

Church investors become more active in investments in renewable energies

Düsseldorf, January 16th 2020 – Churches and denominational investors as a whole are increasingly taking an active role in sustainable investments. "Up to now one has often limited oneself to achieving returns without explicitly doing bad things", says Markus W. Voigt, Managing Director of AREAM GmbH, which specializes in investments in renewable energies. "Increasingly, these investors now want to actively intervene in order to implement higher-level investment goals.

Instead of checking existing investments for compatibility with ESG targets, for example, using their own or global criteria and making a corresponding selection, many church institutions, from pension funds to foundations, are now actively investing, for example in renewable energies. "This is a new quality that will give the sustainable economy an additional boost," says Voigt. Already today, church institutional investors are investing in wind or solar parks. "And this number is growing."

The active investments are a direct consequence of the fact that the churches are dealing with the topic: "Of course, the churches need returns in order to operate plants and facilities, from kindergartens to cemeteries," says Voigt. "The pension obligations of church employees must also be financed in the future." Churches have always been concerned with the different dimensions of their money management. "Man is the originator, center and goal of all economy" is already stated in publications on the occasion of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. Man is at the center; economy and investment of money must be measured by his intergenerational well-being. With this idea, in the recent past even more strongly oriented towards the preservation of creation, church institutions approach investment decisions.

Already in the past decades, church investors have refrained from many investments for ethical and moral reasons. Strict exclusion criteria, for example on issues such as armaments, alcohol or human rights violations by companies, are already common practice for many church investors. "The discussion about climate change and its consequences has led to the two large Christian churches becoming much more sensitive in this area," says Voigt. For example, investors worldwide have joined forces in a divestment movement and are selling shares or bonds of non-climate friendly companies. According to figures from the capital management company Hansainvest Hanseatische Investment-GmbH, institutional investors in Germany and Austria are the drivers of this movement: At the end of 2018, around 93 % of sustainable investments in Germany were in institutional hands: around 40 % with church institutions, followed at some distance by insurance companies (17 %), public pension and reserve funds (12 %) and foundations (10 %).

The sale of non-sustainable investments has created a high level of liquidity that is looking for new investment targets. "And a part of it is just being put into renewable energies", says Voigt, "because here the church leaders see a clear win-win situation of return and responsibility".

More information: www.aream-group.com.

About aream

aream is an owner-managed, fully integrated investment and asset manager for institutional investors with a focus on renewable energies. With a transaction volume of EUR 1.5 billion and a managed investment of EUR 1 billion, aream has been providing the entire spectrum of asset management services for 15 years, thus ensuring the commercial and technical optimisation of assets. Comprehensive services enable investments to be implemented from the planning and construction phase through to operation in line with investors' specifications.

As a signatory to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI), aream actively includes ESG issues in its investment analysis.

Contact

aream GmbH
Kaistraße 2
D-40221 Düsseldorf
Tel.: +49 (0)211 30 20 60 42
E-Mail: info@aream.de
Web: www.aream.de

Press contact

news & numbers GmbH
Bodo Scheffels
Tel.: +49 (0)40 80 60 194 34
M: +49 (0)178 / 49 80 733
E-Mail: bodo.scheffels@news-and-numbers.de
Web: www.news-and-numbers.de