics, distinguishes *lettres de gage* from ordinary asset backed securities (ABS), and in particular mortgage backed securities (MBS).

In Luxembourg, the regime for banks issuing *lettres de gage* was introduced in 1997 with a law amending the 1993 banking law and has since been improved. To our knowledge, no Luxembourg *lettre de gage* has ever defaulted.



Different categories of *lettre de gage*

A *lettre de gage* is a debt security issued by a bank issuing *lettres de gage* and guaranteed by a cover pool specifically allocated to these securities. Unlike ABS, *lettres de gage* are on-balance-sheet for the issuing bank,

Guarantees ensuring the particular safety of *lettres de gage*

- a specific licence for banks issuing *lettres de gage*, the activity of which is mainly limited to the issue of *lettres de gage*
- specific supervision by the Luxembourg *Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier* (CSSF)
- protection of the *lettre de gage* brand
- absolute priority claim by the holders of *lettres de gage* over the cover assets
- over-collateralisation of the *lettres de gage* imposed by law, as the cover assets must at all times represent 102% of the nominal amount of the *lettres de gage* in circulation (that is, for a nominal value of 100, the value of the cover pool will represent at least 102)
- dynamic cover pools so that cover assets satisfy the cover ratio at all times (unlike ABS which often have a static asset pool)
- a ratio of 60% imposed by law when taking into account the value of moveable or real estate assets (80% for residential property) as cover assets (e.g. for a real estate property with a value of 100, only 60 will be taken into consideration when serving as a cover asset)
- a cover assets register detailing each cover asset for each separate cover pool relating to the *lettres de gage* in circulation
- a special auditor who verifies the cover assets register and the permanent ongoing conformity and sufficiency of the cover pools
- *lettres de gage* are issued on-balance-sheet
- bankruptcy remoteness of the cover assets in case of insolvency of the bank issuing *lettres de gage*.

which therefore is, in addition to the strict legal framework, incentivised that the quality and the size of the cover pool meet the standard for repaying the *lettres de gage*.

Traditionally, two categories of *lettres de gage* existed, each secured by a separate cover pool:

- "mortgage *lettres de gage*", guaranteed by rights in or security interests over real estate;
- "public *lettres de gage*", guaranteed by claims against or guaranteed by public entities of the European Union, the European Economic Area and the OECD;

Since the end of 2008, banks issuing *lettres de gage* may also issue "moveable *lettres de gage*", guaranteed by rights in or security interests over moveable assets (e.g. ships, aircraft, boats, trains) which are registered in public registers in the EU, the EEA or the OECD. The list of these cover assets is not limitative; the *Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier* may authorise additional cover assets. The issuer must be a bank having a specific licence or a bank whose licence includes the issue of "*lettres de gage*". In both situations, the protective provisions of Luxembourg law apply.

Because of the tightly regulated legal framework within which they are issued, on-balance-sheet, by specialist banks, subject to constant review and adaptation of the cover assets to ensure their repayment, *lettres de gage* can be expected to emerge from the present financial turbulence with colours flying, as they have done in the past.



Nicki Kayser, Partner - Capital Markets and Banking
Mélinda Perera, Associate - Capital Markets and Banking
Linklaters LLP, Luxembourg

MYTHS AND REALITIES

Luxembourg, a black hole in the international financial system?

Is Luxembourg a tax haven? A trade centre for European and global tax fraud and money laundering? Or again, is Luxembourg a black hole in the European financial regulatory map? Such are the accusations that have been widely aimed at the Grand Duchy in recent months. Though the reproaches are not new, one cannot help but remark that they have experienced a resurgence in recent months, relayed by politicians and major foreign newspapers whose respectability is not in question, but whose claims do not appear to be supported by fact.

At a simple level, the term tax haven can be taken to describe a jurisdiction where taxation is very low compared to tax levels found in other developed countries. However, progressing beyond this definition is not simple. A report published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1987 concluded that "there does not exist a single, clear and objective criterion that enables a country to be identified as a tax haven". Nevertheless several lists of criteria do exist, which between them throw light on different aspects of the subject. In a working paper dated 2007, the International Monetary Fund defined a tax haven as a country in which economic activity is primarily oriented towards non-residents and which offers a favourable regulatory environment (light supervision and minimum disclosure of information) as well as jurisdictions with zero tax rates.

