



Nordic Development Fund

# Nordic Development Fund Communications approach 2023-2025

Adopted by the Managing Director  
on 16 November 2022  
In force as of 1 January 2023

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## Context

Nordic Development Fund (NDF, the Fund) is an international finance institution, funded by the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. We operate in the nexus between climate and development, with an aim to address these two global challenges together with our partners.

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Our Purpose is to advance Nordic leadership in addressing climate change and development challenges through financing, knowledge and partnerships.

Together with our strategic partners, we develop, launch and scale high-impact projects to support developing countries and help the most vulnerable people affected by climate change.

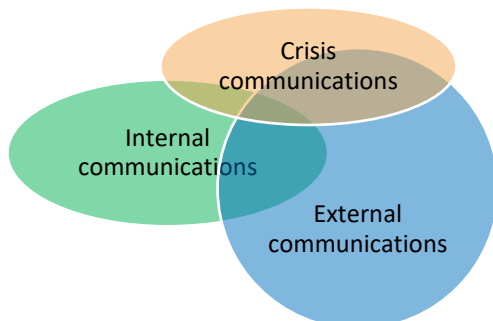
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Our work is guided by Strategy 2025, which sets three guiding targets for the period 2020-2025. These targets also provide the framework for our communication activities.

1. **Climate.** At least 50% of our funding is directed towards adaptation projects.
2. **Country focus.** At least 60% of our funding is directed towards Sub-Saharan Africa.
3. **Concessionality.** At least 50% of our funding is channelled through grants.

## Three communication strands

NDF's communications has three strongly interlinked but distinct strands, each with their own rationale and tools: external communications, internal communications and crisis communications.



While this document mainly focuses on external communications, the objectives and principles apply for all three strands. Solid external communication and brand management build the foundation for crisis communications and are also integral in keeping NDF's staff abreast of the Fund's work. However, as both internal communications and crisis management benefit from more targeted guidelines, these will be outlined in separate documents, to be prepared in 2023.

### **External communications**

External communication is an important part of NDF's outreach activities and a cornerstone in reputation management. This document outlines the external communications cycle from the definition of objectives and target audiences to consistent implementation and determining indicators for measuring success. While this work stream is primarily targeted to external audiences, it also contributes to the organisation's internal cohesion as well as managing crisis situations, all applying the same objectives and principles.

Communication and outreach activities go hand in hand and are often very interlinked. At NDF, we refer to outreach in the context of direct engagement and cooperation with stakeholders, and to communications when messages are directed to larger audiences through appropriate channels.

The implementation of this communication approach is facilitated by an annual communication plan.

### **Internal communications**

NDF's internal communications aims to contribute to an efficient flow of information within departments, across departments and between staff and the management. It also supports knowledge-sharing and enhanced staff understanding of climate finance, largely facilitated by the external communication activities.

Internal communications also has an important role in fostering a positive working environment and a sense of belonging among staff, in line with our institutional values. Given the small size of the Fund, meetings and face-to-face communications play a key role in NDF's internal communications.

### **Crisis communications**

While this document primarily aims to guide NDF's communication in regular circumstances, it also provides the framework for managing eventual crisis situations. When the Fund's reputation is at risk, NDF applies the guiding principles described in this document.

## Communication objectives

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The overall objective of NDF's communication activities is to support the efficient implementation of Strategy 2025 and to demonstrate our relevance and added value as an action-oriented organisation.

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This objective is achieved by bringing visibility for our work to address development and climate challenges through our financing and other solutions. By presenting our action and positive results, we contribute to learning and knowledge-sharing among our audiences.

Communications also has an important role in building a strong brand identity for NDF. Through our style, content and working methods, we aim to build a public profile of a reliable and active partner, and an agile changemaker. These principles guide our interaction with global partners and encourage us in using innovative and modern communication tools and methods.

The positive public profile further contributes to NDF's employer branding, displaying an interesting potential future employer. Our communication reflects our organisational values and commitment to implementing our strategy. By presenting this in an engaging and modern way, we aim to attract the interest of professionals from a wide range of fields as relevant for our work.

To guide us in meeting the overall objective for communications, and building on the Strategy 2025 principles of engagement, we have defined the following three measurable objectives for our communications.

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### **Objective 1: Complement**

Highlight NDF's relevance and added value in addressing climate change and development challenges.

### **Objective 2: Co-create**

Profile NDF as a reliable, active and agile partner, bringing together Nordic priorities and the needs of countries where we work.

### **Objective 3: Convene**

Contribute to creating and fostering strategic partnerships through joint communication and outreach activities.

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## **Target audiences**

To reach the communication objectives, we have defined four main audience segments for NDF's communications.

