



**Environment** reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, increasing renewable energy usage/generation, reducing biodiversity/ecological impacts.

**Social** promoting good labour practices and relations, maximising employee health and safety, supporting diversity in the workforce, and healthy relationships with communities.

### **Benchmark**

This Fund has a financial benchmark that is used for portfolio construction but does not incorporate any sustainable criteria and is not selected for the purpose of attaining these characteristics. This financial benchmark is used as a comparator for Fund performance and

$\rho$   $\rho$   $\delta$   $\delta$

### ● **What Sustainability Indicators are used to measure the attainment of each of the environmental or social characteristics promoted by this financial product?**

Our approach positively identifies companies which promote the above E&S characteristics, seeking to ensure that 90% of the portfolio is aligned with the E&S characteristics identified. We do this by tracking the below sustainability indicators which allow us to measure the attainment of the E&S characteristics the Fund is promoting:

#### **Sustainability Indicator – screening criteria**

Pre investment, abrdn applies a number of norms and activity-based screens to ensure that severe, lasting or irremediable harm is avoided. Binary exclusions are applied to exclude the particular areas of investment of concern. Our exclusions are informed by the Principle Adverse Indicators, but not limited to them. The criteria include investments related to the UN Global Compact (PAI 10), Controversial Weapons (PAI 14), Tobacco Manufacturing and Thermal Coal, further detail can be reviewed per the Fund Investment Approach at [www.abrdn.com](http://www.abrdn.com) under "Fund Centre".

#### **Sustainability Indicator – Environment, Social & Governance Performance**

Our proprietary ESG House Score, developed by our central ESG investment 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. This allows us to see how companies rank in a global context. The score assesses many different Environmental, Social & Governance issues however, specifically assesses the following characteristics energy, greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, raw materials, biodiversity/ecological impacts and circular economy, labour practices and relations, employee health and safety and supply chain management.

The Fund will exclude at least the bottom 10% of companies with the lowest ESG House Score in the benchmark.

#### **Sustainability indicator – Good Governance & Business Quality**

We consider the quality of the businesses management team and analyse the environmental, social and governance (ESG) opportunities and risks impacting the business and appraise how well these are managed. We assign a proprietary score (ranked 1 – 5) to articulate the quality attributes of each company, one of which is the ESG Quality rating. This enables the portfolio managers to exclude companies with material ESG risks and positively skew the portfolio towards ESG opportunities and to build well-diversified, risk-adjusted portfolios.

Companies eligible for inclusion in the Fund must have an ESG Quality rating of 3 or better.

### ● **What are the objectives of the sustainable investments that the financial product partially intends to make and how does 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

sustainable objective and it is this element that is weighted and counted towards the Sub-

abrdn uses a combination of the following approaches:

- i. a quantitative methodology based on a combination of publicly available data sources; and
- ii. 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 do the sustainable investments that the financial product partially intends to make, not cause significant harm to any environmental or social sustainable investment objective?**

As required by the SFDR Delegated Regulation, the investment does not cause 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 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 & 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 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.

-> *How have the indicators for adverse impacts on sustainability factors been 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.

→ How are the sustainable investments aligned with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights? Details:

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.

*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 EU criteria.*

$\delta$   $\rho$  ose 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.*



**Does this financial product consider principal adverse impacts on sustainability factors?**

X

Yes, this Fund considers Principal Adverse Impacts (PAI) on sustainability factors.

**Principal adverse impacts consideration**

Yes, the Fund commits 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).

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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.

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.

No



## What investment strategy does this financial product follow?

The investment strategy guides investment decisions based on factors such as investment objectives and risk tolerance.

are defined as companies with a market capitalisation in the Base Currency of the Fund, as at the date of investment, of under Yen 500 billion.

The Fund is actively managed. The Fund aims to outperform the MSCI Japan Small Cap Index (JPY) benchmark before charges. The benchmark is also used as a reference point for portfolio construction and as a basis for setting risk constraints, but does not incorporate any sustainable criteria.

In order to achieve its objective, the Fund will take positions whose weightings diverge from the benchmark and may invest in securities which are not included in the benchmark. The investments of the Fund may deviate significantly from the components of and their respective weightings in the benchmark. Due to the active and sustainable nature of the

the benchmark.

The Fund promotes environmental and social characteristics but does not have a sustainable investment objective.

Investment in all equity and equity-p

Through the application of this approach the Fund has an expected minimum of 35% in Sustainable Investments. Furthermore, the Fund targets an ESG rating that is equal to or better, and a meaningfully lower carbon intensity, than the benchmark.

to qualitatively identify and focus investment in sustainable leaders and improvers. Sustainable leaders are viewed as companies with the best in class ESG credentials or products and services which address global environmental and societal challenges, whilst improvers are typically companies with average governance, ESG management practices and disclosure with potential for improvement.

