

**Sustainable investment** means an investment in an economic activity that contributes to an environmental or social objective, provided that the investment does not significantly harm any environmental or social objective and that the investee companies follow good governance practices.

The **EU Taxonomy** is a classification system laid down in Regulation (EU) 2020/852, establishing a list of **environmentally sustainable economic activities**. That Regulation does not include a list of socially sustainable economic activities. Sustainable investments with an environmental objective might be aligned with the Taxonomy or not.

Product name: **abrdn SICAV I - Japanese Smaller Companies Sustainable Equity Fund**

Legal entity identifier **549300S5VXYQ7WSGV137**

## Environmental and/or social characteristics

### Does this financial product have a sustainable investment objective?

**Yes**

It made **sustainable investments with an environmental objective: %**

in economic activities that qualify as environmentally sustainable under the EU Taxonomy

in economic activities that do not qualify as environmentally sustainable under the EU Taxonomy

It made **sustainable investments with a social objective: %**

**No**

It **promoted Environmental/Social (E/S) characteristics** and while it did not have as its objective a sustainable investment, it had a proportion of 44.88% of sustainable investments

with an environmental objective in economic activities that qualify as environmentally sustainable under the EU Taxonomy

with an environmental objective in economic activities that do not qualify as environmentally sustainable under the EU Taxonomy

with a social objective

It promoted E/S characteristics, but **did not make any sustainable investments**

### To what extent were the environmental and/or social characteristics promoted by this financial product met?

The Fund promoted environmental and social characteristics by aiming to invest in issuers that:

- Avoided severe, lasting or irremediable harm; and
- Appropriately addressed adverse impacts on the environment and society; and
- Supported a decent standard of living for their stakeholders

The Fund aimed to promote environmental and social characteristics holistically. In doing so, we did not consider all characteristics for all investments, but rather focused on the most relevant characteristics for each investment based on the nature of its activities, areas of operation, and products and services. However, using our proprietary research framework we aimed to promote the below characteristics within this fund; however a broader suite of characteristics might also have been promoted on an investment-

by-investment basis:

Environment – reduced energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, increased renewable energy usage/generation, reduced biodiversity/ecological impacts.

Social – promoted good labour practices and relations, maximised employee health and safety, supported diversity in the workforce, and healthy relationships with communities.

Benchmark

This Fund had a financial benchmark that was used for portfolio construction but did not incorporate any sustainable criteria and was not selected for the purpose of attaining these characteristics. This financial benchmark was used as a comparator for Fund performance and as a comparison for the Fund's binding commitments.

**Sustainability indicators** measure how the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the financial product are attained.

## ● **How did the sustainability indicators perform?**

ESG Assessment Criteria

Our equity analysts assign a proprietary score (1 to 5) to articulate how well a business is managing material ESG factors and the likely impact on performance. This score summarises insights across three key areas:

- 1.) Our view on the quality of the corporate governance and oversight of the business and management
- 2.) Identification of the most material environmental, social, and operational governance issues the company must manage
- 3.) An assessment of the management of the most material ESG risks and opportunities and impact the business' operational performance and valuation

1 indicates best in class performance with excellent governance, strong operational ESG integration and maximisation of revenue opportunities linked to sustainability themes. Overall an ESG Q1 indicates that ESG enhances a company's competitive advantage and strengthens an investment case. ESG Q 5 indicates poor governance and no oversight, little appetite to identify and manage ESG risks and no awareness of revenue opportunities linked to sustainability themes which mean there is significant investment risk. The breakdown of portfolio scores was as below: ESG Q1: 7.5%, ESG Q2: 46.6%, ESG Q3: 42.7%, ESG Q4: 0.0%.

We confirm that during the reporting period, binary exclusions are applied to exclude the particular areas of investment related to UN Global Compact, Controversial Weapons, Tobacco Manufacturing and Thermal Coal. These screening criteria apply in a binding manner and there are no holdings in the fund that fail the agreed criteria. Our proprietary ESG House Score, developed by our central sustainability team in collaboration with the Quantitative investment team, is used to identify companies with potentially high or poorly managed ESG risks. The score is calculated by combining a variety of data inputs within a proprietary framework in which different ESG factors are weighted according to how material they are for each sector. We confirm that during the reporting period the Fund excluded companies with the highest ESG risks, as identified by the ESG House Score. This is implemented by excluding at least the bottom 10% of issuers with an ESG House Score that are in the benchmark. Application of the binary exclusions and the ESG House-based exclusions resulted in at least 20% of the Fund's investment universe being excluded as at 30 Sept 2024.

