

# SOCIAL INVESTMENT INSIGHTS SERIES

March 2016

## Retail social investment across the world: International models that encourage the general public to make social investments

*Building mass participation within social investment can significantly impact communities and individuals. At Big Society Capital, we ultimately want to see millions of people contributing to social change through their own personal finance choices, and thousands of grassroots organisations being able to access the finance they need to support their local communities.*

*The UK has already seen some useful initiatives to engage retail investors, but it is still early stage in building broader mass participation in social investment in the UK. Therefore, we have looked to how other countries have encouraged individuals to support social or environmental causes through their saving or investment choices. Each model is different and has emerged in a unique context, from highly-localised specific investment opportunities to developing a comprehensive ecosystem of retail investment options. This paper highlights interesting features of each of these international models, to stimulate wider debate about how a democratised social investment market could be better supported and enabled in the UK.*



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The Social Investment Insights Series are occasional papers drafted by members of Big Society Capital's team on areas of interest to the social investment market.

Big Society Capital is a financial institution with a social mission, set up to build the social investment market in the UK, so that charities and social enterprises can access appropriate repayable finance to enable them to grow, become more sustainable and increase their impact on society. It is doing this by building a diverse social investment market: encouraging investors to lend or invest money to achieve a social as well as a financial return. Since it was set up as an independent organisation in 2012, Big Society Capital has signed more than £260 million in investments to specialist organisations who lend to charities and social enterprises. Over five years Big Society Capital will be capitalised with approximately £600 million, from a combination of English dormant bank accounts and the four main UK high street banks.



## INTRODUCTION

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Social Investment is one tool to enable charities and social enterprises that are achieving significant impact in our communities to do more with the most vulnerable people in society. Currently, in the UK a large proportion of social investment is being made by institutional investors – pension funds, foundations, large charities and other financial institutions – as well as High Net Worth individuals. This is due, in part, to how the social investment market has evolved over time, with a large proportion of investment happening through intermediated channels, often via fund structures. In this way, the shape of the market has to an extent reflected the shape of the capital available.

At Big Society Capital, one of our goals is to drive mass participation within the social investment market. We ultimately want to see millions of people contributing to social change through their own personal finance choices, and thousands of grassroots organisations being able to access the finance they need to support their local communities ([Big Society Capital Strategy 2014-2017](#)). The benefits of building a more inclusive social investment market are outlined in Triodos Bank's report for the Social Impact Investment Taskforce, 'Impact investing for everyone'<sup>1</sup>. These include supporting greater diversity in the market and increasing peoples' familiarity with the balance between risk, social and financial return.

Building on this, members of the general public have the potential to provide longer term, 'patient' capital to charities and social enterprises, which is exactly the type of capital they are struggling to access through existing channels<sup>2</sup>. There are also good reasons why many charities and social enterprises might prefer to look for investment from members of the public, such as the ability to build stronger connections with members of the community, or to raise the profile of their mission with the broader public.

Though currently on a relatively small scale, members of the public are beginning to engage in social saving and investment, and this movement is growing. According to Ethex<sup>3</sup>, 55,000 people now have social savings accounts with one of the UK's social banks. The fastest growth area is in direct investment – with the most significant growth coming from community shares, potentially the most accessible form of direct investment, where 75 new offers raised £36 million in 2015, growth of 29% between 2014 and 2015<sup>4</sup>. Crowdfunding platforms also show significant promise in connecting individuals to social and environmental issues they care about, though the current profile of those that donate or invest through these platforms indicates that they are not yet being widely used by 'ordinary' members of the public.<sup>5</sup>

Given the early stage of building mass participation in the UK, we have looked to how other countries have encouraged individuals to support social or environmental causes through their saving or investment choices. Each model is different and has emerged in a unique context. This paper highlights interesting features of each model to stimulate wider debate about how a democratised social investment market could be better supported and enabled in the UK.

<sup>1</sup> Triodos Bank, 'Impact investing for everyone. A blueprint for retail impact investing', Report produced for the Social Impact Investment Taskforce, established by the G8, September 2014

<sup>2</sup> In Demand: The changing need for repayable finance in the charity sector, CAF (2014)

<sup>3</sup> The Ethex Positive Investing Report 2015

<sup>4</sup> The Ethex Positive Investing Report 2015

<sup>5</sup> Understanding Alternative Finance, The UK Alternative Finance Industry Report, Nesta and University of Cambridge, 2014