“

A business established in Luxembourg City is taxable on its revenue at a combined rate of 28.59%.



We will focus on the most widely accepted definition, that of the OECD.

Tax haven : the criteria established by the OECD

The OECD uses four principle factors to identify a tax haven: the fact that a jurisdiction has zero or insignificant tax rates, that it lacks transparency, that it is characterised by the existence of laws or administrative practices that impede a real exchange of information and that it is not necessary for an undertaking to have any activity or substance in the jurisdiction.

How does Luxembourg stack up against these criteria?

One response to this question is to point out that the OECD establishes an annual list of non-cooperative tax havens, based on these criteria, and to note that Luxembourg is not on the list. However, it is probably worthwhile looking deeper than this simple statement.

Luxembourg in the light of the OECD criteria

We saw above that the first criterion mentioned by the OECD is the imposition of a zero or near-zero tax rate. This is not the place to go into detail concerning tax rates applicable in the Grand Duchy. However, a couple of examples should suffice to demonstrate that this criterion is not met in the case of Luxembourg. Firstly, where personal income tax is concerned, a comparison of the tax rates in Luxembourg (characterised, notably, by a marginal tax rate of 38%) with other European countries reveals that the former is similar to existing rates in France and Germany. The same is true where corporate tax is concerned. Thus, a business established in Luxembourg City is taxable on its revenue at a combined rate of 28.59%, to which must be added a net worth tax that has virtually no, or no longer, an equivalent within the EU.

Luxembourg does not meet the criterion of lacking transparency any more than it does the first criterion. The constitutional principle of equality of taxpayers before the law, the synthesis of laws into coordinated legal codes and the existence of independent, efficient courts competent in tax matters - the Administrative Tribunal and the Administrative Court - together guarantee an open and coherent application of tax legislation.

The criterion of the absence of real "substance" is not met by Luxembourg either, since a minimum of substance is legally required for any activity. What is more, the strict definition of tax residency in Luxembourg (tax domicile or *séjour habituel* for a physical person, and the company seat or administrative head

“

Banking secrecy ceases to protect the beneficiary where legal proceedings have been taken out against him.

office for a legal person), can be mentioned to disprove the criterion of absence of substantial activity in the Grand Duchy.

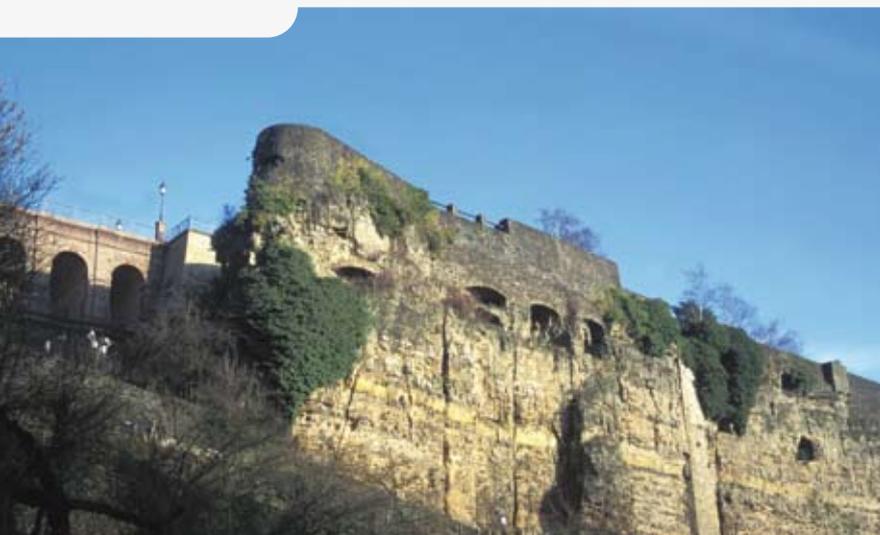
There remains the issue of Luxembourg's position in the area of the exchange of information, a question that we have decided to leave until last and to treat in greater depth, since it is based on a superficial analysis of this question that the myth of Luxembourg as a tax haven has often arisen. What, exactly, is the situation?