Carbon intensity

We confirm that during the reporting period the portfolio performed better than the benchmark, in line with our overall commitment. The Fund achieved a 15.83% lower carbon intensity than the benchmark as at 30 Sept 2024 (on a WACI basis).

ESG Fund Rating

We confirm that during the reporting period the Fund did not achieve a better ESG rating based on MSCI data when compared with the benchmark:

- Fund rating BBB
- Benchmark rating A

Promotes good governance including social factors

We confirm that during the reporting period the Fund focused engagement and analysis on governance and that using the abrdn ESG House Score, we avoided those companies with the worst governance practices.

● **...and compared to previous periods?**

In the previous period the breakdown of portfolio scores was as below: ESG Q1: 0%, ESG Q2: 47%, ESG Q3: 53%, ESG Q4: 0%. The Fund achieved a 68.74% lower carbon intensity than the benchmark as at 30 Sept 2023 (on a WACI basis). We confirm that during the previous reporting period the Fund achieved a better ESG rating based on MSCI data (A) when compared with the benchmark (BBB).

| Period                 | 2024   | 2023   |
|------------------------|--------|--------|
| E/S Characteristics    | 99.01% | 97.36% |
| Sustainable investment | 44.88% | 38.93% |
| Other environmental    | 14.64% | 12.62% |
| Social                 | 30.24% | 26.31% |

● **What were the objectives of the sustainable investments that the financial product partially made and how did the sustainable investment contribute to such objectives?**

The objective of the sustainable investment is to make a contribution to solving an environmental or social challenge, in addition to not causing significant harm, and being well governed. Each sustainable investment may make a contribution to Environmental or Social issues. In fact, many companies will make a positive contribution to both. abrdn use the six environmental objectives of the Taxonomy to inform Environmental contributions, including: (1) climate change mitigation, (2) climate change adaptation, (3) sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources, (4) transition to a circular economy, (5) pollution prevention and control, and (6) protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems. In addition, abrdn use the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their sub-goals to supplement the EU Taxonomy topics and provide a framework for considering Social objectives.

An economic activity must have a positive economic contribution to qualify as a Sustainable investment, this includes consideration of Environmental or Socially aligned revenues, Capex, Opex or sustainable operations. abrdn seek to establish or estimate the share of the investee company's economic activities/contribution towards a sustainable objective and it is this element that is weighted and counted towards the Sub-fund's total aggregated proportion of Sustainable Investments.

abrdn uses a combination of the following approaches:

- a quantitative methodology based on a combination of publicly available data sources; and
- using abrdn's own insight and engagement outcomes abrdn overlay the quantitative methodology with a qualitative assessment to calculate an overall percentage of economic contribution towards a sustainable objective for each holding in a Fund

**Principal adverse impacts** are the most significant negative impacts of investment decisions on sustainability factors relating to environmental, social and employee matters, respect for human rights, anti- corruption and anti- bribery matters.

● ***How did the sustainable investments that the financial product partially made not cause significant harm to any environmental or social sustainable investment objective?***

As required by the SFDR Delegated Regulation, the investment does not cause Significant Harm (“Do No Significant Harm”/ “DNSH”) to any of the sustainable investment objectives. abrdn have created a 3-step process to ensure consideration of DNSH:

i. Sector Exclusions

abrdn have identified a number of sectors which automatically do not qualify for inclusion as a Sustainable Investment as they are considered to be causing significant harm. These include but are not limited to: (1) Defence, (2) Coal, (3) Oil & Gas Exploration,

Production and associated activities, (4) tobacco, (5) gambling and (6) alcohol.