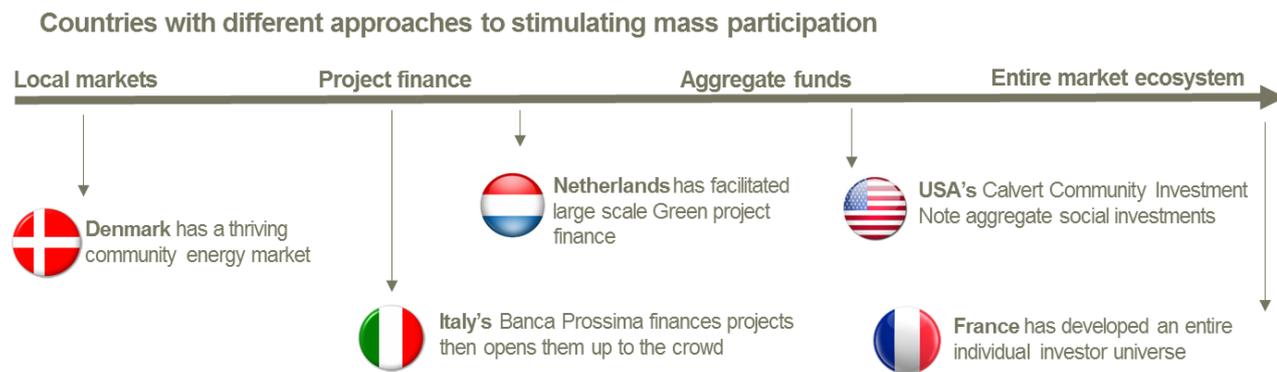


## OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL MODELS OF MASS PARTICIPATION

There is not one model of mass participation in social investment, but a range of examples and approaches that have engaged members of the public in different ways. This paper has picked a range of initiatives to examine, which reflect the diversity of models and the different social, economic and regulatory contexts that have shaped the retail savings and investment markets in different countries. Note, there may be other models we have not included, which we would be keen to learn about.

The spectrum below indicatively maps these initiatives to demonstrate the range of approaches and their breadth. At one end, we see models that allow people to invest directly in specific projects, often within their local areas, with community ownership of wind turbines in Denmark as an example. At the other end of the spectrum, we see models where people can invest indirectly into charities, social enterprises and not-for-profits organisations, through multiple channels or products, including fixed-income notes or their employer savings schemes. For brevity, we have focused on highlighting the key features that define these models, to enable comparison. More comprehensive detail on each can be found in the referenced source material.

Figure 1: Highlighted examples of retail social investment internationally



### Overview

The five models below represent the breadth of initiatives:

- 1. Denmark: Civic participation in project-based community energy initiatives**
- 2. Italy: Offering local social investment opportunities through a crowdfunding platform**
- 3. The Netherlands: Engaging individual investors through tax-incentivised project finance**
- 4. United States: Indirect investment into underserved communities through the Calvert Foundation Community Investment Note**
- 5. France: Building an ecosystem for retail social investment within the Solidarity Finance movement**



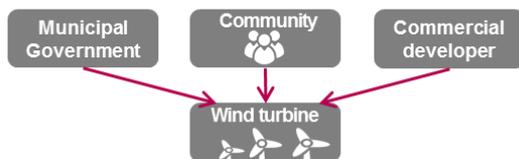
## 1. Denmark: Civic participation in project-based community energy initiatives

Denmark has a long history of communities coming together to invest in renewable energy schemes and continues to support investment from ordinary people through regulation. Communities have participated in the ownership of wind turbines since the 1970s resulting in high levels of local ownership. While the national government is responsible for most energy policy, municipal councils are responsible for local environmental issues which has helped support 'grass roots' engagement.

### Retail investment model

#### Joint venture:

Early stage partnership of ownership and management



#### Split ownership:

Citizen participation after construction of turbine through issuing shares to local people



There are multiple ownership structures for community energy infrastructure in Denmark. The majority of wind turbines are wholly owned or jointly owned by local people, communities, landowners and farmers and, according to Government statistics, 150,000 households in Denmark owned or held shares in wind farm projects as far back as 2001<sup>6</sup>. Many projects involve developers partnering with municipal governments to get projects past the difficult pre-feasibility stage, before going on to raise finance from local people.

For community groups taking on loans to manage pre-feasibility work themselves, a government fund provides a guarantee of up to DKK 500,000 (about £50,000) per project that will be paid if a project doesn't go ahead and the loan cannot be repaid<sup>7</sup>.