To complement this research, the abrdn ESG House Score is used to quantitatively identify and exclude those companies exposed to the highest ESG risks. Additionally, abrdn apply a set of company exclusions which are related to the UN Global Compact, Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM), State Owned Enterprises (SOE), Weapons, Tobacco, Gambling, Thermal Coal, Oil & Gas and Electricity Generation. More detail on this overall process is captured within the abrdn Japanese Smaller Companies Sustainable Equity

Engagement with external company management teams is used to evaluate the ownership structures, governance and management quality of those companies in order to inform portfolio construction.

● **What are the binding elements of the investment strategy used to select the investments to attain each of the environmental or social characteristics promoted by this financial product?**

The binding elements used by the Fund are:

1. A commitment to hold a minimum of 90% of the assets aligned with E/S characteristics and within these assets, the Fund commits to hold a minimum of  $\rho \delta$  Investments. The minimum share of Sustainable Investments with a social objective is 5%; and the minimum share of Sustainable Investments with an environmental objective that are not aligned with the EU Taxonomy is 5%.
2. A commitment to achieve a carbon intensity target lower than benchmark .
3. A commitment to achieve an ESG rating better than or equal to benchmark and
4. A commitment to apply binary exclusions to exclude the particular areas of investment related to the UN Global Compact, Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM), State Owned Enterprises (SOE), Weapons, Tobacco, Gambling, Thermal Coal, Oil & Gas and Electricity Generation.

These screening criteria apply in a binding manner and on an ongoing basis.

● **What is the committed minimum rate to reduce the scope of the investments considered prior to the application of that investment strategy?**

$\delta$  universe, through a combination of in-house proprietary scoring tools  $\rho$  and the use of negative criteria to avoid investing in certain industries and activities that abrdn customers are concerned with.  $\delta$

● **What is the policy to assess good governance practices of the investee companies?**

For this Fund, the investee company needs to follow good governance practices in particular with respect to sound management structures, employee relations, remuneration of staff and tax compliance. This can be demonstrated by the monitoring of certain PAI indicators, for example corruption, tax compliance and diversity. In addition,  $\rho \delta$  any investments with low governance scores.  $\rho$  Our governance scores assess a  $\rho$  porate governance and management structure (including remuneration of staff policies) and the quality and behaviour of its leadership and management. A low score will typically be given where there are concerns in relation to financially materially controversies, poor tax compliance or governance concerns, or poor treatment of employees or minority shareholders.

The investment must further be 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.

Good governance practices include sound management structures, employee relations, remuneration of staff and tax compliance.









binary exclusions are applied to exclude the particular areas of investment.

This process results in the Fund committing to a minimum of 90% in securities with environment and social characteristics and a minimum of 35% to sustainable investments which are inclusive of both environmental and social objectives that DUHQ↑W H[SOLFLWO\ WD[RQRP\ DOLJQHG 7KH PL with an environmental objective is 5%.

## What is the minimum share of socially sustainable investments?

The Fund contains high-quality companies that have been identified through our bottom-up equity research process which takes into consideration the sustainability of the business in its broad HVW VHQVH DQG WKH FRPSDQ\↑V governance (ESG) performance. Within our equity investment process, every company that we invest in is given, via a qualitative assessment, a proprietary overall Quality rating. A key component of this is the ESG Quality rating, which enables the portfolio managers to identify sustainable leaders and improvers and to build well-diversified, risk-adjusted portfolios.

To complement our bottom-up research, the portfolio managers also use our proprietary ESG House Score, which is primarily a quantitative assessment, to identify and exclude those companies exposed to the highest ESG risks. Finally, binary exclusions are applied to exclude the particular areas of investment.

This process results in the Fund committing to a minimum of 90% in securities with environment and social characteristics and a minimum of 35% to sustainable investments which are inclusive of both environmental and social objectives that DUHQ↑W H[SOLFLWO\ WD[RQRP are Sustainable Investments with a social objective is 5%.

## What is the purpose and are there any minimum environmental or social safeguards?

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.

There are certain environmental and social safeguards that are met by applying 3\$,↑V :KHUH UHOHYDQW WKHVH DUH DSSOLHG W



## Is a specific index designated as a reference benchmark to determine whether this financial product is aligned with the environmental and/or social characteristics that it promotes?

No

- **How is the reference benchmark continuously aligned with each of the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the financial product?**

Not applicable

- **How is the alignment of the investment strategy with the methodology of the index ensured on a continuous basis?**

Not applicable

- **How does the designated index differ from a relevant broad market index?**

Not applicable

- **Where can the methodology used for the calculation of the designated index be found?**

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