ii. DNSH Binary Test

The DNSH test, is a binary pass/fail test which signals if the company passes or fails criteria for the SFDR Article 2 (17) “do no significant harm”. Pass indicates under abrdn’s methodology the company has no ties to controversial weapons, less than 1% of revenue from thermal coal, less than 5% of revenue from tobacco related activities, is not a tobacco producer, and has no red/severe ESG Controversies. If the company fails this test, it cannot be considered a Sustainable Investment. abrdn’s approach is aligned with the SFDR PAIs included within tables 1, 2 & 3 of the SFDR Delegated Regulation and is based on external data sources and abrdn internal insights.

iii. DNSH Materiality Flag

Using a number of additional screens and flags, abrdn consider the additional SFDR PAI’s indicators as defined by the SFDR Delegated Regulation to identify areas for improvement or potential future concern. These indicators are not considered to cause significant harm and therefore a company with active DNSH materiality flags may still be considered to be a Sustainable Investment. abrdn aim to enhance the engagement activities to focus on these areas and seek to deliver better outcomes by resolving the issue

During the reporting period, abrdn used the above approach to test the contribution to sustainable investment.

— ***How were the indicators for adverse impacts on sustainability factors taken into account?***

The fund considers Principle Adverse Impact Indicators defined by the SFDR Delegated Regulation.

Pre investment, abrdn applies a number of norms and activity-based screens related to PAIs, including but not limited to: UN Global Compact, controversial weapons, and thermal coal extraction.

UNGC: The Fund uses norms-based screens and controversy filters to exclude companies that may be in breach of international norms described in the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and the UN guiding principles on business and human rights, as well as state owned entities in countries which violate norms.

Controversial Weapons: The Fund excludes companies with business activities related to controversial weapons (cluster munitions, anti-personnel landmines, nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons, white phosphorus, non-detectable fragments, incendiary devices, depleted uranium ammunition or blinding lasers).

Thermal Coal Extraction: The Fund excludes companies with exposure to the fossil fuels sector based on percentage of revenue from thermal coal extraction.

abrdn apply a fund specific set of company exclusions, more detail on these and the overall process is captured within the Investment Approach, which is published at [www.abrdn.com](http://www.abrdn.com) under "Fund Centre".

Post-investment the following PAI indicators are considered:

- abrdn monitors all mandatory and additional PAI indicators via our ESG integration

investment process using a combination of our proprietary house score and 3rd party data feeds. PAI indicators that either fail a specific binary test or are considered above typical are flagged for review and may be selected for company engagement.

- Consideration of portfolio carbon intensity and GHG emissions via our Climate tools and risk analysis
- Governance indicators via our proprietary governance scores and risk framework, including consideration of sound management structures, employee relations, remuneration of staff and tax compliance.
- On an on-going basis the investment universe is scanned for companies that may be in breach of international norms described in the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and the UN guiding principles on business and human rights, as well as state owned entities in countries which violate norms.

— ***Were sustainable investments aligned with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights? Details:***

Yes, all sustainable investments are aligned with OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human rights. Breaches and violations of these international norms are flagged by an event-driven controversy and are captured in the investment process, and in turn excluded from consideration as a sustainable investment.

*The EU Taxonomy sets out a “do not significant harm” principle by which Taxonomy-aligned investments should not significantly harm EU Taxonomy objectives and is accompanied by specific Union criteria.*

The “do no significant harm” principle applies only to those investments underlying the financial product that take into account the EU criteria for environmentally sustainable economic activities. The investments underlying the remaining portion of this financial product do not take into account the EU criteria for environmentally sustainable economic activities.

*Any other sustainable investments must also not significantly harm any environmental or social objectives.*



## **How did this financial product consider principal adverse impacts on sustainability factors?**

The Fund has committed to consider the following PAIs in its investment process, this means that there is pre- and post-trade monitoring in place and that every investment for the Fund is assessed on these factors to determine its appropriateness for the Fund.

- PAI 1: GHG emissions (scope 1 and 2)
- PAI 10: Violations of the UN Global Compact (UNGC) principles and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises
- PAI 14: Exposure to controversial weapons (anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, chemical weapons and biological weapons)

### Adverse impacts monitoring

Pre investment, abrdn applies a number of norms and activity-based screens related to the above PAIs, including but not limited to:

- UNGC: The Fund uses norms-based screens and controversy filters to exclude companies that may be in breach of international norms described in the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and the UN guiding principles on business and human rights, as well as state owned entities in countries which violate norms.
- Controversial Weapons: The Fund excludes companies with business activities related to controversial weapons (cluster munitions, anti-personnel landmines, nuclear weapons, chemical and biological

weapons, white phosphorus, non-detectable fragments, incendiary devices, depleted uranium ammunition or blinding lasers).