This increases the likelihood of successful projects getting off the ground and going on to raise investment from local people in partnership with commercial developers or municipalities. Since 2009, community ownership of wind turbines has been mandated by the Promotion of Renewable Energy Act that requires that any citizen aged 18 or above living within 4.5km of a new turbine be given the option to invest in it directly. Shares to the value of 20% of the total cost of the project must be offered to local people but many developers offer closer to 50-60% to the community. Developers must announce projects in local papers<sup>8</sup>. The trading cooperative Vindenergi Danmark, which sells the electricity generated by its member projects, has made smaller community installations more financially viable and strengthened investor confidence in returns. In 2013, the cooperative sold 2,500 MW of electricity, representing 50% of the entire renewable energy market.

### Key statistics<sup>9</sup>

**Number of individuals that own or hold shares in renewable energy projects:** 150,000 households (2001)

**Number of wind co-operatives:** Over 1,000 in total.

**Average price of a community energy share:** £370 (3500 DKK)

**Average return on community energy shares:** Varies by project, estimated average annual return 9 to 11% (European Wind Energy Association)

**Total number of investors:** Not available

### Looking ahead

Ensuring that local people are able to invest in renewable infrastructure has enabled municipal governments to meet their renewable energy targets and has increased the acceptance of infrastructure such as large in-shore wind turbines. The Danish Energy Agency has noted that there are significantly higher levels of community acceptance of turbines that are citizen-owned, compared to those that are wholly owned by commercial developers.

<sup>6</sup> Community Energy Strategy: Full Report, DECC, 2014

<sup>7</sup> <http://energytransition.de/2015/03/danish-civic-participation-energiwende-lessons-for-germany/>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.ens.dk/en/supply/renewable-energy/wind-power/onshore-wind-power#local\\_citizens](http://www.ens.dk/en/supply/renewable-energy/wind-power/onshore-wind-power#local_citizens)

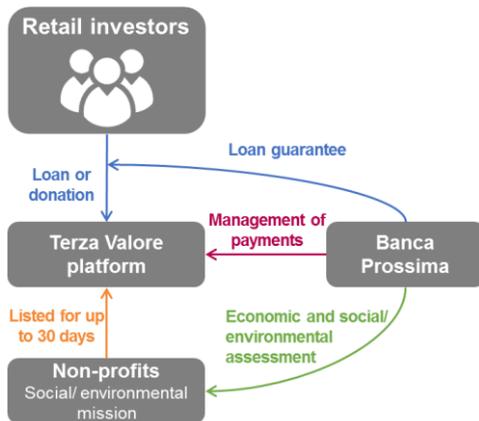
<sup>9</sup> Danish Energy Agency 2011 see, [http://www.ens.dk/sites/ens.dk/files/undergrund-forsyning/vedvarende-energi/vindkraft-vindmoeller/vindmoeller-paa-land/notat\\_evaluerings\\_af\\_koeberetsordningen\\_i\\_ve-loven.pdf](http://www.ens.dk/sites/ens.dk/files/undergrund-forsyning/vedvarende-energi/vindkraft-vindmoeller/vindmoeller-paa-land/notat_evaluerings_af_koeberetsordningen_i_ve-loven.pdf)



## 2. Italy: Offering local social investment opportunities through a crowdfunding platform

In 2010, Banca Prossima, the social bank subsidiary of Gruppo Intesa Sanpaolo, launched a crowdfunding platform, Terza Valore ('Third Value'), to increase the flow of capital to not-for-profit community organisations struggling to access finance through mainstream channels. The platform taps into strong communities of interest around specific social and environmental issues within local areas and galvanises this interest into active support for causes. At its launch, the platform provided the first opportunity in Italy for the general public to lend money to social projects with the guarantee that they would not lose money on their investment.

### Retail investment model



Banca Prossima assesses the financial viability and impact of socially and environmentally impactful projects looking for finance to scale up their activities. The bank uses an innovative evaluation model that takes into account financial sustainability as well as the ability to address local social needs. Based on this assessment, Banca Prossima commits to provide up to 100% of the loan a project requires. Projects can then, over subsequent weeks, reduce the amount borrowed from the bank by raising investment from the general public through the crowdfunding platform Terza Valore. Projects are listed to view for 15 days and opened for investment for a further 30 days.

There are two ways that people can provide finance to projects through the crowdfunding platform:

- A **good rate loan**: an individual and a project can agree the terms including the interest rate (often significantly lower than the commercial rate, typically 1%). Banca Prossima provides the first 33% of the loan needed by a project, to a maximum of 100%, depending on the participation of the crowd. If required, the bank can guarantee 100% of the crowdfunded loan. This guarantee mechanism provides confidence to investors and certainty to projects.
- A **traditional donation**: this reduces the amount projects have to borrow.