Banking secrecy and tax haven, two labels that are often confused

At the heart of the debate over the exchange of information two elements cross paths, the problem of tax evasion and the existence of banking secrecy, and this is frequently a source of confusion. Is banking secrecy - which has its legal source in professional secrecy and has been guaranteed in Luxembourg for many decades - necessarily linked to the problem of tax evasion? The first principle of banking secrecy, stripped of all pejorative connotations, defines the obligation of financial institutions not to give information about their clients to a third party. Above all, banking secrecy is an instrument protecting the personal savings privacy of individuals and, more generally, their private life.

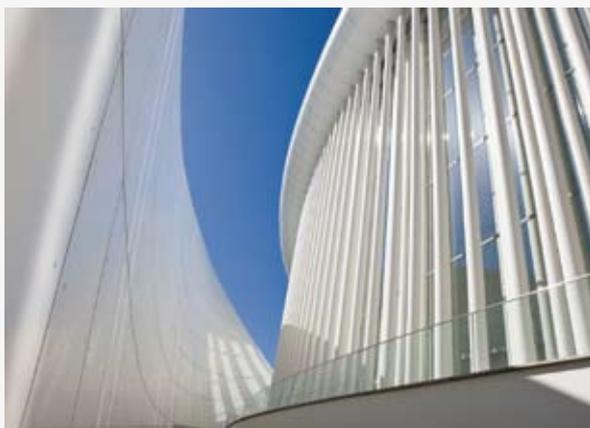
In order to refute a myth that has spread widely, it is necessary to state up front that banking secrecy ceases to protect the beneficiary where legal proceedings have been taken out against him. Thus, between 2006 and 2008 Luxembourg responded favourably to 1023 out of 1033 (that is, over 99%) demands for legal cooperation which were addressed to it by foreign legal authorities.

The European Savings Directive is a legal framework designed to ensure a standard minimum level of taxation of savings throughout Europe. While establishing



the exchange of information as a principle, the Directive provisionally authorises certain Member States, amongst which Luxembourg, to apply a withholding tax on interest income received by non-resident beneficiaries. Luxembourg has also established the rule that account holders can opt for the exchange of information.

A report recently published⁽¹⁾ by independent experts on the results of the application of the Savings Directive reveal that "Member State tax authorities appear to have found the exchange of information model difficult to apply and are facing long delays, inaccurate data and problems with pursuing the reports of interest income". The logical conclusion follows that "a withholding tax system seems to operate more efficiently". This point of view is shared by Luxembourg, all the more so that the application of a withholding tax permits it to combine efficient tax collection with legitimate protection of personal privacy.



But, over and above a debate on the comparative efficiency of the two systems, the opinion persists that Luxembourg does not participate wholeheartedly in the exchange of information. Is this a myth or reality?

According to official figures published by the Commission on 28 November 2008, Luxembourg, through the process of voluntary exchange of information, reported 4.2 billion euros of interest income in 2006 (the first full year of application of the Savings Directive). This represents some 35.4% of the total 11.8 billion euros reported by all 27 Member States. Far from being at the bottom of the class, Luxembourg takes first place in Europe in terms of the volume of interest payments reported, and this despite the existence of banking secrecy. Furthermore, Luxembourg paying agents withheld 166.1 million euros of withholding tax in 2006 (63% of the volume withheld by paying agents in Europe). At a

“

The application of a withholding tax permits it to combine efficient tax collection with legitimate protection of personal privacy.

conservative estimate, this indicates some 20 to 35 billion euros of capital.

On top of these amounts must be added those concerned by an exoneration certificate. The withholding tax mentioned above can indeed be avoided if the investor submits a certificate of exoneration issued by the tax authority of the State in which he is resident. By issuing a tax exoneration certificate, the tax authority in question declares that it is informed of the income received by the investor in Luxembourg, so that neither withholding tax, nor an exchange of information is necessary. Unfortunately, the characteristics of this procedure are such, that neither the European Commission nor the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg are in a position to make a credible estimate of the amounts concerned.

