

Corporate Governance Statement of Stefnir 2021

By issuing this corporate governance statement Stefnir hf. (Stefnir) is fulfilling the requirements set out in recognized guidelines current at the time this Financial Statement is approved by the company's board of directors and the provisions of Article 19 of Act No. 161/2002, cf. Article 12 of Act No. 75/2010. The Guidelines on Corporate Governance, 5th edition, issued by the Icelandic Chamber of Commerce, SA – Business Iceland, and Nasdaq Iceland hf. and the OECD's Principles of Corporate Governance from 2015 were used as a reference when Stefnir hf.'s corporate governance statement was written. The Guidelines on Corporate Governance and the Principles of Corporate Governance can be viewed on Stefnir's [website](#).

In 2012 Stefnir was the first Icelandic company to be recognized for "Excellence in good corporate governance." This recognition was first awarded by the Center for Corporate Governance at the University of Iceland and is based on an audit performed by KPMG ehf.

Stefnir since been recognized in this way on repeated occasions and therefore remains a model company in good corporate governance in Iceland.

The board of directors of Stefnir believes that good corporate governance is a key factor behind Stefnir's success as a leading fund management company in Iceland. Corporate governance provides companies with a framework in which objectives are defined, which tools should be used to achieve these objectives and how the success of these objectives is measured. Good corporate governance is designed to provide the right incentives to the board of directors and management to exploit the opportunities which serve the interests of the company, the shareholders and the general public. Good corporate governance also enables the board to perform its monitoring duties effectively.

Stefnir hf. is an independent financial company under the Financial Undertakings Act No. 161/2002.

The company operates on the basis of an operating license from the Financial Supervisory Authority of the Central Bank of Iceland as a manager of UCITS pursuant to Act No. 128/2011 on Undertakings for Collective Investment in Transferable Securities (UCITS) and as an alternative investment fund manager pursuant to Act No. 45/2020 on Alternative Investment Fund Managers. In addition to this, the company is licensed to operate asset management services, investment advisory and to manage financial instruments for collective investments, cf. Article 27 (1.1-3) of Act No. 161/2002. Stefnir has assets of ISK 230 billion under fund management. Stefnir has a team of 20 people with a diverse range of expertise and experience from the domestic and international financial markets.

Stefnir is a subsidiary of Arion Bank hf. The company is fully owned by Arion Bank and a related company. The company's corporate governance statement serves to encourage open and reliable communications between the board, shareholders and other stakeholders such as fund members managed by Stefnir, parties that service and participate in the operations of Stefnir, employees and the general public.

The company's operations are subject to restrictions by the legislator. The company's operations are governed by acts of law including the Financial Undertakings Act No. 161/2002, the UCITS Act No. 128/2011, and the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Act No. 45/2020. Stefnir is supervised by the FME under Act No. 87/1998.

Risk management and active internal control are mainstays of the responsible operation of a fund management company. The board confirmed the company's risk policy at the end of 2020. The risk policy states:

“Risk in the company's operations shall be identified, quantified, measured and monitored according to the criteria established in the business at any given time. The risk appetite of the board of directors of Stefnir shall be communicated to the employees and be integral to the process of informed decision-making at the company.”

By setting out a clear risk policy the board wishes to encourage and support a corporate culture at Stefnir which is characterized by a keen sense of risk awareness.

The company's risk appetite has been defined and this work was based on international models which were adapted to Icelandic conditions and the company. The company's auditing and risk committee helped to define the risk appetite and tolerance limits. The board of directors of Stefnir will review the company's risk appetite on an annual basis to take into account changes in the company's internal and external environment.

The Risk Officer of Stefnir is responsible for analyzing and assessing the company's financial risks and operating risks. The Risk Officer takes an active part in formulating the risk policy, risk appetite and is involved in major decisions on risk management. Compliance, Internal Audit and the Risk Officer regularly report the results of their assessments to the board of directors of Stefnir and the audit and risk committee. All supervisory measures are documented and regularly assessed by the team. The audit and risk committee is informed of the progress of these measures. Compliance and Internal Audit functions are outsourced with the permission of the FSA to Arion Bank and they work in accordance with a charter from the board of directors of Stefnir.