### Key statistics<sup>10</sup>

**Current investors:** 1,274 investors and 171 donors

**Number of projects funded:** 70 completed

**Total social lending:** €5,974,000

**Minimum investment amount:** €500. Max €50,000 per investor.

**Main issue areas of projects on platform:** Health and social care (55%). Non-profit organisations can submit up to 3 projects per year.

**Main type of investment provided by individuals:** Loan; (in 60% of cases, with 10 year maturity)

**Average funding sought by project:** €200,000

### Looking ahead

This model demonstrates the potential opportunity for individuals to finance social projects in partnership with others – not just the rest of the crowd, but potentially financial institutions. The timing of investment by different groups is also critical, with institutions providing additional confidence to individual investors by committing their capital first, or by providing guarantees. The growing number of crowdfunding platforms in the UK could consider such models in future. Big Society Capital is looking for ways to support more models of social investment through crowdfunding, and in 2015 launched a Crowdfunding Match competition to support platforms raising SITR eligible social investments.

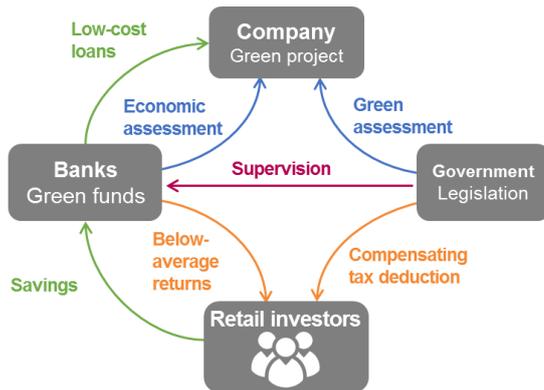
<sup>10</sup> Banca Prossima. Date correct to end 2015.



### 3. The Netherlands: Engaging individual investors through tax- incentivised project finance

The Green Funds Scheme is a tax incentive scheme launched in 1995 by the Dutch government to support innovative green initiatives and to build engagement with environmental issues amongst the financial services sector and the public. The scheme has the dual benefit of providing a relatively secure and close to market rate investment for individual investors, whilst bringing down the cost of finance for projects that create positive environmental impact.

#### Retail investment model



The scheme comprises a number of component parts<sup>11</sup>. In summary, it channels affordable capital to early stage environmental projects (typically supporting innovative technologies). This includes large scale projects such as sustainable infrastructure. These projects approach designated ‘green banks’ for finance. Based on their assessment of impact and potential sustainability, banks apply for viable projects to receive ‘green’ certification from the government. Retail savers and investors can then provide capital to designated ‘green banks’ through a range of structured ‘green’ products. Banks must use at least 70% of individuals’ ‘green’ investments to provide loans to certified projects.

For individuals, there are three ways to invest through the scheme. Firstly, through green savings products; secondly, through low-risk investments including fixed value and interest rate bonds, or thirdly, through shares in a ‘green’ investment fund. They can also invest directly into ‘green’ projects based in their local communities. The government worked closely with the Dutch Bankers Association to stimulate the financial sector to develop a range of products that would allow individuals to use their savings or investment to support the environment. Other examples of retail products include ‘green’ mortgages, where buyers of sustainably built homes can negotiate a mortgage at a rate typically 1 to 2% lower than the market rate. A core part of the scheme is the tax incentive that individual investors receive (see below) and this has been critical in stimulating demand. Banks are able to offer individuals a return on their investment below market rate (as this difference is offset by the tax break), which allows them to reduce the cost of capital for ‘green projects’ (typically 1% below market rates.)

#### Key statistics<sup>13</sup>

**Investors:** More than 250,000 investors since launch. 1 in 7 investors buys green bonds or shares in green funds.  
**No. of projects:** Circa 7,400 projects have received finance.<sup>12</sup>  
**Average individual investment size:** €30,000  
**Average interest rate received on ‘green’ products:** 1.4% to 2.25% below that offered by government securities

**Tax incentive structure:** Capital gains tax rate is normally 1.2% of the amount invested. This tax is waived on dividends and interest received from green investments, up to €55,000 per individual. Income from green investments is also taxed at a reduced rate – currently around 0.7%. This provides a combined tax benefit to retail investors of around 2%  
**Cost of tax incentive to government:** Approx. £150 million since the scheme was launched in 1995

#### Looking ahead

This model demonstrates a co-ordinated approach from government - offering a tax incentive to retail investors created sufficient demand for banks and financial institutions to participate in the scheme and design a range of products to meet this demand. Despite recent cuts to the benefit, the tax advantage is still sufficient to attract new investors. The Netherlands approach also demonstrates the potential for ordinary people to invest indirectly into larger-scale projects including infrastructure, which could help us re-think community ownership of assets in the longer term.

