



# Communication on Progress 2020

UN Global Compact

*Wiersholm*



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# To Our Clients and Collaborators

**We are pleased to share our goals and progress this past year related to the focus areas of the UN Global Compact. In this report you will get an overview of our commitment to the SDGs, what measures we have taken in 2019 to make positive social impact, how we execute our environmental commitment and promote an inclusive workplace for our employees.**

One of the issues we are particularly concerned about is gender equality. The legal profession, and especially business law firms, has traditionally been dominated by men, but we are happy to see progress within the industry. In Wiersholm, women now constitute 54 % of our workforce. However, we have a long way to go until we have equal representation of women in our partnership. We are determined to increase the percentage of female partners year by year.

Another issue especially important to us, which you can read about in this report, is our partnership with Save the Children to strengthen children's rights. In 2019, we entered into a 5-year agreement standing on three main pillars: financial project support, pro bono legal work and a responsible business trainee scheme.

Wiersholm consists of nearly 250 people making an effort every day to ensure we meet our goals and make a positive difference for our stakeholders, the environment and society. I am proud of what we achieve together, and I would like to extend a big thank you to everyone who has contributed to our dedication to ESG and the UN Global Compact.

Kind regards,



Morten Goller

Managing Partner



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# Our priority SDG targets

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The world has entered the “decade to deliver” on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Wiersholm is committed to playing our part, and we are accelerating our actions to contribute to realising the SDGs.

## SDGs we prioritise



## SDGs to which we contribute



## Partnerships for the goals

We are committed to engaging in partnerships to contribute to the SDGs, in the legal industry and beyond.



- 4.5** By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- 5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.5** Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 10.2** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- 10.7** Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies
- 12.5** By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse
- 16.3** Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.5** Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

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## Our Core Values



# Ethical conduct

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As lawyers we have a special responsibility to promote justice and prevent injustice. We should not only provide our clients with the highest service and quality, but also show responsibility in how we run our business and in our contributions to the society around us.

## Human rights

As lawyers, we have a special responsibility for respecting and promoting human rights in our own business and in our advisory services. Our lawyers and employees shall respect human rights in accordance with the UN's guiding principles and the recommendations of the Norwegian Bar Association

## Sustainability

All employees are expected to comply with our procedures for collecting, sorting and recycling of waste, procedures for reducing paper consumption, as well as considering the environment during business travels.

## Working environment

Wiersholm is a knowledge firm and our employees are our most important assets. We consider the following principles to be fundamental to Wiersholm being an attractive workplace that ensures everyone a good physical and psychosocial working environment:

- Zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment
- Diversity
- Responsible management and employee participation

## Ethics

Wiersholm conducts its business in accordance with the highest ethical standards for law firms. This imposes high demands on our managers and employees and entails:

- Wiersholm ethics committee – a sparring partner whenever dilemmas arise in ongoing matters, advising the management on ethical issues related to the management of our business
- Dilemma training – an intergal part of our introductory programmes and regular professional seminars for all employees
- Supplementary training – in accordance with the current rules of conduct for lawyers and the Norwegian Bar Association's requirements for regular supplementary ethics training.

# Anticorruption policies and compliance

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The basic principle of a responsible and sustainable law firm is that we, in our own business, comply with the requirements and rules that apply to our type of business activities. For us, this is not enough: Ethics is an essential part of our profession and the spine of our law firm. In everything we do, Wiersholm must maintain high ethical standards.



To fulfil these ambitions, Wiersholm implemented new ethical guidelines in 2018, strengthening the focus on ethics in the business. Ethics and dilemma training is an integral part of Wiersholm's introductory programs and our annual seminars, "fagdager", for all employees. All lawyers are obliged to comply with the ethical guidelines from the Norwegian Bar Association and with the Bar Association's requirements for regular training in ethics.

Wiersholm's own ethics committee shall be a sparring partner where dilemmas arise in ongoing cases, and shall advise the management on ethical issues related to the business management. During 2018, the mandate for the ethics committee was extended and strengthened, and the ambition is that the committee shall be more dedicated and proactive in its work, contribute to deepening

Wiersholm's ethics expertise and awareness and contribute to good ethical judgements. Going forward, Wiersholm will ensure full implementation of the new mandate.

In Wiersholm, we have developed and implemented routines related to AML, anti-corruption, conflict check, labour rights and Data Privacy, and we have systems for follow-up and internal control.

Internal compliance within these areas are essential for a law firm as a profiled external adviser within these areas. To secure compliance and sufficient internal control, Wiersholm has appointed a dedicated Compliance & CSR Officer who is responsible for the internal Compliance program and internal CSR assignments.