- Thermal Coal Extraction: The Fund excludes companies with exposure to the fossil fuels sector based on percentage of revenue from thermal coal extraction.

abrdn apply a fund specific set of company exclusions, more detail on these and the overall process is captured within the Investment Approach, which is published at [www.abrdn.com](http://www.abrdn.com) under "Fund Centre".

Post-investment the above PAI indicators are monitored in the following way:

- Company carbon intensity and GHG emissions is monitored via our Climate tools and risk analysis
- On an on-going basis the investment universe is scanned for companies that may be in breach of international norms described in the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and the UN guiding principles on business and human rights.

Post-investment we also undertake the following activities in relation to additional PAI's:

- Dependent on data availability, quality and relevance to the investments the consideration of additional PAI indicators will be on a case-by- case basis.
- abrdn monitors PAI indicators via our ESG integration investment process using a combination of our proprietary house score and 3rd party data feeds.
- Governance indicators are monitored via our proprietary governance scores and risk framework, including consideration of sound management structures, and remuneration.

Adverse impact mitigation

- PAI indicators that fail a defined pre-investment screen are excluded from the investment universe and cannot be held by the fund. We confirm that screening in line with our Investment Approach documents has been undertaken during the reporting period.
- PAI indicators that are monitored post investment which fail a specific binary test or are considered above typical are flagged for review and may be selected for company engagement. These adverse indicators may be used as a tool for engagement, for example where there is no policy in place and this would be beneficial abrdn may engage with the issuer or company to develop one, or where carbon emissions are considered to be high, abrdn may engage to seek the creation of a long-term target and reduction plan.



## What were the top investments of this financial product?

The list includes the investments constituting the **greatest proportion of investments** of the financial product during the reference period which is:  
01/10/2023 - 30/09/2024

| Largest Investments          | Sector                 | % Assets | Country |
|------------------------------|------------------------|----------|---------|
| LIFE CORP                    | Consumer Staples       | 4.01     | Japan   |
| HACHIJUNI BANK LTD/THE       | Financials             | 3.88     | Japan   |
| JSB CO LTD                   | Real Estate            | 3.81     | Japan   |
| NIFCO INC                    | Consumer Discretionary | 3.72     | Japan   |
| TOKYO CENTURY CORP           | Financials             | 3.72     | Japan   |
| TOKYU FUDOSAN HOLDINGS CORP  | Real Estate            | 3.69     | Japan   |
| MARUZEN SHOWA UNYU CO LTD    | Industrials            | 3.59     | Japan   |
| NH FOODS LTD                 | Consumer Staples       | 3.02     | Japan   |
| OPEN UP GROUP INC            | Industrials            | 2.82     | Japan   |
| ESPEC CORP                   | Industrials            | 2.77     | Japan   |
| JEOL LTD                     | Health Care            | 2.76     | Japan   |
| AMADA CO LTD                 | Industrials            | 2.46     | Japan   |
| LION CORP                    | Consumer Staples       | 2.36     | Japan   |
| TAKASAGO THERMAL ENGINEERING | Industrials            | 2.35     | Japan   |
| TRANSACTION CO LTD           | Consumer Discretionary | 2.31     | Japan   |