<sup>11</sup> Diagram based on that found in report The Green Funds Scheme A success, NL Agency, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, 2010

<sup>12</sup> Good practice factsheet: Green fund scheme Netherlands, Concerted Action Energy Efficient Directive, May 2013

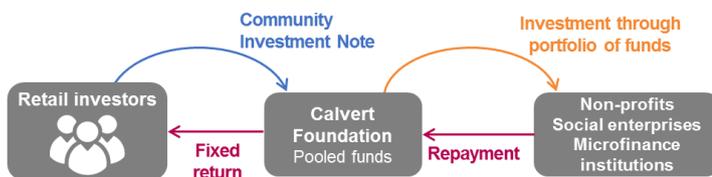
<sup>13</sup> The Green Funds Scheme A success, NL Agency, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, 2010



## 4. Indirect investment into underserved communities through the Calvert Community Foundation Investment Note in the United States

The Community Investment Note (CI Note), launched by the Calvert Foundation in 1995, is one of the earliest examples of a retail investment product that connects ordinary investors to local and global social and environmental issues. The note was launched in response to the lack of opportunities for retail investors to create social impact with their money in the United States, and the Foundation remains focused on making social investment accessible to ordinary people through multiple channels.

### Retail investment model



The CI Note is a registered fixed income security available to non-accredited investors in the US. The note is now available through three channels – online at the Foundation’s own platform Vested.org; purchased directly from the Foundation through an agent; or through a brokering agent. Funds from individuals’ note

investments are pooled into multiple funds managed by Calvert Foundation that invest in non-profits, social enterprises and micro-finance institutions in the United States and internationally, addressing entrenched social problems.

People cannot use the CI Note to invest directly into a specific project or organisation. However, the use of themed funds targeted at specific social issues or geographical areas allows people to support issues that resonate with them. For example, people can invest through a CI Note in the Age Strong fund that invests in organisations providing community care for vulnerable older people. This fund resonates particularly with aging ‘Baby Boomers’. People can also chose to invest in their local areas through the ‘Ours to Own’ initiative that pools CI Notes bought by investors within a specific city to provide loans to local organisations creating local social impact. Individuals can also purchase the Note in self-directed Individual Retirement Accounts.

The online platform has had a significant impact on the accessibility of the CI Note – it allows people to invest as little as \$20 USD, due to reduced transaction costs. It also allows Calvert Foundation to connect people investing into themed funds with the positive impact they are supporting. Almost a quarter of new investors came through the online platform in 2014, investing on average \$500 USD. The strategy of focusing on advisors with large networks has also proved to be a cost-effective way of expanding reach<sup>14</sup>. A strong understanding of the need to access people across multiple channels has enabled the Foundation to reach more than 13,500 ordinary investors to date.

### Key statistics<sup>15</sup>

**Current (total) number of investors:** 4,500 (15,000)

**Current (total) note balance:** \$250 million (>\$1 billion)

**Minimum Investment Requirement:** \$20 or \$1,000

**Rates:** 0% to 4%, corresponding to the term of the Note

**Term/Maturity:** 1 to 20 years

**Status:** Senior Unsecured Debt

**Investor repayment rate:** 100%, to date

### Looking ahead

Calvert Foundation is developing strategies to appeal to different types of retail investors in the future. For example, it is exploring ways to engage millennials through partnerships with colleges, universities and social media platforms. It is also developing opportunities to enable diaspora communities and individuals to invest in their countries of origin<sup>16</sup> - potentially through the investment note product.

<sup>14</sup> Lisa Hall, President and CEO, Calvert Foundation. Quote taken from an interview published by the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), that can be found here: <https://thegiin.org/knowledge/spotlight/investor-spotlight-calvert-foundation>

<sup>15</sup> Calvert Foundation CI Note Fact Sheet, see <http://www.calvertfoundation.org/storage/documents/CI-Note-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

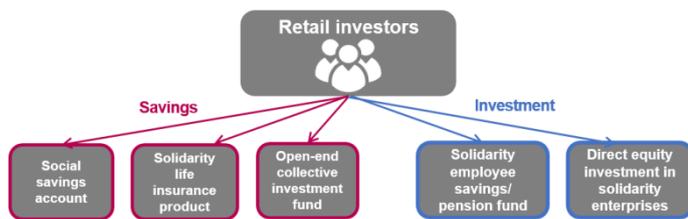
<sup>16</sup> <http://www.africancapitalmarketsnews.com/1922/calvert-foundation-says-all-investors-set-to-include-impact-investments-in-portfolios/#sthash.ng22OvTp.dpuf>