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## Social Impact





# Pro bono and sponsorships

Wiersholm has a strong and proud pro bono tradition and donates several FTEs of pro bono work a year. In 2019, we worked pro bono for the following partners:

## **NOAS – Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers**

Wiersholm has established a collaboration with NOAS and annually litigates approximately 8-10 cases on behalf of asylum seekers who risk being deported from Norway. This is part of Wiersholm's community involvement, in which we provide pro bono legal assistance in connection with legal reviews of asylum cases of principal importance.

## **HumAk – Norwegian Law Students' Humanitarian campaign**

Wiersholm is proud to be the main partner of HumAk. In 2020, the mission is "Courtrooms on wheels for children" in Malawi in collaboration with Save the Children. A late summer festival concludes the campaign. Through our

partnership with HumAk we also contribute to the lectures being held during the HumAk week.

## **Kronprinsparets Fond – The Crown Prince and Crown Princess' Foundation**

Approximately 10 years ago, the Norwegian Crown Prince and Crown Princess decided to change the foundation established in connection with their wedding in 2001. The new vision of the Foundation was "The Crown Prince and Crown Princess' Foundation will strengthen young people's sense of community so that everyone feels they belong and can participate". In connection with the restructuring and transformation of the Foundation, Wiersholm was engaged as the Foundation's advisor, and since the conclusion of this engagement, Wiersholm

has been a pro bono partner for the Foundation. The Foundation primarily focuses on young people who are at risk of being left on the outside of the community, and the Foundation therefore always collaborates with selected initiatives that aim to give young people new arenas where they can succeed.

## **Save the Children**

Wiersholm provides legal assistance as part of our corporate partnership with Save the Children. This collaboration includes pro bono advice, professional contributions to Save the Children, involvement in specific Save the Children projects, as well as a joint trainee programme and financial support.



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# Teaching

As leading commercial lawyers, our knowledge and experience are our most important assets and our most valuable and sustainable contribution to businesses and society. Each year, we spend several FTEs creating value for others.

Firstly, we contribute to educating tomorrow's lawyers and leaders by lecturing at universities and colleges, including the University of Oslo and BI Norwegian Business School. We teach at several legal forums such as JUS (lawyers' education centre), seminars at the Law Society and JUC Norway, at universities, through private tutoring of students in our office auditorium, and we participate as speakers at external seminars and conferences. We also have an extensive trainee programme, and 80 trainees gained experience at Wiersholm in 2019. In addition, we saw 30 students attending our weeklong Summer School.

Secondly, we share our knowledge with our peers and contribute to increased competence in businesses by arranging seminars and conferences in multiple legal areas, focusing largely on sustainability and human rights. Our biggest events in 2019 were Oslo Compliance Forum and Nordic Buy Out Forum with approximately 200 and 400 attendees respectively. Our four annual

conferences Oslo Privacy Conference, Oslo Compliance Forum, Transfer Pricing Forum and Nordic Buy Out Forum have become some of the industry's most important platforms for knowledge and experience sharing. In total, Wiersholm hosted 57 seminars, lectures or conferences in 2019 – more than one event a week.

Thirdly, a number of our leading lawyers contribute to the development of law and society through the seats they hold in the committees of the Norwegian Bar Association.



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# Responsible advice

By virtue of our profession and leading position as a law firm, we have a duty to conduct our business in a responsible and sustainable manner, and at the same time provide high-quality advisory services to our clients. We strive for excellence and rely on leading international standards.

Our Code of Ethics summarises what we expect from our employees, our partners and our management in the areas of human rights, sustainability and the environment, working environment and diversity, as well as ethics and compliance. The Code of Ethics supplements our other procedures and business principles, and is based on leading international standards for responsible business conduct, including the UN Global Compact, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the Norwegian Bar Association's rules and guidelines.

The Code of Ethics serves as a guide for our day-to-day business, both for how we conduct our internal affairs and how we practice our advisory services. The Code of Ethics clarifies the principles underlying our role as an employer, as a provider of legal services and as a purchaser and community participant, and states what we expect from our staff as employees, colleagues and lawyers. Ethics and dilemma training is an integral part of Wiersholm's introductory programmes and our annual professional seminars involving all employees.



In our terms of business, we have committed ourselves to be an active partner for our clients in their efforts to ensure respect for human rights. We take the initiative to discuss the risk of human rights violations, and assist our clients in the work to minimise such risk. We reserve the right to withdraw from the assignment should our client decide not to follow our advice in this respect, or if it becomes clear to us that the assignment may result in a violation of human rights.

