

News release

## Expansion of prestigious women empowerment fund

**Tokyo/Zurich, 5 September 2019 – Swiss based impact investor BlueOrchard Finance (“BlueOrchard”) is pleased to announce the expansion of the Japan ASEAN Women Empowerment Fund (“JAWEF”). Following the success of JAWEF, the fund will be increased to USD 241 million to address the significant gap of financing women in Asia, increasing its outreach to 700,000 women in need.**

JAWEF was launched in 2016 with the appreciation of the Japanese Government as the first fund of its kind focusing on empowering women in Asia. The fund has been highly effective in mobilizing private commercial capital and delivering on all its impact objectives, reaching out to approximately 230'000 female micro entrepreneurs by financing 21 microfinance institutions across 7 countries.

Building on this success, JAWEF will double in size and reach USD 241 million. Its investment objective, to provide senior loans and subordinated debt to financially sustainable and socially responsible microfinance institutions focusing on female borrowers, remains unchanged; as does the fund's initial lifetime of 8 years.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), as well as leading Japanese institutional investors, among them Sumitomo Life Insurance Company, support the fund's expansion by increasing their participation on a pro rata basis. Furthermore, the renowned Sasakawa Peace Foundation will participate as new partner and investor.

*“I am pleased to see how an initiative we launched three years ago has proven that providing financial opportunities to women is a very powerful tool for fostering gender equality and women empowerment. The expansion of JAWEF will make an important contribution to further closing the credit gap for women in Asian countries and supporting their economies”,* said the office of the Prime Minister of Japan.

*“With more than 50% of total fund assets coming from private investors, JAWEF has been a prime example for blended finance-structured funds and has proven that impact investing has reached the mainstream. We are very honored and proud to be the fund manager of this successful, benchmark-setting initiative,”* said Peter A. Fanconi, BlueOrchard's Chairman of the Board.

*“We are excited to see JAWEF attracting strong demand from private investors, which reflects that the fund presents an excellent opportunity for investors to achieve financial returns while making an impact,”* said Patrick Scheurle, CEO of BlueOrchard.

### **About BlueOrchard Finance Ltd**

**BlueOrchard** is a leading global impact investment manager. The firm is dedicated to fostering inclusive and climate-smart growth, while providing attractive returns for investors. BlueOrchard was founded in 2001, by initiative of the UN, as the world's first commercial manager of microfinance debt investments. Today, BlueOrchard provides investors around the world with premium investment solutions, including credit, private equity, and sustainable infrastructure. Being an expert in innovative blended finance mandates, the firm is a trusted partner of leading global development finance institutions. With a major global presence and offices on four continents, BlueOrchard has invested to date more than USD 6bn across 80 emerging and frontier markets, enabling tangible social and environmental impact. BlueOrchard is a licensed Swiss asset manager of collective investment schemes authorized by FINMA. Its Luxembourg entity, BlueOrchard Asset Management S.A., is a licensed UCITS management company as well as a licensed alternative investment fund manager (AIFM) authorized by CSSF. For additional information, please visit: [www.blueorchard.com](http://www.blueorchard.com).

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