1. **Nordic decision-makers.** To show the relevance, impact and added value of NDF's financing, and to strengthen the role of the Nordic countries as active and progressive climate financiers.
2. **Strategic partners.** To illustrate the benefits of collaboration through co-financed projects and the aggregate benefit of our collaboration.
3. **Informed general public.** To participate in the global climate discussion with individuals and the civil society organisations, and build a brand of an active and agile organisation.
4. **NDF staff.** To contribute to efficient information sharing and feeling of belonging across the departments.

The definition of target audiences guides NDF in selecting relevant communication and outreach opportunities and in forming effective messages.

## Overriding principles

To achieve the defined communication objectives and to reach the target audiences, our communication activities are guided by the following overriding principles, aligned with NDF's three organisational values: thrive together, strive for excellence and drive change.

These principles guide our strategic planning as well as the implementation of our communication activities. They also form the foundation for NDF's response in eventual crisis situations where our reputation is at risk.

- **Thrive together**
  - **Cooperation.** We plan and implement our external communication activities in cooperation with our strategic partners when possible. In this way, we mutually benefit from synergies and multiplier effects.
  - **One NDF.** We plan and prepare our communications as a team. Communication activities are led by NDF's Business development and outreach department, but all teams have a role in making it a success. We benefit from different competences and support each other as needed.
- **Strive for excellence**
  - **Relevant and reliable.** We showcase our work through results and connect with debate-provoking triggers in the public domain when relevant. Our results are data-based, and we honestly acknowledge any challenges in the context of our work. We are transparent with the organisation of our work.
  - **Active and agile.** Our communication considers its audience, is factually correct, engaging, and easy to understand. We use modern communication tools and try out new approaches. This is how we learn and remain interesting for our stakeholders.
- **Drive change**
  - **Sustainable.** We strive for environmentally friendly communication methods, for example by avoiding printing, by favouring virtual events and considering sustainable solutions in our event management.
  - **Nordic priorities.** Integrated in the context of climate and development, our communication highlights Nordic priorities, such as gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusiveness. Transparency is a cross-cutting principle in all our work.

## Topics and angles

NDF's communication topics are guided by our overall purpose statement and the guiding targets defined in Strategy 2025. While these define the priority focus in our communications, given the full scope of NDF's activities, also topics outside the three priority targets will be featured, when relevant and beneficial for reaching the overall communications objective.

Through our communications, we draw attention to topics related to:

- Impact of adaptation financing, as well as mitigation efforts when relevant.
- Challenges and solutions in the Sub-Saharan Africa, but also in other continents.
- Development angle in climate finance, through our role as a concessional financier.

When presenting our work and results in these areas, we make sure to highlight Nordic priorities such as gender equality, transparency, non-discrimination, and inclusiveness. Concrete topics are promoted through the financed projects and may evolve as new opportunities emerge.

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To achieve best results, we seek to find a human angle to our communications. Through storytelling and visual content, we show the connection between climate finance and benefits to people in the countries where we work.

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Our communication approaches the climate challenge with a positive and forward-looking angle, focusing on solutions, results, and the benefits our work has brought to people and the environment. We always seek to find the human angle.

## Channels

NDF communicates through targeted and modern tools and channels, which are well-suited for easy distribution to our international audiences. Channels are used in a strategic manner, each having their own style and purpose.

The list of channels presented below is not exhaustive as new tools may emerge while implementing this approach.

### Website

Purpose: Information hub about NDF and our work

Our website is the official face of NDF and the hub for all information about us as an organisation and our work. It serves the purpose of presenting dynamic updates as well as



providing for the governance transparency required from a public organisation and in line with the Nordic priorities.

The website hosts the following main sections.

**Frontpage.** The frontpage profiles NDF as an active, agile and relevant climate financier, bringing added value to the international climate agenda. The content and visuals highlight the impact of our projects in the countries where we work. We write all content in an easy-to-understand language which also caters the needs of audiences outside of the climate financing community.

**News section.** The dynamic news stream presents our projects in an engaging and visual style, bringing forward Nordic priorities in the context of our work. The topics follow NDF's annual communication plan, balancing the geographical focus and showcasing our strategic objectives.

**Social media feed.** By showcasing NDF's operational activities, such as participation in events, and by connecting NDF's work with topical discussions in the public domain, the feed brings another dynamic element to the frontpage.

**Project database.** The website hosts NDF's project database, providing a transparent introduction of the key facts from each project. Targeting expert audiences, this content has a more technical and factual nature.

**NDF's governance.** NDF's governance structure and related administrative documentation are published on the website, contributing to organisational transparency in line with our Access to Information Policy.

## Social media

Purpose: Raise interest to climate/development questions through NDF's work

Social media communication primarily aims to raise interest in NDF's work and direct readers to our website for further information. Social media posts are visual, engaging and snappy, with an aim to inspire informed members of general public beyond the immediate climate financing community.