For Wiersholm, it is important to focus on the respect of human rights in all parts of the business. Therefore, we have implemented respect for human rights as part of the agreements with all suppliers in a separate supplier policy, in which the suppliers must confirm their compliance with the human rights principles.

To secure compliance and sufficient internal control, Wiersholm has a dedicated Compliance & CSR Officer, who is responsible for the internal Compliance programme and internal CSR assignments.

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# Case: Partnership with Save the Children

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The key for stronger impact is to join forces with a business that strives for the same goals as you, but does not have the same expertise as you do.



We, as lawyers, are particularly concerned about justice and human rights, and as part of our ESG strategy we have decided to dedicate our competence and efforts to making a difference for children's rights. In 2019, Wiersholm entered into a 5-year strategic partnership with Save the Children.

The partnership between Save the Children and Wiersholm is founded upon shared values and common objectives, but also on our complimentary capabilities. Save the Children are experts in children's rights programming, with a strong local presence in more than 100 countries around the world; Wiersholm's lawyers are experts in commercial law, with a strong presence in the Nordic corporate sector. The sum is bigger than its parts.

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In the first year of our partnership, Save the Children and Wiersholm have cooperated to advance children's rights in three complimentary ways:

- **Responsible Business Trainee:** Two talented professionals have entered into a joint trainee scheme, working at Wiersholm on commercial projects and at Save the Children on legal issues concerning children's rights.
- **Pro bono legal work:** Our partners and lawyers have provided specialised legal services to take a load off Save the Children's administration and advise the organisation's management wisely on current legal issues.
- **Financial project support:** Wiersholm has committed to donating an annual amount of NOK 500,000 to Save the Children projects. Our first donation was dedicated to Save the Children's work for vulnerable children in Norway, including a campaign to address violence and abuse against children.



Responsible Business Trainees Edith Thorseng and Sunniva Skar presented the report Revocation and the best interests of the child for Save the Children and NOAS.

The partnership is structured to make as much impact as possible through our competence and the resources at hand, defined by a team of lawyers and business support staff at Wiersholm in cooperation with Save the Children.

A dedicated Wiersholm lawyer (partner) is responsible for overseeing the partnership and the primary contact on our side. The responsible partner is also in charge of the annual coordinated activity plan for our partnership. Wiersholm partners play an active role in the

various aspects of the partnership, for instance (1) in interviewing and identifying talented candidates for the Responsible Business Trainee scheme, (2) in contributing with legal services and advise as part of our pro bono scheme, and (3) in discussing and deciding upon projects to support financially, following recommendations from Save the Children.

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In 2019, Wiersholm supported projects in Norway, and in 2020, we will be supporting projects in Myanmar. In addition to the donation from the firm, Wiersholm employees give extra individual donations to our project through an optional monthly salary gift to Save the Children.

The partnership has evidently had an impact on both organisations and on children's rights.

- **Responsible Business Trainee:** The trainees carried out a legal investigation into children's best interests in cases where their refugee status is terminated. Save the Children used the report in their advocacy work. The trainees presented the legal investigation in a public seminar on children's rights in immigration cases, which Save the Children and Wiersholm hosted in cooperation with the Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers (NOAS).
- **Pro bono legal work:** Wiersholm advised Save the Children when they entered into a new framework agreement with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), as well as when they entered into a cooperation agreement with the Norwegian

Football Federation to prevent and detect abuse against children and young people in sports. Wiersholm's lawyers have also assisted on issues such as revision of supplier contracts, other cooperation agreements, compliance and hearings. In 2019, Wiersholm provided legal advice worth NOK 700,000.

- **Financial project support:** Wiersholm's donation has supported Save the Children's work in Norway to prevent violence against children, and particularly the development and distribution of animated films and educational material in schools, in collaboration with the Norwegian public broadcaster, NRK.



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## Environmental Commitment



# Environmental Commitment

We are committed to continually improving our environmental performance as an integral part of our business's strategy and operation. We concentrate our efforts along two lines: (1) to reduce our organisation's environmental footprint in the areas waste, transport and energy, and (2) to positively utilise the indirect impact we have on the environment through our suppliers and partners.

## Reducing our environmental footprint

We are an office-based organisation and our environmental footprint is therefore relatively small. That said, we are constantly making changes to reduce our negative environmental impact.

