



Press release

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## **Bpifrance mandates EthiFinance for the Second Party Opinion on its inaugural social bond framework**

Bpifrance, the French national promotional bank, innovation agency, sovereign fund and export credit agency whose mission is to support companies at each stage of their development, has just set the framework for the issuance of its social bonds. It has chosen EthiFinance to carry out the Second Party Opinion (SPO) following consultations with a number of international extra-financial rating agencies.

Financial markets play a leading role in supporting private and public organisations in their environmental and social transformation. Green and social bonds are among the tools at their disposal. The International Capital Market Association (ICMA) has published recommendations calling on issuers to have their framework verified by independent experts, who publish an SPO on them.

In the case of social bonds, the funds raised must be used to finance new social projects or refinancing pre-existing projects. The SPO validates whether the bonds issued comply with the 4 main principles of the ICMA: use of funds, project selection and evaluation, fund management, and reporting.

In its SPO, EthiFinance reviewed and confirmed the alignment of the Bpifrance's framework with the ICMA Social Bond Principles and also conducted an assessment of the level of impact of the projects eligible for financing. To do so, EthiFinance used the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the draft European Social Taxonomy project as points of reference.

*"As a leading investor in France and Europe, we entered the world of thematic bonds in March 2020. Since then, in April 2021 we issued a first green bond of 1.25 billion euros after obtaining an SPO from an international rating agency and we repeated the experience in June 2022. For the social bonds, we chose EthiFinance, a reputable ESG player with strong experience of French institutions and a good understanding of their missions, whose approach fits perfectly with ICMA's criteria for conducting this SPO",* points out Bpifrance.

*"ESG ratings and opinions require both solid and long experience of the subject and cultural and geographical proximity to the issuers. EthiFinance meets these requirements in every respect: founded in France almost twenty years ago, we now have offices and teams in Spain, Germany and France, which means our footprint extends to almost two-thirds of the population, GDP and companies in the euro zone. We are therefore particularly proud to have been selected by Bpifrance for its inaugural social bond framework. It is a recognition of the quality of our teams and our analyses",* underlines Carol Sirou, Executive Chairwoman of EthiFinance.

### **About EthiFinance**

EthiFinance is a European independent consulting, research as well as financial and non-financial rating services group.

EthiFinance is recognized for its methodological rigor and its original approach to dual materiality.

EthiFinance fosters trust between investors, stakeholders and companies to support their societal and environmental transformation.