In the light of these statistics, and taking into consideration the absence of figures relative to the volumes covered by tax exoneration certificates, it is clear that Luxembourg is making a considerable effort both in the area of transparency and in the application of a withholding tax with regard to EU savings.

Rigorous prudential regulation

The Luxembourg financial sector benefits from rigorous regulation that is in conformity with both European and international legal standards and recommendations. Furthermore, the reputation and success enjoyed by Luxembourg funds, both within the European Union and worldwide, sufficiently demonstrates the quality of prudential regulation in this field.

Recent legal scandals in the financial area, far from contradicting this statement, illustrate quite the opposite. The huge fraud allegedly perpetrated by the American financier Madoff has been an opportunity for the Luxembourg regulatory authority, the *Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier* (CSSF), to draw people's attention to the fact that legal provisions govern-



ing Luxembourg depositary banks with regard to the custody of investment fund assets faithfully reflects European legislation in the area⁽²⁾. Hence, when the assets of an investment fund are deposited by the custodian bank at a third party institution (sub-custodian), the custodian retains responsibility for follow-up and supervision of the assets thus transferred. In consequence, it must at all times know how the assets of the investment fund are invested and from where and how they can be recovered. This responsibility with regard to the fund, and through the fund to its investors, is in no way attenuated by the fact that the custodian has entrusted all or part of the assets of the fund to a third party.

Equally, anti money laundering legislation is particularly strict in the Grand Duchy. In 1989, Luxembourg was one of the first EU Member States to implement the European Directive in this domain. Since then, the fight against money laundering has remained a priority for Luxembourg, which strives to remain irreproachable in this field.

Luxembourg, black hole in the international financial system: myth or reality? In our opinion, objective analysis leads unambiguously to the conclusion that the

Grand Duchy has nothing in common with a black hole that could imperil the international financial system, nor with a tax haven; on the contrary. For western public opinion informed by an impartial press, this analysis ought to take precedence over rumours and fortuitous juxtapositions. But perhaps here again it is a question of myth and reality? As far as we are concerned, people should not believe in myths in this area any more than they should in the area of international finance.

⁽¹⁾ "Challenges facing the EU Savings Tax", Graham Mather and Keith Boyfield, European Policy Forum, November 2008.

⁽²⁾ Council Directive 85/611/EEC on the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities (UCITS).

Luxembourg fully OECD compliant

In line with recent international developments, Luxembourg decided on 13 March 2009 to fully adopt the OECD Model Tax Convention.

Henceforward, Luxembourg will participate in the exchange of information with foreign tax authorities, upon request, in precise cases and on the basis of concrete suspicion of a tax offence.

However, it must be underlined that the OECD Model Tax Convention does not imply direct or systematic access to banking data by tax authorities.

Furthermore, since banking secrecy is not incompatible with OECD rules, Luxembourg will maintain banking secrecy as an instrument for the protection of privacy that is only lifted in cases of criminal offence.

Further to this decision, Luxembourg insists that the exchange of information, as defined by the OECD, be adopted as the sole standard within the European Union.



Georges BOCK Partner, Tax - KPMG Luxembourg

Georges Bock joined KPMG Audit in 1991 where he gained extensive experience in the fields of banking and financial instruments. In 1994 he joined the KPMG Tax Advisers team and he was nominated Partner of the firm in January 2000.

MODERNISATION OF THE SICAR REGIME

Created by the law of 15 June 2004 on the *société d'investissement en capital à risque* (the "SICAR Law"), the SICAR is a regulated investment vehicle, the exclusive object of which is to invest in risk capital and which is thus primarily intended for the venture capital and, more generally, the private equity industry.

Benefiting from a favourable tax regime and taking advantage of double tax treaties, the SICAR has had considerable success since its creation. 222 SICARs are now on the official list of the *Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier* (CSSF). Exclusively restricted to "well informed investors", this vehicle has a flexible legal and regulatory framework that combines the characteristics of a company and an undertaking for collective investment. Like undertakings for collective investment, the SICAR is subject to prudential supervision by the CSSF. The interests of investors are further protected by the compulsory audit of the annual accounts and the requirement to appoint a custodian bank.

