



Nordic Development Fund

Ombudsman Regulations

**Adopted by the Managing Director
on 12 November 2021
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Responsible Functions

- General Counsel, NIB People and Culture (following organisational change 1 January 2026)

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OMBUDSMAN REGULATIONS

1 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE

An independent Ombudsman has been engaged to advise and counsel the staff of Nordic Development Fund (NDF) on employment related matters.¹ The aim of the Ombudsman function is to improve the overall working environment and resolve conflicts informally and efficiently.

The Ombudsman is impartial and independent and offers a confidential forum for discussing employment related matters. All staff members² have the opportunity to consult the Ombudsman and the consultation is free of charge.

Differing views between NDF as employer and a staff member or between staff members shall primarily be resolved internally as set out in Code of Conduct for Staff. Supervisors and NIB's People and Culture department offer help and support to discuss and solve disagreements and to find ways to improve the working environment. If a conflict cannot be resolved internally, staff are encouraged to seek the Ombudsman's advice and may also resort to mediation. The Ombudsman may give recommendations but does not conduct any investigations³ or have decision-making powers in employment matters. For conflict and dispute resolution methods in employment matters, please see the Staff Regulations.

2 ROLE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The Ombudsman shall:

- 1) advise and counsel staff members regarding their terms of employment and working environment;
- 2) help and support staff members in concerns relating to alleged harassment and advise on available actions as set forth in Code of Conduct for Staff and Guidelines for dealing with conflicts, unwanted behaviour and harassment⁴; and
- 3) mediate conflicts between NDF and a staff member or between staff members.

The Ombudsman is available for consultation and may be contacted as set out in NIBnet.

The Ombudsman does not handle individual salary and performance premium matters or matters that are subject to arbitration proceedings, official investigations, court proceedings or review by an authority.⁵

The Ombudsman may advise the staff on how to commence arbitration in accordance with the Arbitration Regulations. The Ombudsman shall otherwise refrain from assisting in the

¹ The Ombudsman is engaged by Nordic Investment Bank for its own staff, and NDF and its staff have access to the Ombudsman on the same terms as NIB under the service agreement between the institutions.

² For reasons of avoiding conflicts of interest, the Managing Director of NDF does not have access to the Ombudsman in her/his own matters.

³ Allegations of staff misconduct are handled as set out in Code of Conduct for Staff.

⁴ The document is internally available

⁵ Cases related to official investigations, court proceedings or review by an authority may occur e.g.. as a result of the Board of Directors' waiving the immunity of a staff member.

arbitration, except if he/she may be able to assist in mediating the dispute. The Ombudsman may not be called as a witness or required to provide information in any legal proceedings.

3 INTEGRITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The Ombudsman shall act with high integrity and protect the confidentiality of the staff. The Ombudsman keeps the identity of staff members and all matters and discussions with staff members strictly confidential.

The Ombudsman will not disclose the identity or details of the circumstances without the staff member's prior consent. However, in some cases, the Ombudsman may not be able to provide adequate advice or recommendations or mediate the matter if the staff member does not consent to sharing his/her identity or details of the circumstances. It is particularly important to hear both parties when addressing concerns relating to harassment and violations of the Staff Documents.

Staff members shall cooperate with the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman shall have access to information relevant to the exercise of his/her duties. Information and materials received or compiled may only be used for the purpose of the Ombudsman function.

Staff members may contact the Ombudsman or resort to mediation without fear of retaliation.

4 MEDIATION BY THE OMBUDSMAN

Staff members are encouraged to attempt to resolve matters through existing internal channels with help from supervisors and NIB's People and Culture. If a conflict cannot be resolved, staff members or NDF may seek mediation facilitated by the Ombudsman. In mediation, the Ombudsman assists the parties in resolving the conflict in a mutually satisfactory manner. Mediation is voluntary, strictly confidential and free of charge to the staff member. NDF is required to attend mediation involving NDF and shall appoint representative(s) for the mediation.

The staff member or NDF shall contact the Ombudsman as soon as possible and at the latest within one (1) year from the date the staff member became aware of the decision or circumstances giving rise to the conflict. A delay in initiating the process may adversely affect the mediation. The mediation shall be initiated within thirty (30) days from the date the Ombudsman was contacted with the request to initiate the mediation. The Ombudsman shall inform the staff member if the conflict does not fall within the role of the Ombudsman and justify his/her decision. The Ombudsman shall inform the General Counsel and NIB's Director People and Culture ⁶ of the initiation of the mediation.

The procedure and timeline for the mediation shall be decided by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman shall hear both parties during the process but may also discuss on a confidential basis separately with the parties. Any written material shall be shared with both parties. The Ombudsman may hear other staff members or experts if needed. The staff member may have a representative or counsel present at his/her own expense.

The Ombudsman may give a recommendation how to resolve the conflict, which the parties shall either accept or reject within the timeframe set by the Ombudsman. The mediation is completed when (i) the parties sign a conciliation agreement; (ii) the Ombudsman informs the

⁶ NIB's Director, People and Culture acts for NDF under a service agreement between the institutions.

parties that continuing the mediation is not justifiable; or (iii) a staff member informs the Ombudsman that he/she does not wish to continue the mediation.

5 FEEDBACK TO MANAGEMENT

The Ombudsman may provide observations, views and advice to NDF on employment matters and the working environment in general, including recommendations for development. NDF may also consult the Ombudsman in general employment related questions.

The Ombudsman shall bring to the attention of the Managing Director, the General Counsel and NIB's Director People and Culture any systemic or grave issues that become apparent from individual cases.

6 ANNUAL REPORT

The Ombudsman shall issue an annual report specifying the number and general nature of the matters brought to his/her attention and describing in general terms the extent to which the matters were or were not resolved. The annual report shall be distributed to the Managing Director and Board of Directors as well as to the staff.

7 QUALIFICATIONS AND APPOINTMENT

The Ombudsman shall have high professional qualifications, including in-depth expertise in employment law, and excellent communication, mediation and conciliation skills and experience.

The Ombudsman shall be appointed for a term of two years and the appointment may be further extended. The Ombudsman is not an employee of NDF and may not be employed by NDF within five years from the end of the Ombudsman's term. Former employees or Managing Directors are not eligible as Ombudsman.⁷

8 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The primary responsibility for the correct implementation of these Ombudsman Regulations remain with NIB's People and Culture department and the General Counsel at NDF. These Regulations shall be reviewed at least every five (5) years.

⁷ The same applies to the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation and the Nordic Investment Bank.