

Norfund's Gender Strategy 2016-2020

Introduction

Women's rights and gender equality is a priority in Norwegian policy. Its importance is highlighted e.g. in *White Paper no. 27 (2013-2014): Diverse and value-creating ownership*, article 8.3.6 Diversity and Equality, and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA's) *Action plan for women's rights and gender equality in the foreign and development policy 2016-2020*.

Stark gender disparities remain in the economic realm, especially in developing countries. Fewer women than men participate in the formal workforce and women are underrepresented in management positions and on boards. They earn less than men and have fewer assets and economic opportunities.

Norfund is mandated to contribute to the development of sustainable companies in low- and middle-income countries. We are committed to advance women's economic participation by promoting equal opportunities for women and men in our investee companies.

Scope

Norfund's strategy is to be an active, strategic minority investor. This implies that while Norfund can influence the companies we have invested in through the investment contract, dialog, and our seat on the companies' boards; we also depend on buy-in from our partners. As such, our influence depends on the investment instrument used, our shareholding, and our partners' priorities.

Women's economic participation is influenced by a number of factors, including education, access to work, care burdens, control over assets, labour market characteristics, legal framework and social norms. Norfund invests in private enterprises and our commitment to promoting gender equality therefore centres on areas within the control of these companies, i.e. addressing gender gaps in employment, leadership and entrepreneurship.

Objectives

Norfund is committed to:

1. Promote equal opportunities for men and women within the organisation and among portfolio companies, e.g. Norfund shall develop a gender neutral recruitment policy, and integrate non-discrimination considerations in Norfund's Investment Manual;
2. Encourage female participation in management and on corporate boards in portfolio companies, e.g. Norfund shall increase the share of women among Norfund's external board representatives; and
3. Support women's enterprise and self-employment by improving access to financial services.

Approach

Norfund works to advance gender equality on four different levels.

1. **Own organisation:** Norfund shall practice non-discrimination with regards to recruitment, promotion and remuneration at all levels of the organisation and strive to increase the number of women appointed to our investees' board of directors.
2. **Investments:** Norfund's investments shall uphold high standards on fair treatment, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity of workers cf. IFC Performance Standard 2. The principle of non-discrimination applies to all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment and hiring, compensation, promotion, working conditions and access to training.
3. **Tailored initiatives:** Norfund supports initiatives that reduce gender gaps in portfolio companies. This can include interventions that reduce obstacles for women's participation as employees, corporate leaders and entrepreneurs.
4. **Communication:** Norfund's reporting shall be disaggregated by gender where relevant. Norfund will also identify good practices and effective solutions among investees and partners, and share knowledge internally and externally.

Follow-up

Based on this strategy, Norfund shall specify priority areas and a corresponding implementation schedule (action plan) and monitor progress annually throughout the current strategy period (2016-2020).

Oslo, 20 December 2016



Kristin Clemet

Board Chairperson

Norfund