## 5. Building an ecosystem for retail social investment within the Solidarity Finance movement in France

France has a long standing culture of individuals coming together to support social and environmental projects. The concept of Solidarity Finance emerged in the early 1980s, of which the developing social investment ecosystem is one part. This ecosystem includes the opportunity for both direct and indirect investment through multiple channels and products into solidarity organisations<sup>17</sup>. By 2014, more than 1 million individuals were actively involved in the broader solidarity finance movement (compared to 40,000 to 50,000 a decade before<sup>18</sup>.) France potentially offers the broadest suite of opportunities for retail social investors. This has been supported by high levels of government involvement and the efforts of bodies such as Finansol, the association of solidarity finance organisations that includes banks, financial institutions, social enterprises and investment funds.

### Retail investment model



There are broadly three ways individuals can engage with social investment in France – through direct investment into solidarity organisations, through a growing number of solidarity bank savings products; or through a corporate solidarity employee savings fund. In these employee savings funds, 90% to 95% is invested in SRI (Socially

Responsible Investing) screened listed securities and the remaining 5% to 10% in unlisted solidarity organisations. With over a million investors to date, it is solidarity pensions that are bringing retail social investment into the mainstream. Regulation that extended the requirement for corporates to offer these funds as an option to all employee saving schemes has increased total assets under management in these funds from €478m in 2008 to €3.7 billion in 2013<sup>19</sup>. Individuals can also save through one of a small number of Finansol approved solidarity insurance products. Finansol has played a key role in making social savings and investment products more accessible to the public – probably most significantly through advocating tax breaks for investors (see Appendix 1) and its accreditation label. The Finansol label is used to certify solidarity financing vehicles, playing a key role in guiding ‘unsophisticated’ ordinary investors.

### Key statistics<sup>20</sup>

	All individuals saving/ investing in solidarity finance	Direct investors into solidarity organisations*	Solidarity bank savers	Solidarity employee savings funds
<b>Distribution</b>	N/A	Social Enterprises	Banks, Mutuels	Banks, employee savings schemes, assets managers
<b>Total invested</b>	€6.5 billion	€0.474 billion	€1.1 billion	€5.0 billion
<b>Average saved/ invested (€)</b>	€4,306 52% invested > €1000	€3,449 51% invested < €1000	€11,510 52% saving at least €3000	€3,485 54% have invested > €1,000
<b>Age of individuals saving/ investing</b>	Distributed across ages. Average 45 years	Distributed across ages. Average 49 years	Skewed older profile. Average 52 years.	Slightly younger profile. Average 44 years.

### Looking ahead

There has been much discussion around replicating the French ‘90/10’ solidarity pension model internationally. Amongst others challenges, deal flow for the 10% social investment portion of a fund has been highlighted as a key consideration for replicating this model<sup>21</sup>. In 2015, Big Society Capital published the first in a series of papers (found [here](#)) that discusses how such a fund might be structured in the UK. A significant opportunity to reach more retail investors in France is solidarity life insurance products. Life insurance products represent 37%

<sup>17</sup> Solidarity organisations are defined as organisations whose activities have strong social and/or environmental benefit, that are not offshore entities, and who reinvest the majority of profits back into the organisation

<sup>18</sup> Finansol, 2014

<sup>19</sup> Finansol, see [http://www.finansol.org/\\_dwl/etude-epargnants-solidaires.pdf](http://www.finansol.org/_dwl/etude-epargnants-solidaires.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Data adapted from Finansol, see report ‘Les Epargnants Solidaires’, Finansol. Based on quantitative analysis conducted in 2012. Total invested across products/ channels is 2014 data from Finansol, see [http://www.finansol.org/\\_dwl/social-finance.pdf](http://www.finansol.org/_dwl/social-finance.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Bringing mass retail to impact investing The French 90/10 solidarity investment funds, 2015



of total household financial wealth<sup>22</sup>, yet solidarity life insurance products account for just 2.1% of total solidarity finance assets. Finansol are calling for all life insurance companies to offer a one solidarity product in the future.

## LESSONS FOR UK RETAIL SOCIAL INVESTMENT

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What can be seen from the range of approaches above is that there is no one clear roadmap for encouraging more ordinary individuals to get involved in social investment. This is perhaps unsurprising given the diverse national contexts in which these approaches are emerging. In the context of the current UK landscape for retail social investment, it is however worth highlighting a number of insights that have emerged from this overview.