More than half of our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions today come from transport. We have updated our transport and travel guidelines. We encourage our employees to limit air travel and to use environmentally sound alternatives such as virtual meetings.

We work systematically to reduce waste. After switching to double-sided printing as the default choice, we have saved about 176,700 sheets of paper a year.



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In 2019, we started using electronic signing of documents and so far the switch has saved the environment 819 kg of wood, 18,274 litres of water, 1,842 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> and 121 kg of other waste.

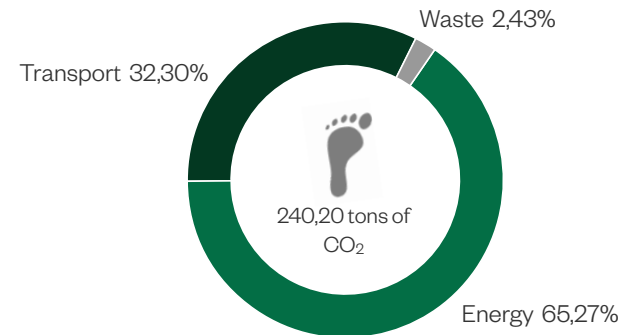
Our employees' engagement is critical to achieve our goals. We therefore place great emphasis on building awareness within the organisation. "Green Week" is an example of such an initiative, where we highlighted how even small changes in our employees' habits can have an impact on our total environmental footprint.



### Air travel

The Nordics	- 9,9%	↓
Europe	- 22%	↓
Long distance	- 10%	↓

### Our environmental footprint



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**Making a positive impact through our suppliers and partners**

We have set clear requirements when it comes to environment in our supplier contracts. The aim is to ensure that all new and existing suppliers meet our environmental standards. We also require of our 30 largest suppliers that they have an environmental certification such as Miljøfyrtårn, ISO 14001, EMAS or equivalent.

We are also committed to choosing eco-labelled products whenever that is an option, and even at a higher cost.

In 2019, we also joined the industry partnership Green Forum to exchange ideas on how the legal sector can contribute to environmentally friendly and sustainable development.

Fuel consumption - 2,3% ↓

Supplier policy

21 of 30 of our largest suppliers are environmentally certified ↗

Eco – lighthouse

Wiersholm has been environmentally certified through Eco-lighthouse since 2018. Eco-lighthouse is Norway's most widely used certificate for businesses, and the first national scheme in Europe to be recognised by the EU.

We use Eco-lighthouse as an environmental management system to improve our environmental performance in the areas of waste management, energy consumption, procurement and transport.



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## Wiersholm's "Green Group"

In 2019, Wiersholm established an internal "Green Group", dedicated to making Wiersholm even more sustainable and environmentally friendly. The Green Group consists of lawyers and Wiersholm's Purchasing Manager, in close dialogue with management, administration and HR.

The group's mandate is to identify areas of improvement, including transportation and business travels, purchasing, marketing, waste handling and recycling, and to propose specific measures to lower the firm's environmental footprint in the respective areas. This has resulted in the development of a new transport policy, which encourages and focuses on sustainable transport, the review of Wiersholm's carbon footprint and opportunities of carbon offsetting and climate neutrality, focus on environmentally friendly events (both internally and externally), the introduction of environmental footprint as a separate item in Wiersholm's internal index and the establishment of a working group with a mandate to identify areas of law, under which sustainability may represent a business opportunity or a risk to clients.

## "Green Forum" – an industry partnership

"Green Forum" is an initiative started by internal green groups across different law firms in Oslo. The Green Forum aims to be a meeting place where we exchange ideas and inspiration on how law firms and our business relationships can contribute to environmentally friendly and sustainable development.

In January 2020, Wiersholm hosted the fourth Green Forum meeting with approximately 60 participants from other law firms and private and public businesses. Among the speakers were lawyers from Wiersholm, who talked about sustainable finance, the regulation of green bonds and ESG, all topics that are becoming increasingly important to businesses across different sectors.



Knut Johannesen, Managing Director of Sagene Brewery AB, Wiersholm lawyers Helene Bogen and Anne Katrine Ramstad, and Nils Thommessen (former MP at Wiersholm and partner and Senior Advisor in Summa Equity) shared their insights at Green Forum.

# Case: “Green Week” 2019

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In November 2019, we put environment on the agenda for a whole week at Wiersholm. The “Green Week” was an internal campaign focused on raising awareness about the environmental initiatives we are taking as a company and how we measure our progress. During Green Week, we also invited everyone in the firm to contribute with ideas on how to make Wiersholm an even greener company.