Significant modifications to the SICAR law

Following the success of this vehicle, the Luxembourg legislator recently modernised the SICAR Law. The main changes introduced by the law of 24 October 2008 are the following:

A SICAR may now be created as an umbrella structure with multiple compartments. This innovation allows the management of independent pools of assets, following different investment policies, and ensures the ring fencing of the assets and liabilities of the respective pools. This segregation between compartments, in turn, guarantees protection of the interests of investors, who only bear the risk and the debt of the compartment in which they have invested. The assets and liabilities of the respective compartments are ring fenced by law, unless the constitutive documents of the SICAR provide otherwise.

Another important innovation is the possibility for a SICAR set up in the form of a limited partnership (*société en commandite simple*) to opt for a variable capital structure. Furthermore, if this structure is chosen and by derogation to the law on commercial companies, the identity of the limited partners, as well as their respective participations in and commitments towards the SICAR, do not need to be published and inscribed in the Register of Commerce and Companies in Luxembourg.

These changes give more flexibility to the use of a limited partnership and could be of particular interest to participants seeking a tax transparent investment vehicle.

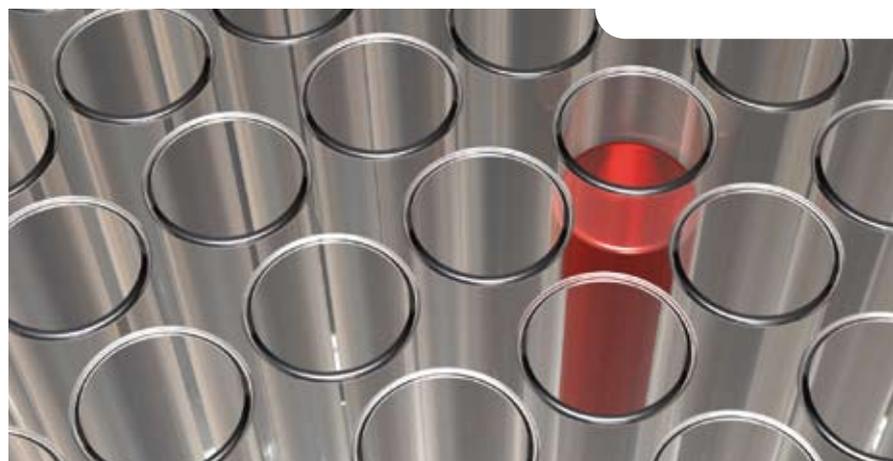
The requirement for investors to be informed at least once every six months about the net asset value has also been abolished. This and other amendments lighten the duties of the SICAR and its service providers and should entail a reduction of the administration costs of the structure. Furthermore, the derogation providing that the general partners of limited partnerships do not need to qualify as "well informed investors", should they wish to subscribe to shares in the SICAR, has been extended to the directors and all persons who operate the management of the SICAR regardless of its legal structure.

A further significant modification is that the premium paid on the issue of shares is now taken into account for the purpose of the calculation of the minimum capital of one million euros. Finally, it is now clarified that the assets of the SICAR must be valued on the basis of their fair value and not on their foreseeable sales price as determined in good faith.

While this vehicle had already proven popular in the private equity universe, these legislative changes make it even more attractive by offering new structuring opportunities and by allowing a cost reduction in the administration and management of the fund.



Olivia Moessner,
Lawyer - Elvinger,
Hoss & Prussen



BECOME AN EXPERT IN MICROFINANCE



Werner Eckes,
Director IFBL

In recent years, the microfinance sector has experienced almost exponential growth. A growing number of retail investors have discovered this sector, which offers the combination of attractive returns combined with a "social dividend" in that microfinance contributes actively to the fight against poverty in developing countries. With a view to contributing to the development and professionalism of this sector, the Luxembourg Institute for Training in Banking (IFBL) is now offering a specific microfinance training programme.