In Twitter and LinkedIn, we target audiences with a professional interest towards NDF and our work. Our Facebook presence has a more general aim to inspire informed general audiences with an overall interest in climate questions.

NDF's social media posts promote new content on the website, typically web news and other announcements. They also feature NDF staff's public engagement and events, and tap in topical discussion in the public domain, for example by connecting NDF's work to topics of established international days.

Benefiting from the nature of social media, content is also drawn by sharing and reproducing messages from our strategic partners.

## Newsletter

Purpose: Give regular updates of NDF's main activities

Largely reflecting the content on the website, NDF's monthly newsletter gives an overview of the main recent and upcoming activities. Short and concise snippets present the highlights of the main news and announcements, ensuring a regular information flow to our audiences. For more comprehensive information, readers are guided to the website.

With an aim to attract new subscribers and maintain their interest, the Newsletter is written in an engaging tone, complemented with visual and audio-visual material when available.

## Events

Purpose: Exchange information and build partnerships

Participation in events gives an opportunity to exchange in-depth and technical information and profile NDF as an expert organisation on climate financing. Event engagements allow us to promote our guiding targets; adaptation, focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, and our concessional financing structure, as well as Nordic priorities, such as gender equality, transparency, non-discrimination and inclusiveness.

Most of our event participation is facilitated through our strategic partners, and NDF staff contribute to events when requested and considered relevant.

For some high-visibility events, such as the annual United Nations climate conference (Conference of Parties, COP), NDF participates in agenda setting by organising events reflecting our own priority topics.

In line with the sustainability principle, virtual participation is considered when possible and relevant.

## Media

Purpose: Bring broader visibility for climate funding through NDF's work

This work stream will be gradually built and strengthened, with an aim to bring more visibility to our work beyond the immediate climate financing community. In line with the defined target audiences, we prioritise attention by Nordic media where we can best promote the interests of the Nordic governments. We also benefit from media coverage generated by our partners and further promote this publicity in our own communication channels.

Media requests are always dealt with promptly and positively. The requests are channelled to the Managing Director, who is NDF's official spokesperson. They may delegate the response to other colleagues as relevant. The communications team is always kept in the loop to ensure appropriate follow-up and to build networks for future media engagements.

## Publications

Purpose: Give an update of annual performance

NDF produces two publications each year: Annual Financial Report and the Results Report.

**Annual Financial Report** is a statutory requirement and part of NDF’s governance. As a product, it is an administrative report, contributing to organisational transparency.

**Results Report** gives an annual update on NDF’s delivery on its strategy and presents the main achievements in our portfolio. The report is data-driven but presented in an engaging and user-friendly style. The aim of the publication is to highlight NDF’s added value and enhance NDF’s visibility among our target audiences.

To value the sustainability principle, NDF produces publications only in digital format. Printed products are used only in exceptional cases.

### Other communication tools

We keep abreast of other relevant communication tools, such as podcasts, blogs or new social media platforms and consider their relevance in achieving NDF’s communication aims. To support our profile of a modern and agile organisation, we strive to present our work using modern communication tools, such as short videos, visuals, engaging virtual publications and interactive engagement tools.

## Monitoring and improving

The implementation of this approach is monitored with output indicators, reflecting the three communication objectives. Monitoring baselines will be finalised at the end of 2022.

<b>Objective 1: Complement</b> Highlight NDF’s relevance and added value in addressing climate change and development challenges			
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target/year</b>	<b>Source</b>
High-level events organised by NDF	2	2	Communication plan
Updated project pages on website	to be defined	5	NDF website
Results report published	1	1	NDF website
Regular Newsletters	to be defined	8	LianaMailer

<b>Objective 2: Co-create</b>			
Profile NDF as a reliable, active and agile partner, bringing together Nordic priorities and the needs of countries where we work			
Indicator	Baseline	Target/year	Source
Web news on NDF's portfolio projects	to be defined	20	NDF's website
Regular posts on social media channels	to be defined	50	Meltwater database
Video highlights on projects	2	2	NDF's website

<b>Objective 3: Convene</b>			
Contribute to creating and fostering strategic partnerships through joint communication and outreach activities			
Indicator	Baseline	Target/year	Source
Joint communication initiatives	to be defined	10	Communication plan
Strategic partners' news promoted through NDF's channels	to be defined	10	Meltwater database
Number of partner events with NDF contribution	to be defined	20	Event calendar

Additionally, a few generic outcome indicators will be monitored to facilitate further improvement. These indicators guide NDF in planning and adjusting its communication activities in the constantly changing environment.

<b>Outcome indicators</b>			
Indicator	Baseline 2022	Target/year	Source
Visits to website	to be defined	>10%	Google analytics
Outreach on Facebook/Twitter/LinkedIn	to be defined	>10%	Meltwater database
Newsletter subscribers	to be defined	>10%	LianaMailer
Video views	to be defined	>10%	Google analytics