The structure and organization of corporate governance are vital tools for the effective management of the company, the separation of different business units and the prevention of conflicts of interest. Corporate governance at Stefnir has been assessed and the board of directors is of the opinion that the company operates in accordance with the standards set out there concerning best practice in internal corporate governance.

The company's accounting is the responsibility of Arion Bank's finance division. The FSA has authorized the outsourcing of this task. Arion Bank is also the depositary of Stefnir hf. and the price calculations of funds managed by Stefnir are the responsibility of the Bank. The audit and risk committee examines the company's financial statement and obtains the opinion of an external auditor on the six-month financial results



and 12-month financial results of Stefñir and the funds managed by Stefñir. Reporting to the board of directors with respect to the accounts is the responsibility of the committee; the board also meets the auditing company Deloitte.

Stefñir's core values have been an important guideline for employees and the board of directors, who devised them together, in their day-to-day work.

The first core value is "success through knowledge" which implies that our strengths are embodied in the combination of knowledge, experience, professional corporate governance and fund management. Meticulous working practices, responsibility and reliability lay the foundations for future success. By doing this we are safeguarding our clients' interests.

Our second core value is "the ambition to excel" which describes our progressive, determined and dynamic approach in which we do not hesitate to seek new ways to achieve our goals. Fertile thinking, ambition and financial clout provide a platform for us to lead the way in developing new financial products. This is how we create key opportunities to excel for the benefit of our clients.

The third and final core value is "united in a strong team" and it describes how the way we operate is characterized by clearly defined team work, mutual respect

and a healthy team spirit in which we support each other in what we do. We are known for our well-considered decisions which we regularly review and re-evaluate. This is how we harness the synergy of a dynamic team in order to provide our clients with outstanding service.

The board of directors approved the code of conduct in 2018 which reflects the ethical standards according to which the board and employees work. Other benchmarks can be found in employment agreements, the conflicts of interest policy and the board of directors' rules of procedure.

The company has not formally adopted a policy on sustainability but in setting out its strategy and defining its role the board of directors has underlined the importance of being guided by the interests of clients, owners, employees and society as a whole when managing funds and running the company. At the beginning of 2018 Stefñir became a signatory to the Principles for Responsible Investment and undertakes to provide information on how it takes into account environmental, social and governance issues when managing its investments. During the year Stefñir submitted its second progress report to PRI and it will be possible to keep track of the company's progress on responsible investment as more reports are added to the PRI database. The company is also one of the founding members of Iceland SIF, which was founded in 2017. Iceland SIF is an independent forum for discussion and education on responsible and sustainable investment.

In 2020 Stefñir signed a declaration of intent on investment for a sustainable recovery. Financial resources are critical for shaping the business sector and creating jobs in this recovery. Responsible and diverse investment options and thorough disclosure of information are central to the corporate social responsibility that the company aspires to represent. The board of Stefñir has adopted a policy on responsible investment which applies to investments by funds managed by the company and how Stefñir can have a positive influence on our society, to the benefit of fund members and other stakeholders.

Stefñir has adopted a policy on conflicts of interest. The objective of the policy is to protect clients and fund members and to safeguard the independence and reputation of the company and its employees. The policy applies equally to directors and employees and implies that the company will take all available measures to prevent conflicts of interest from damaging the interests of clients and fund members. An extract of the policy and other rules designed to prevent conflicts of interest, e.g. rules on business dealings by employees of Stefñir, can be found on the company's [website](#).

Stefñir has three board members and two alternate members. The majority of the board is independent of Arion Bank, Stefñir's parent company, and the company itself. All board members are elected at a shareholders' meeting of the company. The managing director is hired by the board and has the mandate from the board to manage the day-to-day operations of the company. Board meetings are held regularly, on average once a month and more often if required. There were 21 board meetings during the year and there was a quorum present at every meeting. The board's standard procedures can be accessed on the company's [website](#) as well as the company's articles of association.