### **‘Intermediaries’ are still needed to connect individuals to suitable investment opportunities**

Whilst there is evidence of latent demand for people to save and invest their money more socially<sup>23</sup>, a number of the case studies demonstrate the role that banks and other financial intermediaries have played in making these opportunities available through the development of products, often in partnership with government. In The Netherlands, the Ministry of Environment engaged early with the finance sector and close partnerships with the Dutch Bankers Association have led to the development of multiple ‘green’ retail products, including Green Funds. At Big Society Capital, we are exploring ways of supporting financial institutions to develop more savings and investment products (beyond social savings accounts and social ISAs) that are available to ordinary people. A key part of the challenge is demonstrating demand from individuals to save and invest their money more responsibly – though there is a growing body of evidence to support this.

### **Shared ownership is a way to increase individual participation**

A number of the models explored here demonstrate the effectiveness of ordinary people co-investing in partnership with others – including governments, financial institutions or even commercial investors. Both Banca Prossima’s ‘Terzo Valore’, and many examples of community energy schemes across Europe that offer a portion of ownership to local people, reflect this. There is also the question of timing – partnership co-investment models that allow ordinary people to come in with their money after the commitment of financial institutions or commercial investors can provide a level of comfort to investors.

### **Project finance can be an important way of reaching individuals**

The highly intermediated nature of social investment through fund structures often excludes them from the majority of individual investors outside High Net Worth individuals. The success of project financing models, such as the thriving community energy markets in Europe and the growing appeal of community shares to date in the UK<sup>24</sup>, suggest that project-based social investment holds the potential to reach retail investors at a greater scale. Project-based investment opportunities, such as social housing, or potentially other community infrastructure, could be more appealing to the public as they are often locally based, and it can be easier to see the tangible impact that an individual investment can support.

### **Leverage existing networks and allow individuals to engage through familiar channels**

The success of models such as the provision of local social investment opportunities to the crowd by Banca Prossima demonstrates the effectiveness of tapping into existing networks of individuals supporting specific social issues. Here, Banca Prossima leveraged strong networks in local parishes around local issues – such as employment, and the provision of education opportunities. It also provides a simple platform to convert this interest to investment opportunities. Calvert Foundation has also succeeded in making it easy for individuals to identify and engage with investment opportunities that resonate with them through the Vested.org platform.

### **Independent accreditation can provide reassurance to retail investors**

As highlighted in the G8 Social Investment Taskforce report in 2014<sup>25</sup>, the importance of an independent label

<sup>22</sup> Banque De France, 2015. See [https://www.banque-france.fr/uploads/tx\\_bdfgrandesdates/Focus\\_14\\_GB\\_03.pdf](https://www.banque-france.fr/uploads/tx_bdfgrandesdates/Focus_14_GB_03.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> The Ethex Positive Investing Report 2015

<sup>24</sup> Inside the Market Report June 2015 - Community Shares

<sup>25</sup> Impact Investment, The Invisible Heart of Markets, report of the Social Impact Investment Taskforce, September 2014



(ideally backed by government) continues to be borne out for retail investors in France, and could serve to increase investor confidence in social investment in other markets, including the UK. A label could improve the confidence of investors across the sector, but is likely to be particularly helpful as a trusted ‘short cut’ for ordinary people navigating unfamiliar social investment products and channels. A label could apply to a social investment product, a fund, a fund manager or even an investor itself, and therefore such a decision should consider the broader impact.



## CONTACT US

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This report has been prepared on the basis of analysis of publicly available information and a series of expert interviews. It is not a comprehensive collection of all international models of retail social investment, and presents the latest publically available data on these models.

As such, we are very keen to hear about other models enabling ordinary people to get involved in social investment, either in the UK or internationally, or of any more recent data on the performance of these models. We are also keen to partner with others who are also looking at ways of supporting retail social investment, and we would welcome people to get in touch with us to provide further information on existing retail social investment models or suggestions for how we can work together:

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**The information and opinions in this report were prepared by Camilla Parke, Strategy and Market Development Associate, and Simon Rowell, Senior Strategy and Market Development Director, on behalf of Big Society Capital.**

### Titles available in the Social Investment Insights Series

- Growing Social Enterprise Through the Holding Company Model: Groupe SOS (June 2014)
- Social Impact Bonds: Lessons Learned (June 2014)
- Growing the Market for Charity Bonds (July 2014)
- Housing and Social Investment (August 2014)
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- Long-Term Unemployment and Social Investment (December 2014)
- The Criminal Justice System, Those It Affects and Social Investment (January 2015)
- Social Investment in Education (February 2015)
- Communities and Social Investment (March 2015)
- Social Investment for Families, Friends and Relationships (March 2015)
- Arts, Heritage and Sports and Social Investment (April 2015)
- Conservation of the Natural Environment and Social Investment (April 2015)
- What next? Future Opportunities for Social Investment (May 2015)