### Monday’s theme was recycling

Across the globe, so much food and packaging sadly ends up being thrown away as trash. As the Green Week began, everyone at Wiersholm was reminded of our commitment to recycling and reducing our waste, be it plastic, paper, food and so on.



### Tuesday’s theme was transport

Today, more than 50% of global CO2 emissions are caused by petroleum transport. Everyone at Wiersholm was once again reminded of our guidelines for transport and travel, and encouraged to use green methods of transport whenever possible.

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### Wednesday we focused on procurement

On Wednesday, we informed our employees of our procurement routine for suppliers. Part of the requirement is that suppliers must minimise negative environmental impact and make active choices to reduce emissions. In addition, a supplier shall ensure that subcontractors fulfil the same requirements. We also showed the positive consequences these measures have had on our environmental footprint.



### Thursday we focused on reducing food waste

Thursday's focus was on reducing food waste and asking for feedback from our employees on what we can do to be even greener. Although we recycle our food waste at Wiersholm, we aim to also reduce the amount of food we throw away.

### Friday quiz and brainstorm

On Friday, we challenged all partners and employees to take a quiz about the highlights of the week, and we announced a winner from those who contributed with ideas for new green measures.



The feedback on this initiative was so positive that the **Green Week** will now be an annual event at Wiersholm. We strive to further raise awareness and strengthen our commitment to making our business as green as possible.

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## Work Environment



# Employee satisfaction

In January 2020, we conducted an “employee experience survey” among our employees to obtain information about the status quo and input on how we may develop and improve. The survey was structured around six main areas: working environment, competence and career development, management, motivation, diversity and ethics. The survey will be conducted annually and is designed in such a manner that it may be reused to measure progress.



92% would recommend others to apply for a job at Wiersholm

94% are proud to be a Wiersholm employee

95% feel that they can be themselves at work

The results of the survey were very encouraging. Wiersholm’s culture is perceived as welcoming and inclusive among employees, satisfaction is very high across the entire firm and employees find that Wiersholm creates a good working environment for 92% would recommend others to apply for a job at Wiersholm, 94% are proud to be a Wiersholm employee and 95% feel that they can be themselves at work. At the same time, we found that we have a potential for improvement in management and competence development. Following the survey, we have therefore initiated a management development programme for our partners to make them even better equipped for their roles

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as managers. The management development programme consists of four sessions and individual conversations in each interim period. The sessions focus on raising awareness of the management role, intrinsic motivation, communication, collaboration and follow-up. In addition, each group has a subsequent semi-annual meeting so as to reinforce learning with the passing of time. This autumn, a third group of partners will be participating in this programme. The goal is for the entire partnership to participate, which is why every bi-annual partner meeting also includes a part of this important management development programme. We have observed that the partners' strengthening of the management role has had a positive effect on our employees in the form of increased satisfaction and mastery.



Furthermore, we have made some changes to our internal sponsorship programme, so that all employees have an HR sponsor, a professional sponsor and an onboarding sponsor. The purpose of the scheme is for all employees to have their own team of sponsors who actively support the employees' professional and personal development. Following the survey, we also updated our internal "Wiersholm School" with digital solutions to ensure good training and with various courses to clarify the expectations of employees and management. In addition, we have introduced new staffing procedures to ensure a more even distribution of job tasks among employees.

Our goal for next year's survey is to maintain a correspondingly high score in working environment, motivation, diversity and ethics, while we hope that the measures we implement this year will further improve the score in the areas of management and competence development



# Workplace inclusivity

Wiersholm consists of the legal industry's most accomplished professionals, who have an excellent understanding of the commercial context. The complexity of our clients' demands requires us to combine our competence, industry insight, legal expertise and understanding as a team in order to create the best possible solutions for our clients.



As people are our most valuable assets, we strive to create an inclusive workplace environment where employees can develop both professionally and socially. As our workplace environment consists of a diverse group of people, we have to offer activities and initiatives that reflect our workplace diversity. Our initiatives include after-work socialisation, football and golf tournaments, seminars and educational courses, group workouts, which all contribute to making Wiersholm a great place to work.

Trust is embedded in our collaborative workplace culture. We trust and respect one another to do our best every day; we listen and provide each other with valuable feedback in order to learn more about our profession, each other and ourselves. The inclusiveness of our culture was reflected in our employee experience survey, in which the vast majority of our employees confirm that Wiersholm is an accommodating and inclusive place to work. Two defining aspects, which substantiate our inclusive culture, are workplace diversity and career development.