The board of directors of Stefñir comprises Sigrún Ragna Ólafsdóttir, chairman, self-employed, Jón Óttar Birgisson, vice chairman, managing director of Stöplar Advisory ehf., and Guðfinna Helgadóttir, business development specialist at Arion Bank hf. Sigrún Ragna has been chairman of the board since August 2019, while Jón Óttar joined the board in March 2020. Further information on board members at Stefñir can be found on the company's [website](#).

The alternate board members are Ásgerdur Hrönn Sveinsdóttir, area manager at Arion Bank hf., and Þórhallur Örn Guðlaugsson, lecturer in the faculty of business administration at the University of Iceland. The audit and risk committee was appointed by the board of directors in March 2020. The committee is composed of board directors of Stefñir. The committee met eight times in 2020 and achieved a quorum on each occasion. Two committee members are independent of the company and their broad expertise in business administration, auditing and management was put to good use in the course of the committee's business. The committee submits its annual report to the board of directors in the first quarter of every year. The committee's rules of procedure can be found on the company's [website](#). The board of Stefñir does not have a remuneration committee as this function is performed by the board. There is no nomination committee due to Stefñir's ownership structure, where the company is fully owned by Arion Bank and a related company.

The board of directors of Stefñir jointly devised the following mission statement for the board:

The board's key role is to establish a corporate strategy and ensure that it is implemented. The core of the strategy is for the company to be a leading fund management company and to ensure that the company is guided by the interests of clients, owners, employees and society at large. The focus is on running a solid and profitable business and minimizing risk. The board places a strong emphasis on good corporate governance and ensuring that the board and company operate at all times in compliance with the law, rules and good business practices.

The role of the board is defined in more detail in the rules of procedures and the company's articles of association.

The board evaluates its own work and that of the chairman on an annual basis and makes proposals for improvements. For the assessment the board uses an anonymous, electronic questionnaire. The results of the assessment are then discussed at a board meeting and the board's proposals for improvements are assigned to people for completion.

The company's managing director since 1 August 2020 is Jóhann G. Möller, born in 1979. Jóhann is a business



studies graduate and is a qualified stockbroker. Jóhann has extensive experience of the financial markets, where he has worked for the past 20 years and he joined Stefnr in 2006, managing domestic equities funds and he was head of the company's equities team for the last three years. Jóhann does not serve on the board of any companies and owns no shares or call option in Stefnr. There are no common interests with Stefnr's main business partners, competitors or shareholders. The main duties of the managing director are to manage the day-to-day business of the company, implement strategy and follow the instructions given by the board of directors, cf. Article 68 (1) of the Public Limited Companies Act. He is responsible for reporting to internal and external supervisory bodies. The managing director is authorized, upon approval by the board, to grant other employees of the company the power to carry out limited aspects of their duties.

The board's rules of procedure were established with reference to Article 54 (2) of the Financial Undertakings Act and Article 70 (5) of the Public Limited Companies Act. The rules of procedure are largely based on Guidelines No. 1/2010 of the Financial Supervisory Authority (FSA) and the company's articles of association, as well as the work undertaken in relation to the company's recognition as a model company in good corporate governance.

The board of directors' rules of procedure cover in detail the protocol for communications between shareholders and the board. The rules basically state that the chairman of the board is responsible for communications between the board and shareholders. The chairman shall ensure that the board is informed of all communications with shareholders and that at every board meeting a report, verbal or in writing, shall be given on communications with shareholders between meetings. The rules of procedure can be viewed on Stefnr's [website](#).

No judgments for punishable acts according to the Criminal Code, the Competition Act, Financial Undertakings Act or laws on public limited companies, private limited companies, book-keeping, annual accounts, bankruptcy or taxation, nor under special legislation applicable to parties subject to public supervision of financial activities, have been passed on Stefnr hf.

Stefnr has been a leader in many areas and has placed great importance on offering its clients competitive and responsible investment options in virtually all asset classes. It is vital that the company is able to share information accurately and easily with investors. The company's [website](#) performs an important role in this respect by publishing detailed information on all the Stefnr funds available to the public.