



NEWS

GRANTEES & PROJECTS

CONTACT

[Grantee Networks committed to supporting USSPM promotion and implementation](#)

[SPM Meeting – sharing successes and discuss challenges](#)

[More grantee networks publish their SP country reports](#)

[Introducing our grantee: Association of Microfinance Institutions in Rwanda \(AMIR\)](#)

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NEWS

Grantee Networks committed to supporting USSPM promotion and implementation

The Majority of current SP Start-up Fund Grantee Networks have expressed their commitment to support the SPTF's efforts to roll-out the Universal Standards for Social Performance Management (USSPM). If your network is interested in integrating themes around the USSPM into your on-going communication activities in the new year, join us for the SPTF 2013 Global Awareness-Raising Campaign. For more information, please contact us at 2013usspm@mfc.org.pl.

GRANTEES & PROJECTS

SPM Meeting – sharing successes and discussing challenges

In late November, the SP Start-up Fund for Networks collaborated with Cerise to deliver an SPM training event in Tunis (Tunisia) for 7 networks from Francophone Africa and Haiti. Eleven participants, including representatives of 7 Francophone African networks (Cameroon, Congo, Burundi, Togo, Niger, and Burkina Faso) and Haiti took part in this five-day event.

The workshop was divided into two parts. The first part, a study tour to ENDA, demonstrated how SPM works in an MFI. According to participants, the study tour was the most useful element of the SPM workshop. Given its focus on experience and results, it helped to clarify the concept of SPM. They also appreciated practical and concrete examples of how SPM works in practice, including sharing practical managerial tools in use. Finally, they commented on the willingness of ENDA to discuss their SPM difficulties and challenges.



assessment tools for SPM.

The second part of the workshop was dedicated to building capacity of network staff in SPM concepts, tools, social performance-related developments, in the form of TOT (training of trainers). Participants also had an opportunity to share and discuss their plans for promoting SPM in their respective countries. The sessions which were considered most useful included the discussion on the Universal Standards, tools to support MFIs in clarifying their missions and developing social goals and objectives, as well as insights into available

All the training materials will be available in French in January 2013 from the SP Start-up Fund webpage.

More grantee networks publish their SP country reports

Following in the example of Sharakeh (Palestine), RMC/NAMMS (Russia), UCORA (Armenia), CDF (Bangladesh) and AMIR (Rwanda) have recently published country-level social performance reports. Released at the final workshops of the grantee networks, they will be available soon on their websites.

The reports provide a summary of common social performance strengths and weaknesses of MFIs in network's respective countries. Networks also used the reports to develop their strategies and activities to be undertaken over upcoming years to mainstream SPM in their countries, building on lessons learnt and achievements of their SP Start-up projects. For more information, follow the news on the SP Start-up Fund [website](#).

Introducing our grantee: Association of Microfinance Institutions in Rwanda (AMIR)



Association of Microfinance
Institutions in Rwanda

Established in 2007, AMIR is a national network of 61 licensed MFIs (out of 66 nationally), 48 Savings and Credit cooperatives (of varying sizes), and 1 NGO delivering microfinance services. AMIR's mission focuses on providing diversified services to microfinance institutions in order to enable them to work professionally and effectively contribute to poverty reduction in a sustainable way. AMIR's objectives are to:

- Improve the access of MFIs to training facilities and other forms of institutional and financial supports
- Support the promotion of the microfinance sector in Rwanda
- Promote the exchange of information and experience between MFIs and its partners at national and international level
- Advocate and represent microfinance institutions interests in various forums
- Facilitate the set up of an auto regulation system

As an apex body, AMIR is committed to carrying out its mandate based on the following interrelated core values in the provision of all of its services: professionalism, accountability and transparency, integrity and unity of AMIR members.

Why SPM?

AMIR became involved in SPM due to its potential to improve members' operations to properly address clients' needs and expectations. AMIR believes that working providing its members with SPM capacity building and other support (advocacy and transparency) will help MFIs in improving services and products for clients, thereby improving performance at MFI and industry level. SPM will also help MFIs to treat clients responsibly, a necessary measure to avoid the mission drift and over-indebtedness caused by growing competition in the Rwandan microfinance sector.

Seizing the opportunity of the SP Start-up Fund, AMIR decided to focus on building local SPM capacity, including helping MFIs to track social performance indicators and raising SPM awareness within the Rwandan microfinance sector.

Project achievements in brief

Within AMIR's 12-month SP Start-up Fund project, they achieved the following:

- At the Autumn 2011 kick-off workshop in the Philippines, three people from Rwanda (including AMIR staff) were trained as SPM trainers.
- A social performance awareness-raising workshop was held in early 2012 for AMIR members and other key stakeholders: investors, regulators.
- Where needed AMIR held individual meetings with member MFIs to help them set or align measurable social objectives.

- A social performance reporting trained members on how to report to the MIX. Follow-up engagement with every participating MFI resulted into 20 members reporting on their social performance to the MIX by September 2012.
- Reporting lessons learned and SPM scale-up plan development workshops were held with members in the fall of 2012, and a 3-year scale-up plan emerged from the discussions.
- AMIR worked with various stakeholders including the Central Bank, local universities, Terrafina and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning throughout the project to promote SPM throughout the country. As a result, the Central Bank has introduced key social performance indicators into its new reporting format, a microfinance graduate program at INES-Musanze has dedicated the whole module to SPM, and a code of conduct for AMIR members was developed.
- Other important activities included AMIR staff participating in the SPTF and SEEP annual meetings, where meetings for SP Start-up grantees were also organized.



For more information about AMIR and its Start-up Fund project please visit www.amir.org.rw/home.