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# Workplace diversity and equality

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## At Wiersholm, we continually strive to create a diverse workplace that reflects the diversity of the world we serve.

As our clients develop and face new challenges, we believe that the breadth of knowledge, diverse backgrounds and unique experience each employee brings to the firm allows us to deliver better service to our clients and creates a stronger organisational culture. Consequently, we work hard to recruit, advance, retain and promote people from minority backgrounds.

We encourage our colleagues to bring their diverse selves to the workplace and acknowledge the importance of creating an inclusive workplace environment. During Pride month, we celebrate the LGBTQIA community by showing our support through visibility at work. Our employee experience survey shows that our employees feel they can be themselves at work, which is vital in order to foster a diverse workplace culture. Our employees also consider workplace diversity to be an asset.

Additionally, to ensure gender equality at all levels we continually work to achieve our goal of a gender-balanced partnership, which takes time. During the last three years, women have constituted 50 per cent of our partner promotions to achieve our goal of 1/3 female partners by 2028. To retain a gender-balanced talent pool in the decision making process, we systematically work with talent development and follow-up before, during and after parental leave to ensure inclusion. In this manner, we create a workplace

culture that encourages fathers as well as mothers to take parental leave, a number which has increased significantly in recent years. However, in 2019, female students constituted 63.5 per cent of law admissions compared to 36.5 per cent male students. This gender disparity in student admissions poses new challenges to diversity and equality.

We have a diversity committee, which consists of both female and male senior partners, as well as HR, which has developed and implemented a number of initiatives, such as the home office scheme, to ensure that we foster an inclusive culture. The home office scheme allows employees a fixed number of home office days each month. The initiative is also available to colleagues who require reasonable adjustments (due to e.g. mental health issues, etc.) and employees with care responsibilities or extended families.

Female partners 19%

50% of partner promotions last 3 years were female

Female lawyers in total 48%

- **> 1/3 goal** for women in partnership within 2028
- **Equal pay and equal retention rate** for men and women

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16 Languages spoken fluently

14 Countries represented



Wiersholm collaborates with Mino.jur, a student-driven organisation for minorities at the Oslo and Bergen faculties of law. The organisation aims to create networks and contacts among minorities, and contribute to their professional development. We hold and host a series of seminars and events together with Mino.jur to increase our visibility and we believe this collaboration plays an important role in our efforts to attract more legal talents with minority backgrounds. We have started to see the results of our efforts. Currently, our workforce originates from 14 different countries across four continents and covers 16 different languages (mother tongue or similar), including Arabic, Hindi, Persian, Russian, Albanian, German, French and American. Additionally,

Wiersholm is a corporate sponsor of Styrelisten, a non-profit initiative connecting female talent with boards of directors as a measure to promote more competence and diversity in the boardrooms.

We regard diversity as a strength and an integral part of our vision, strategy and continued success. That we are all different is a competitive advantage that will enable us to deliver better services to our clients. We therefore aim to create a culture that will attract, recruit and retain people of various nationalities, religions, ethnicities, sexualities, gender expressions, (dis)abilities and ages.

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The majority of our employees started their Wiersholm careers as students, either through our trainee programme or as scholarship holders. Our employees' career development is an ongoing process throughout their careers at Wiersholm.



In recent years, we have agreed on a clear set of priorities and initiatives that include a focus on everyday actions and inclusive leadership, and on improving the dialogue and increasing the engagement. We recognise that we need targeted initiatives and programmes, but believe that an everyday two-way dialogue with our employees is the most important foundation for creating individually tailored career paths for each employee.

We also know that predictability, facilitation and teamwork are key factors for employee motivation. Our role is to create a set-up that allows employees to reach their own career goals at their chosen pace. We place great emphasis on teamwork and help each other in order to ensure that each individual can successfully combine work and family.

The legal framework changes rapidly, which means we have to stay up-to-date on recent legal trends and laws. Thus, we ensure that our employees stay updated in order to provide our clients with competitive legal expertise.

Furthermore, we share our knowledge and experience with industry leaders and fellow lawyers by hosting seminars and courses within Wiersholm's areas of expertise. Oslo Compliance Forum and Oslo Privacy Conference are amongst the industry's most valuable knowledge sharing platforms.

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## Reporting & Data



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### Reporting approach

This report outlines our activities and achievements across the following four areas: Ethics, Social Impact, Environmental Commitment, and Work Environment.

Since last year's reports, we have made an effort to further align our ESG work with UN Global Compacts SDGs. Analysing our own organisation against a wider framework helps us to accelerate our actions to realise the SDGs.