While classical commercial banks across the world are mired in the financial crisis, microfinance institutions continue business more or less as usual. The microfinance business model encourages a spirit of enterprise, creates risk diversification and eschews complex financial products. The repayment rate of microfinance loans, sometimes for sums as small as 40 or 50 euros, is well over 90%. It is therefore not surprising that more and more investors are joining public donors to finance microfinance institutions. According to Micro-rate, a rating agency that specialises in microfinance, assets invested in microfinance investment vehicles rose from 908 million dollars in 2004 to 3.9 billion dollars in 2007.

A distinct set of rules

The microfinance sector functions according to a distinct set of rules and neither financial intermediaries nor investors should evaluate microfinance institutions (MFIs) using the same methods that banks traditionally apply to emerging market investments.

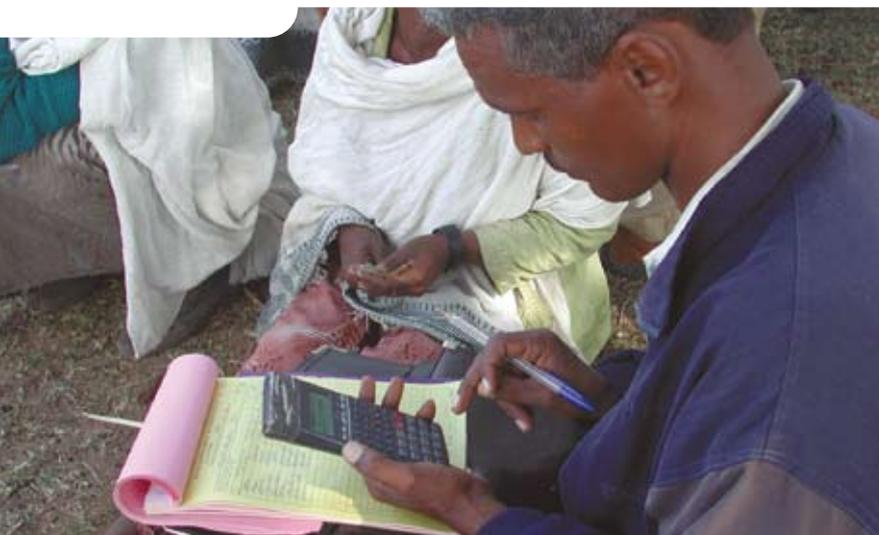
The first module *Initiation à la microfinance* will be held on 12 May 2009 in French. Companies can equally request a private course to be held at their premises, at the dates and in the language preferred.

To find out more see the following link:
www.ifbl.lu/ada022009.php

The training programme offered by the Luxembourg Institute for Training in Banking (IFBL) in collaboration with the NGO ADA (*Appui au Développement Autonome*), a non profit-making association active in microfinance since 1994, takes this into consideration. The programme targets financial sector professionals active in the microfinance field: fund managers, investment advisers, bank directors and employees, auditors, etc.

Following a general introduction to the subject, a series of modules focus on different areas such as valuation of the performance of an MFI (key indicators, analytical tools, ratings and case studies), the history and track record of microfinance investment vehicles, key stages in the process of creating an investment vehicle (from product development through to distribution), evaluation of the risks linked to the underlying microfinance investments, familiarisation with legal aspects specific to the creation of a microfinance investment vehicle and the advantages and disadvantages of various legal structures.

The course will initially be delivered in French but an English language option could be added on demand.



PUBLICATIONS

Download these brochures on our website www.lff.lu

Luxembourg, your privileged partner



This is a general introduction to the Luxembourg financial centre, covering all the major products and services available in the Grand Duchy. It is available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian.

Luxembourg Real Estate Investment Vehicles



The choice of a real estate vehicle will depend on the type of funding that needs to be raised, the proposed investor base, the type of investments to be made and any specific tax considerations. The Luxembourg legal framework is diverse and flexible enough to fulfill a wide range of investor needs. This brochure compares the different vehicles available.

Luxembourg Regulated Outsourcing



In Luxembourg, specialised service providers that deliver operational services to the financial industry are submitted to the supervision of the Luxembourg financial supervisory authority, the CSSF. By creating the statute of "Support PSF", the legislator has facilitated the outsourcing of non-core activities whilst ensuring the high quality of services provided and the respect for confidentiality required in the sector.