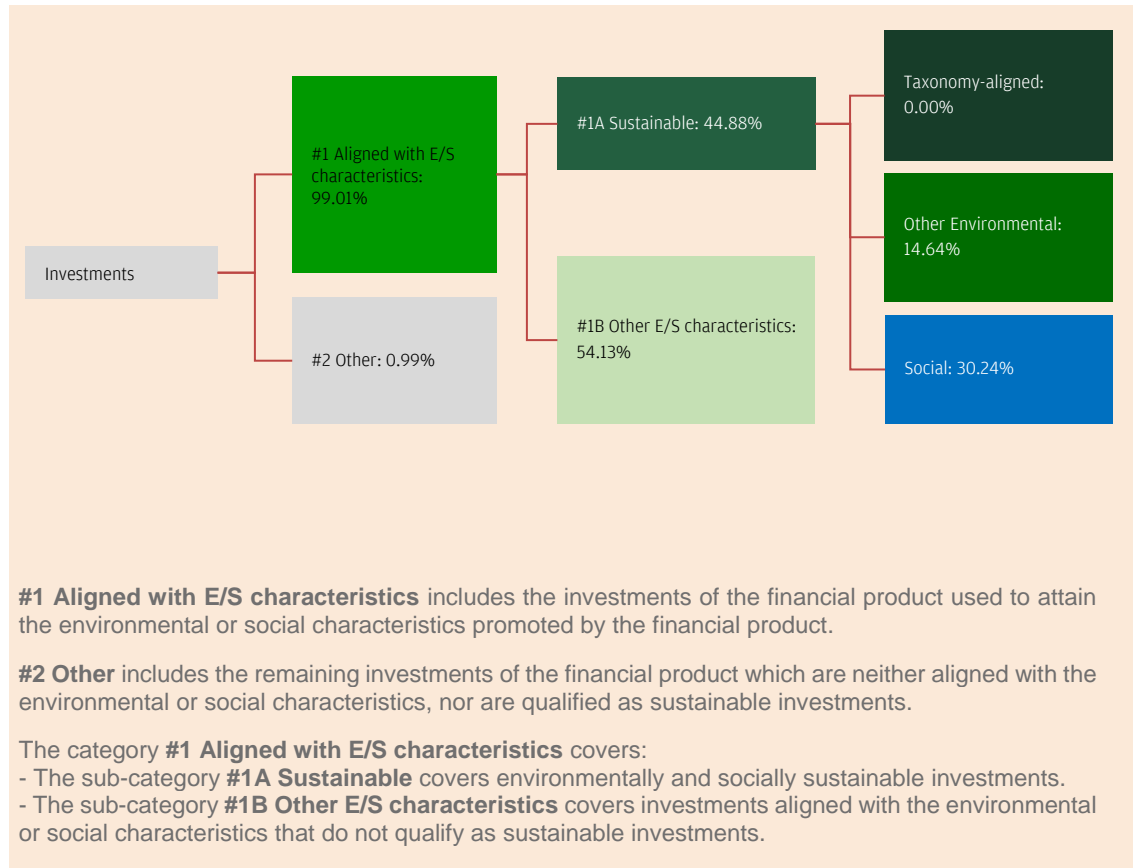


## What was the proportion of sustainability-related investments?

**Asset allocation** describes the share of investments in specific assets.

### ● What was the asset allocation?

The fund committed to hold a minimum of 90% of the Fund's assets aligned with E/S characteristics. Environmental and social safeguards are met by applying certain PAI's, where relevant, to these underlying assets. Within these assets, the Fund commits to a minimum of 35% in Sustainable Investments. The Fund invests a maximum of 10% of assets in the "Other" category, which include cash, money market instruments and derivatives. The chart below shows the investments aligned with Environmental and Social Characteristics expressed as a percentage of Net Asset Value (NAV), achieved during the reporting period.



### ● In which economic sectors were the investments made?

| Sector                 | Sub-sector                      | % Assets |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Financials             | Financial Services              | 5.15     |
| Financials             | Banking                         | 3.88     |
| Technology             | Software & Tech Services        | 7.12     |
| Technology             | Tech Hardware & Semiconductors  | 6.70     |
| Consumer Discretionary | Consumer Discretionary Products | 5.55     |
| Consumer Discretionary | Retail & Whsle - Discretionary  | 2.31     |
| Consumer Discretionary | Consumer Discretionary Services | 2.19     |
| Health Care            | Health Care                     | 6.70     |
| Industrials            | Industrial Products             | 12.73    |
| Industrials            | Industrial Services             | 15.46    |
| Communications         | Media                           | 2.15     |
| Communications         | Telecommunications              | 2.19     |
| Consumer Staples       | Consumer Staple Products        | 5.74     |
| Consumer Staples       | Retail & Wholesale - Staples    | 4.01     |
| Materials              | Materials                       | 6.19     |
| Real Estate            | Real Estate                     | 9.21     |

**Enabling activities** directly enable other activities to make a substantial contribution to an environmental objective.  
**Transitional activities** are economic activities for which low-carbon alternatives are not yet available and that have greenhouse gas emission levels corresponding to the best performance.