### Organisational set-up

ESG is one of six strategic areas for our organisation. An ESG responsible partner heads our ESG work. Wiersholm's Facility Manager is responsible for following up on our environmental commitments.

The Facility Manager is responsible for reporting on our environmental commitment. HR is responsible for the work environment. Wiersholm has a dedicated Compliance & CSR Officer, who is responsible for the ethical side of business through our internal compliance programme and internal CSR assignments. Our marketing department is responsible for the work related to social impact together with our pro bono responsible partner.



### Setting targets

Our goals, KPIs and activities for the coming year are set by the responsible teams and approved by the management team at the beginning of the year.



### Reporting cycle

The team leaders provide quarterly reports on progress within the four prioritised areas to our Managing Partner, ESG Responsible, and Compliance Officer. The team leaders, ESG Responsible and Managing Partner keep our employees informed on the progress in connection with the general meetings (allmøter) for the whole company. We also run internal campaigns to raise awareness and provide information about ongoing projects through other internal communication channels such as our intranet and internal information monitors.

We submit our annual report to the Eco-lighthouse in March/April. The report presents the results of our environmental commitment and certain KPIs within the work environment.

We submit our Communication on Progress (CoP) report annually to the UN Global Compact. It is important for us that our stakeholders know that we are a responsible and trustworthy company. Therefore, we share the annual CoP with central stakeholders such as clients, suppliers, and employees as well as with the wider community.

# Goals and progress



Ongoing



In progress



Achieved

## Social Impact

GOAL	PROGRESS	UPDATE	SDGs
Strengthen Save the Children's capacity to advance children's rights through pro bono legal services		We are the legal supplier for our main partner Save the Children and cover the organisation's need for legal assistance in Norway. This year we contributed to the renewal of their contract with Norad and The Norwegian Soccer Association.	
Strengthen Save the Children's internal legal competence to advance children's rights		In 2019 we established a joint trainee program with Save the Children – Responsible Business Trainee.	
Increase awareness about children's rights in society		We co-hosted a seminar on children's rights with Save the Children and NOAS.	
Assist NOAS in their legal work for asylum seekers		We led 6 cases for NOAS in 2019 and provided assistance equivalent to three FTEs in asylum cases.	
Support human rights initiatives		We signed a two-year sponsorship agreement with the humanitarian student organisation HUMAK 2020 raising money for Save the Children.	
Increase knowledge and share best practice in legal areas related to ESG and human rights		We hosted the leading professional conferences Oslo Compliance Forum and Oslo Privacy Forum as well as several seminars on employment law and ESG.	

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GOAL	PROGRESS	UPDATE	SDGs
Continue with trainee-program and Wiersholm Summer School for students		80 trainees and 30 attending Wiersholm Summer School in 2019	
Contribute with speakers on seminar and conferences i.e. for The Bar Association, legal network (JUC, JUS), universities and colleges		57 external seminar for clients in 2019 – more than any previous years	 
Host breakfast/lunch seminars and webinars with topics relevant for clients and market in general.			
Implementing a new AML-routine and KYC-system		Established a systematic approach meeting the new AML rules – KYC is not yet completed	 
Follow-up ESG training for all employees – on ethics, CSR and human rights		All employees have been trained through the marketing groups, and all new employees receive AMLK training and ethics training	  
Advise our clients on human rights as part of the assignments		Our policy is now incorporated in our order confirmation	  



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## Environmental Commitment

GOAL	PROGRESS	UPDATE	SDGs
<p><b>Energy</b>  <b>Target:</b> 120.00 kWh per m2</p>		Current energy use is 128,76 kWh per m2	 
<p><b>Residual waste*</b>  <b>Target:</b> 9,900 kilograms</p>		Currently: 10,630 kilograms	   
<p><b>Waste sorting*</b>  <b>Target:</b> 60%</p>		We currently sort 55,05% of the waste	   
<p><b>Fuel consumption</b>  <b>Target:</b> We encourage our employees to use taxis or similar transport as little as possible</p>		The fuel consumption went down by 2,3% in 2019	 
<p><b>Air travel</b>  <b>Target:</b> We encourage our employees to limit air travel and use environmentally sound alternatives such as virtual meetings</p>		<p>Air travel has continued to decrease:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Nordics: -9,9%</li> <li>• Europe: -22%</li> <li>• Long distance: -10%</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Supplier policy</b>                      Ensure that new and existing suppliers meet our environmental standards  <b>Target:</b> Our 30 largest suppliers should have an environmental certification such as Miljøfyrtårn, ISO 14001, EMAS or equivalent</p>		<p>One more supplier was certified in 2019.                      Currently 21 of our 30 largest suppliers are environmentally certified</p>	  













