

Sustainability-related product disclosure: JAPAN ASEAN Women Empowerment Fund

In accordance with Chapter IV, Article. 45-57 and Article 9(1), (2) and (3) of Regulation (EU) 2019/2088

1. Summary

The BlueOrchard JAPAN ASEAN Women Empowerment Fund (JAWEF) or “the Fund” aims at investing in a diversified portfolio of mainly microfinance debt and subordinated debt instruments with the objective of empowering women in South East Asian countries.

2. No significant harm to the sustainable investment objective

The fund does not directly invest in sectors, which are prohibited by the IFC Exclusion List. Furthermore, inherent to the investment process is an ESG and Impact assessment (B.Impact Framework). The ESG Spirit Scorecard developed by BlueOrchard is a dedicated tool and process to assess investees’ environmental, social and governance risks and practices. It is aligned to international standards like the ILO Labor Convention. The Impact Spirit Scorecard verifies, amongst others, that the potential investment side effects do not cause significant harm to other sustainable investment objectives. BlueOrchard’s proprietary tools are based on the Operating Principles for Impact Management.

3. Sustainable investment objective of the financial product

The Fund specifically seeks to contribute to closing the UN Sustainable Development Goals investment gap, while creating tangible impact along a number of selected SDGs, including, no poverty, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities and partnership for the goals.

4. Investment strategy

The principal focus of JAWEF is to finance financial institutions and microfinance institutions characterized by a large portion of female clients (min. 60% of female clients’ base). Sustainability risk is reflected in the overall impact investment process and makes part of the variable compensation scheme.

5. Proportion of investments

All JAWEF investments (100%) are screened according to BlueOrchard’s proprietary ESG and Impact screening methodology. The remaining is invested in cash or money market funds.

6. Monitoring of environmental or social characteristics

All investments of the Fund are regularly monitored for their social component by a dedicated team of monitoring specialists. Specific impact related indicators relevant for the Fund, e.g. the number of female clients per institution, are monitored at the investee level on quarterly basis throughout the life of the investment. Additionally, the ESG Spirit Scorecard is updated on a biennial frequency and the Impact Spirit Scorecard in case the impact objective may not be attained.

7. Methodologies

The Fund combines a top-down approach of strategic asset allocation with a rigorous bottom-up credit analysis and underwriting process. ESG and impact measurement and management is an integral part of the investment process. Each prospective investment is analyzed via a three-step ESG and Impact assessment framework consisting of (1) ESG assessment: a dedicated tool and process to assess a project’s environmental, social and governance risks and practices, (2) Impact Assessment: a dedicated tool and process to assess a project’s potential impact, (3) SDG Mapping & alignment: a dedicated SDG methodology allowing for SDG mapping at fund and investment level.



8. Data sources and processing

The B.Impact framework consists of a holistic approach to manage and measure ESG risks and impact potential across asset classes and impact themes. The two separate developed scorecards are looking at ESG risks and practices of a company and the impact generated by the investment. Most information is collected through direct contact with potential investees and their information on the underlying portfolio, policies and procedures, organizational structure, business plans, etc. which will form part of the proprietary tools and processed accordingly.

9. Limitations to methodologies and data

Given the fast-paced development of ESG and Impact management tools and methodologies across the industry, BlueOrchard's proprietary tools are reviewed and updated on a regular basis to drive industry best-practice. The last update was reviewed and launched in December 2020. Using a proprietary tool eases comparability across the investments based on the same metrics and standards.

10. Due diligence

Each investee financed by the Fund needs to go through a rigorous on-site Due Diligence process. The Due Diligence process focuses on financial and social performance and can be broken down into two components: (1) Industry information collected through meetings with local regulators, associations, rating agencies, other lenders, etc., and (2) due diligence of the investee where the investment officers assess in detail policies, procedures, processes and practices of the investee. The due diligence is comprised of interviews with the senior management and directors and loan file reviews and more broadly assess credit underwriting and risk management tools and processes.

11. Engagement policies

Engagement policy is part of the ESG framework (Investment Process Level).

12. Attainment of the sustainable investment objective

JAWEF is the first fund investing to support female micro-entrepreneurs in the South East Asia frontier and emerging markets; a direct comparison of the Fund with available benchmarks is not the case (Article 9 (2) no index designated as its reference benchmark). The fund maps its impact to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) via a dedicated SDG methodology allowing for SDG mapping at fund and investment level.

For more information on BlueOrchard's proprietary ESG & Impact measurement tool in relation to this sustainability-related product disclosure please contact: info@blueorchard.com