## To what extent were the sustainable investments with an environmental objective aligned with the EU Taxonomy?

Whilst the minimum mandatory allocation to sustainable investments with an environmental objective aligned with the EU Taxonomy is 0%, the fund is permitted to allocate to such investments which would form part of the overall allocation to sustainable investments with an environmental objective.

Assessment on Taxonomy alignment is currently conducted with data from third party providers as well as self-reported data from investee companies when available.

Data providers' methodologies vary and results may not be fully aligned to all Taxonomy requirements, as long as publicly reported company data is lacking and assessments rely largely on equivalent data.

Out of caution, unless we are able to confirm available data for the majority of the portfolio's holdings, we will report 0 (zero) per cent of Taxonomy-Aligned Investments (concerning all environmental objectives) .

The compliance of the investments with the EU Taxonomy has not been subject to an assurance by auditors or a review by third parties.

The fund holds 0% investments in sustainable investments with an environmental objective aligned with the EU Taxonomy.

● **Did the financial product invest in fossil gas and/or nuclear energy related activities complying with the EU Taxonomy?**

Yes

In fossil gas

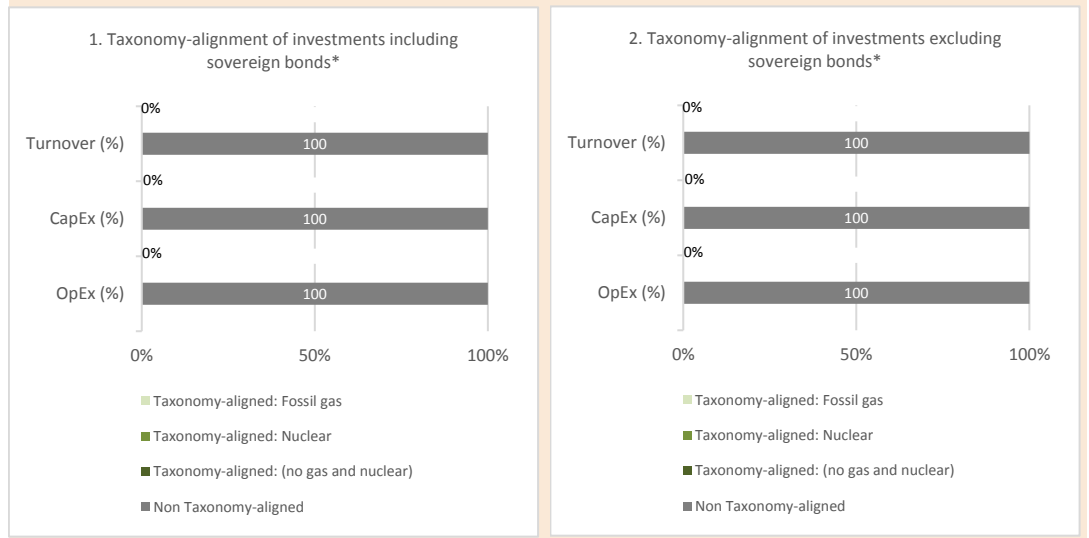
In nuclear energy

No

Taxonomy-aligned activities are expressed as a share of:

- **turnover** reflecting the share of revenue from green activities of investee companies.
- **capital expenditure (Capex)** showing the green investments made by investee companies, e.g. for a transition to a green economy.
- **operational expenditure (Opex)** reflecting green operational activities of investee companies.

The graphs below show in green the percentage of investments that were aligned with the EU Taxonomy. As there is no appropriate methodology to determine the taxonomy-alignment of sovereign bonds\*, the first graph shows the Taxonomy alignment in relation to all the investments of the financial product including sovereign bonds, while the second graph shows the Taxonomy alignment only in relation to the investments of the financial product other than sovereign bonds.



This graph represents 0 % of the total investment.