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GOAL	PROGRESS	UPDATE	SDGs
<p><b>Procurement</b> We are obliged to choose eco labelled products whenever possible, even if the cost is higher</p>		We are currently buying 37 eco labelled products	   
<b>Work environment</b>			
1/3 women in the partnership within 2028 to demonstrate our commitment to increasing gender diversity in our partnership		50 per cent of partner promotions last three years were women. We currently have 19 per cent women in partnership	  
Achieve 40 per cent gender balance in promotions to senior associates and managing associates		60% of our last promotions were women. Women currently account for 47% of our managing associates and 64% of our senior associates	  
Continue to ensure equal pay for equal work		The average salary for women/men are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing associates: 50/50%</li> <li>• Senior associates: 51/49%</li> <li>• Associates: 50/50%</li> </ul>	  
Ensure 50 per cent of women on Wiersholm's board		We are now 50% women in the boardroom	  

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GOAL	PROGRESS	UPDATE	SDGs
Balanced gender representation in recruitment processes		We have a policy (and we deliver) to always have gender balance in the recruitment team during interviews	  
<b>Employee satisfaction</b> Build a work environment where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees report high job satisfaction</li> <li>• Employees will recommend others to apply for a job at Wiersholm</li> <li>• Employees are proud to be a Wiersholm employee</li> <li>• Employees find that they can be themselves at work</li> </ul>		Wiersholm's culture is perceived as welcoming and inclusive among employees, satisfaction is very high across the entire firm and employees find that Wiersholm creates a good working environment for the employees. 92% can recommend others to apply for a job at Wiersholm, 94% are proud to be a Wiersholm employee and 95% find that they can be themselves at work	  
Secure a healthy workplace by constantly monitoring the risks to employees' physical and mental health. Keep the rate of employees on sick leave below 3.0%		The annual absence is below 3.0	  

# Awards and recognition

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## Finansavisen's lawyer survey 2020

Highest ranking of all Norwegian firms.

Won the categories:

- Investigation and Compliance
- Data Protection
- Energy and Climate
- Public Procurement

## Chambers Europe Awards 2020

Named *"Norwegian Law Firm of the Year"*

## Chambers Europe/Global 2020

Ranked in 18 categories, in nine of which as *"Band 1"*. 47 individual rankings, including 15 top rankings

## Legal 500 2020

Ranked as *"Tier 1"* in 16 of 19 categories.  
27 lawyers with individual rankings

## IFLR1000 2020

Top-ranked/*"Tier 1"* in all five categories included in the survey

## Kantar Sifo Prospera 2020

Among the leading firms and top-ranked in the categories:

- Banking, Finance & Insurance
- Employment & Pension
- Public Procurement
- Intellectual Property
- Investigations
- Data Protection & Integrity



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## Financial results (2019)

Revenue (NOK)	<b>850 100 937</b>
Expenses	<b>435 860 782</b>
Pre-tax earnings	<b>413 102 126</b>
Growth	<b>9,5%</b>

## Our People

Employees	<b>260</b>
Lawyers	<b>184</b>
Partners	<b>41</b>
Lawyers admitted to the Supreme Court	<b>18</b>

## Equality and diversity

Female partners	<b>19%</b>
Female lawyers in total	<b>48%</b>
Countries represented	<b>14</b>
Languages spoken fluently	<b>16</b>

## Environmental footprint

<b>240,20</b> tons of CO <sub>2</sub> in 2019	
Emissions from transport	<b>32,30%</b>
Emissions from energy	<b>65,27%</b>
Emissions came from waste	<b>2,43%</b>

## Social impact

- 5-year agreement with Save the Children
- 6 cases for NOAS in 2019
- 57 external seminars for clients in 2019
- Provided assistance equivalent to 3 FTEs in asylum cases

# About Wiersholm

Wiersholm is one of Norway's largest law firms and your discussion partner and legal advisor in transactions and strategic processes. We offer professional, enterprising and highly skilled lawyers who provide value-creating solutions based on comprehensive commercial and industry insight. We place great importance on always acting with professionalism, with a people-focused approach. When choosing us, you choose a dynamic law firm with integrity, quality and personal commitment that puts you and your needs first.

## Contact us:

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wiersholm.no

The logo for Wiersholm, featuring the company name in a white, elegant, cursive script font.

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