Luxembourg Captive Reinsurance Companies



The Luxembourg financial centre provides the ideal legal framework and administrative infrastructure for captive reinsurance solutions. This brochure explains the benefits of setting up a captive reinsurance company and why Luxembourg is Europe's most popular domicile for captives.

EVENTS

Luxembourg Financial Forum

Luxembourg, 29 May 2009

The fourth edition of the Luxembourg Financial Forum will be held by Luxembourg for Finance on 29 May. This annual event, which is held under the patronage of Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, will bring together a dozen high level international speakers. This year, the debate will focus on lessons that can be drawn from the financial crisis and in particular the reforms needed to ensure stability of the financial system and to reestablish investor confidence. A round table will also be held on the subject of the role of the state in the economy.

For further information, see our site: www.lff.lu

Islamic Finance Conference

Luxembourg, 5 & 6 May 2009

This conference is organised by the Institute for Training in Banking Luxembourg (IFBL), the Association of the Luxembourg Fund Industry (ALFI) and Luxembourg for Finance, in cooperation with the University of Reading, England, and with the support of the Minister in charge of the Luxembourg financial centre, Mr Luc Frieden. It brings together a prestigious group of experts from the Islamic Finance world, with the objective of providing a comprehensive overview of shariah compliant products and discussing practical issues with Luxembourg service providers active in this rapidly growing sector. See www.lff.lu to download a programme and an invitation.

Central Europe Road Show

18 to 20 May 2009

In May, Luxembourg for Finance will be holding a series of financial seminars in Vienna (18 May), Warsaw (19 May) and Prague (20 May). Each event will be followed by a walking lunch offering participants an opportunity to network. See www.lff.lu to download an invitation and a registration form.



Works of art from the Laure Tixier exhibition: Plaid Houses | Mudam, Luxembourg, until 20 April 2009 | © Photo: Andres Lejona

LIFESTYLE.....

Grimaud/Batiashvili/Mørk on 24 May

Hélène Grimaud (piano), Lisa Batiashvili (violin) and Truls Mørk (cello): one of the biggest chamber music event of the season. In the evening of 24 May, these three artists will perform two emblematic sonatas from Johannes Brahms (*Sonate für Violine und Klavier N° 2*) and Dmitri Chostakovitch (Sonata for cello and piano in D minor).

It is also the opportunity to discover their performance of the very passionate "Piano Trio N°1" by Robert Schumann.
24 May 2009 at 8 p.m. at the Grand Auditorium.
www.philharmonie.lu



4th ING Europe-marathon Luxembourg on 23 May



On Saturday 23 May at 6 p.m., 8000 runners will depart from the *centre sportif de la Coque* for the famous "Night Run", and Friday evening, a samba festival will animate the streets of the city. The perfect weekend to combine a cultural visit with a sporting experience.
www.ing-europe-marathon.lu

Festivals

Printemps musical

Jazz and world music festival in Luxembourg city. From 3 March to 3 June 2009. www.printempsmusical.lu

International Festival of Echternach

Classical music festival. From 7 May to 2 July 2009.
www.echternachfestival.lu

Patricia Kaas live concert on 29 April



An amazing show and an exciting tribute to the 1930's where Patricia Kaas mixes old and new hit singles like *Mademoiselle chante le blues* and *Mon mec à moi*. Event organised on the occasion of the 2009 Télévie.
www.coque.lu

Museums

Museum of Modern Art - Mudam

Laure Tixier: Plaid Houses, until 20 April 2009.
The space of words, Moving stills, Dominique Petitgand, until 25 May 2009. www.mudam.lu

National Museum of History and Art

"Between the Sacred and the Profane", masterpieces of Italian painting from the 17th century. Until 17 May 2009. www.mnha.lu

Impressum

Editor: Luxembourg for Finance - 7, rue Alcide de Gasperi BP 904 L-2019 Luxembourg - Tél. : + 352 27 20 21-1 - Fax : + 352 27 20 21-399.
Responsible for publication: Jean-Jacques Picard. Circulation: 20,000 – Quarterly – CO₂ neutral printing.