\*For the purpose of these graphs, 'sovereign bonds' consist of all sovereign exposures

1 Fossil gas and/or nuclear related activities will only comply with the EU Taxonomy where they contribute to limiting climate change ("climate change mitigation") and do not significantly harm any EU Taxonomy objective - see explanatory note in the left hand margin. The full criteria for fossil gas and nuclear energy economic activities that comply with the EU Taxonomy are laid down in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/1214.

● **What was the share of investments made in transitional and enabling activities?**

The fund holds 0% investments made in transitional and enabling activities.

● **How did the percentage of investments that were aligned with the EU Taxonomy compare with previous reference periods?**

The fund held 0% investments in sustainable investments with an environmental objective aligned with the EU Taxonomy, during the previous reference period.



**What was the share of sustainable investments with an environmental objective not aligned with the EU Taxonomy?**

The share of sustainable investments with an environmental objective not aligned with the EU Taxonomy was 14.64% of assets as at the year end date and is representative of the Reference Period.

Assessment on Taxonomy alignment is currently conducted with data from third party providers as well as self-reported data from investee companies when available.

Data providers' methodologies vary and results may not be fully aligned to all Taxonomy requirements, as long as publicly reported company data is lacking and assessments rely largely on equivalent data.

Out of caution, unless we are able to confirm available data for the majority of the portfolio's holdings, we will report 0 (zero) per cent of Taxonomy-Aligned Investments (concerning all environmental objectives), and the remainder as not aligned with the EU Taxonomy.

The compliance of the investments with the EU Taxonomy has not been subject to an assurance by auditors or a review by third parties.



**What was the share of socially sustainable investments?**

The share of sustainable investments with a social objective is 30.24%



**What investments were included under "other", what was their purpose and were there any minimum environmental or social safeguards?**

The Fund invested 0.99% of assets in the "Other" category. The investments included under "other" are cash, money market instruments, derivatives. The purpose of these assets are to meet liquidity, target return or manage risk and may not contribute to the environmental or social aspects of the Fund.

 are sustainable investments with an environmental objective that **do not take into account the criteria** for environmentally sustainable economic activities under Regulation (EU) 22/852.



## What actions have been taken to meet the environmental and/or social characteristics during the reference period?

To promote the environmental and social characteristics, the Fund applies ESG assessment criteria, ESG screening criteria and promotes good governance including social factors. In addition, the fund committed to consider the following PAIs within the investment process: PAI 1: GHG emissions (scope 1 and 2), PAI 10: Violations of the UN Global Compact (UNGC) principles and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and PAI 14: Exposure to controversial weapons (anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, chemical weapons and biological weapons). The fund has also engaged with issuers on relevant environmental or social topics which include Climate change, Labour Management, Human Rights, and Corporate Governance: 1) tripla Co Ltd - This was our first ESG engagement with Tripla, a relatively small company with around 110 employees. Key ESG issues for the company include human capital management and data security. They seem to be managing talent attraction/retention really well, with incentivisation for their employees through flexible work programmes, emphasis on culture, as well as proper reward/remuneration to align them to corporate growth. Turnover rates have been low. On data security, this is important since their business model is digital, and they have put in place some useful access controls and mechanisms such as training to reduce cyber security risks. An encouraging first meeting. 2) Zenkoku Hosho - Another positive engagement with Zenkoku Hosho, and one where we covered a range of ESG issues, including: a) how the company manages climate change risks, b) consumer finance protection frameworks, and c) cyber and data privacy initiatives. The company seems to be progressive with respect to cyber security, which we were comforted by given the company is moving towards digitalisation and open IT architecture. We were also pleased to hear that they have been upgraded by MSCI from BB to BBB following our engagement last year; we are hopeful they will continue to see ratings improvement in future.



## How did this financial product perform compared to the reference benchmark?

Not applicable

**Reference benchmarks** are indexes to measure whether the financial product attains the environmental or social characteristics that they promote.

- ***How does the reference benchmark differ from a broad market index?***

Not applicable

- ***How did this financial product perform with regard to the sustainability indicators to determine the alignment of the reference benchmark with the environmental or social characteristics promoted?***

Not applicable

- ***How did this financial product perform compared with the reference benchmark?***

Not applicable

- ***How did this financial product perform compared with the broad market index?***

Not applicable