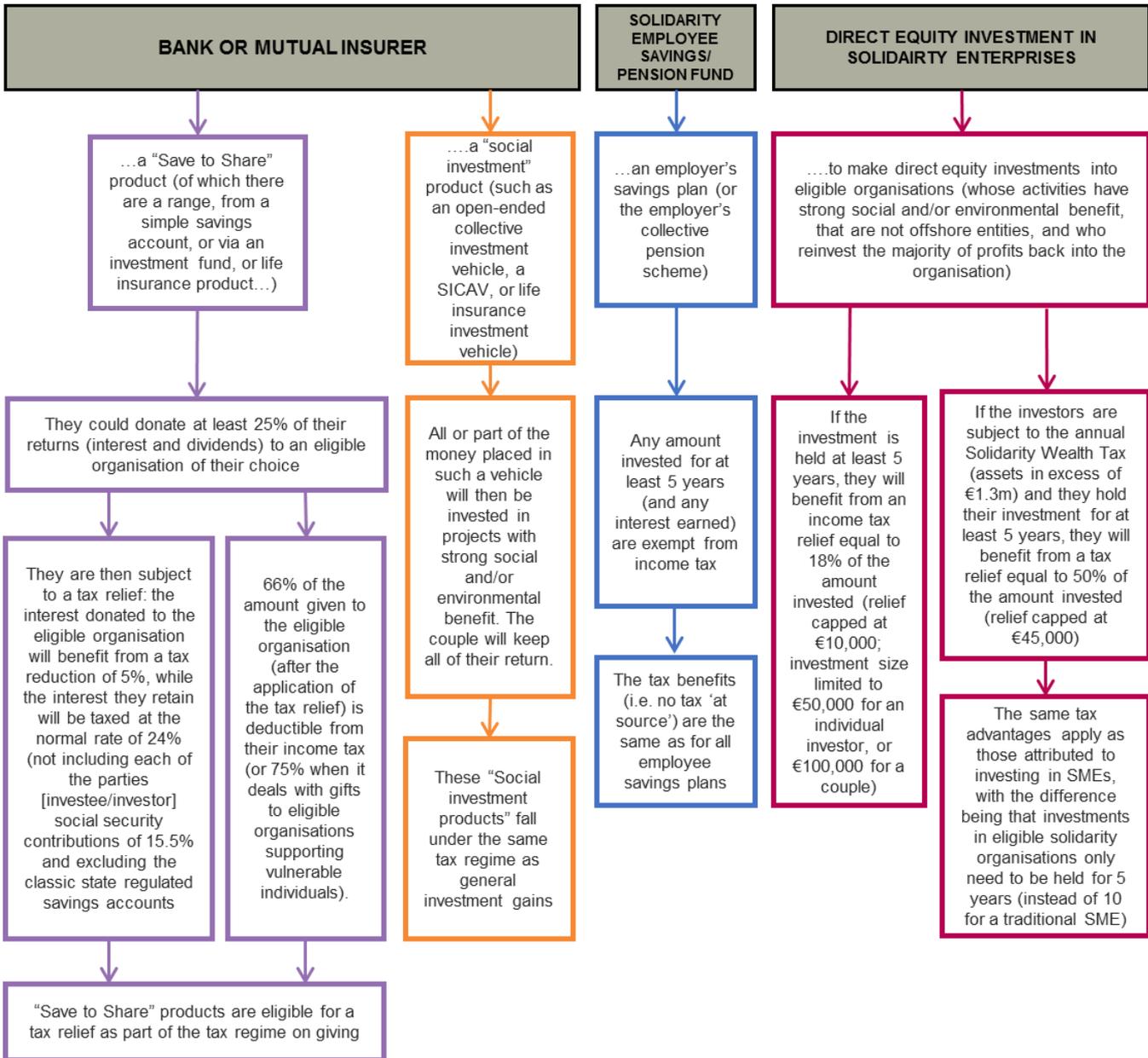


## Appendix

### An example of the options open to retail investors and the associated tax breaks

Translated from a case study developed by Finansol, available at <http://www.finansol.org/quelle-fiscalite-pour-quel-type-de-produit/>

A couple have some savings they would like to make a return on, at the same time as supporting causes they care about, such as vulnerable individuals gaining access to employment and housing, or environmentally beneficial activities. They have a range of options to do this...





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