

# Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation

Neuberger Berman Europe Limited

## Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation

Regulation (EU) 2019/2088 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on sustainability-related disclosures in the financial services sector ("**SFDR**") seeks to (i) establish a harmonised approach in respect of sustainability-related disclosures made by financial market participants to investors within the European Union's financial services sector and (ii) to achieve more transparency regarding how financial market participants integrate Sustainability Risks (as defined below) into their investment decisions and the consideration of adverse sustainability impacts into the investment process. Financial market participants include AIFMs, investment firms and UCITS management companies, in their capacity as manager of financial products (which includes all forms of AIFs, UCITS and/or segregated client accounts). For the purposes of SFDR, Neuberger Berman Europe Limited ("**NBEL**") is a financial market participant for the financial product listed below.

### Integration of Sustainability Risks

Unless otherwise specified, NBEL applies the Neuberger Berman ESG Policy for financial products under its management. In applying the Neuberger Berman ESG Policy, NBEL (in conjunction with other companies in the Neuberger Berman group for which it is applicable) shall integrate ESG factors (including the consideration of Sustainability Risks) into the investment decision-making process. The specific approach to ESG integration taken by NBEL in applying the Neuberger Berman ESG Policy, in its role as portfolio manager (together with other companies in the Neuberger Berman group as applicable) will depend on multiple factors, including (i) the objectives of the financial product's strategy, (ii) the assets held by the financial product, (iii) the investment time horizon, (iv) any specific research undertaken by NBEL, (v) an assessment of the likely impact of Sustainability Risks on the returns of the financial product and (vi) the overall investment process.

NBEL (together with other companies in the Neuberger Berman group as applicable), in applying the Neuberger Berman ESG Policy, determines how to (i) achieve its ESG integration objective and (ii) undertake ESG analysis to potentially increase return or mitigate risk (including Sustainability Risk). Each of those steps influences portfolio construction. The Neuberger Berman ESG Policy requires that research analysts and portfolio managers, including NBEL, undertake their own research on ESG factors so they can consider them alongside other inputs as part of the overall investment process.

As per SFDR - Sustainability Risks are defined as environmental, social and governance events or conditions whose occurrence could have an actual or potential material negative impact on the value of an investment (and hence on the net asset value of the fund and on its returns). Typical examples of Sustainability Risks include but are not limited to, risks stemming from climate change (notably physical and transition risks), natural resource depletion, environmental degradation, human rights abuses, bribery, corruption, poor governance and social and employee matters.

Sustainability Risks can impact the value of an investment in a number of ways depending on the nature of individual investments, for example, through physical damage to assets, policy or technological changes impacting the economics of the investment or through changes in consumer preferences.

NBEL considers Sustainability Risks (as defined in the SFDR as per above) as a broad term which seeks to identify financially material risk that relates to ESG issues. Therefore, potential risk posed by Sustainability Risks can be limited through ESG integration, sustainable investing and the responsible and proper management of portfolios.

### Neuberger Berman ESG Quotient

Unless otherwise stated in the relevant supplement or Investment Management Agreement ("**IMA**"), for each of the Article 8 and Article 9 financial products NBEL uses the proprietary Neuberger Berman ESG rating system (the "**NB ESG Quotient**") as part of the investment process. The NB ESG Quotient is built

around the concept of specific industry or sovereign ESG risks and opportunities. Foundational to the NB ESG Quotient is the proprietary Neuberger Berman ("NB") materiality matrix, which focuses on the ESG characteristics that are considered to be the most material drivers of ESG risks and opportunities for each industry sector or sovereign issuer. Each industry sector or sovereign criteria is constructed using third party ESG data and internally derived ESG data, leveraging the investment team's significant industry sector or sovereign expertise. Unless otherwise specified in the supplement or IMA for the relevant financial product, the NB ESG Quotient does not consider investments in money market instruments, cash, cash equivalents or derivatives.

The methodology for determining the NB ESG Quotient is a multi-step process. Firstly, NB's central research equity and fixed income analysts determine which ESG issues are likely to be financially material across a given industry sector or to a sovereign issuer. Secondly, NB identifies quantitative sources to measure a particular company's or sovereign issuer's performance against ESG factors by utilising third party ESG data.

For ESG issues requiring additional incremental insight, NB's research analysts use proprietary quantitative or qualitative assessments, informed by engagement. Each company or sovereign issuer is compared to their peer universe which includes other companies within the relevant industry sector or sovereign issuers to produce an overall ESG performance for that company or sovereign issuer.

As a final step, further refinements are applied to the company's rating or the sovereign issuer's rating by the analysts based on their engagement with the company or sovereign issuer and their overall industry experience. The data underlying the company's or the sovereign issuer's ratings is updated regularly.

NBEL has noticed that small capitalisation companies tend to have less favourable NB ESG Quotient ratings when compared to large capitalisation companies. This can be due to lack of publicly disclosed data as well as fewer resources which can be dedicated to data disclosure (including ESG data disclosures) in small capitalisation companies.

Where adequate and reliable data is available, NBEL will provide the NB ESG Quotient rating and an ESG rating as generated by a third-party data provider for the Article 8 or Article 9 Portfolios in the Portfolio's mandatory periodic report template (as per the requirements of Article 11 of SFDR). This third-party ESG rating will be provided for informational purposes only.

Adequate, reliable and verifiable ESG data coverage may not be available for all issuers, where that is the case, ESG ratings (as generated by a third-party data provider) may include qualitative judgment and/or may be based on estimates. NBEL uses data from third-party data providers (which may include providers for research, reports, screenings, ratings and/or analysis (such as index providers and consultants)) and, while NB conducts due diligence on these third-party data providers, it cannot be ruled out that such information or data may be incomplete, inaccurate or inconsistent.

While NBEL will aim for all corporate and sovereign issuers held by a Portfolio to have an NB ESG Quotient rating, there may be some issuers held by a Portfolio that do not have an NB ESG Quotient rating. The number of issuers that do not hold an NB ESG Quotient rating is expected to be minimal. In such instances, the ESG analysis is performed internally, with the support of third-party data, and is not outsourced.

#### **Assessment of the impact on likely returns**

In applying the Neuberger Berman ESG Policy, NBEL may, depending on the particular strategy, deliberately forego opportunities for a financial product to gain exposure to certain companies, industries, sectors or countries that it believes may benefit the particular portfolio and it may choose to sell a security when, in hindsight, it might be seen to have been disadvantageous to do so. Certain financial products may focus on investment in companies that relate to certain sustainable development themes and demonstrate adherence to environmental, social and good governance practices. Accordingly, as the universe of investments for those financial products is smaller than that of other funds, NBEL has determined that those financial products could underperform the market as a whole if the investments underperform the market, which could negatively impact on returns. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Neuberger Berman ESG Policy seeks to formalise and focus Neuberger Berman's responsible investment efforts, with the belief that material ESG characteristics are an important driver of long-term investment returns and mitigator of risk and have the follow-on effect of supporting better-functioning capital markets and having a positive impact for people and the planet.

## Remuneration Considerations

NBEL has adopted remuneration policies consistent with its regulatory obligations. NBEL's remuneration policies (i) promote sound and effective risk management and (ii) discourage excessive risk taking, including without limitation, with respect to Sustainability Risks, as defined above.

NBEL adheres to group-wide general principles, policies and practices. NBEL's remuneration policy applies in addition to the remuneration and employment policies and practices operated from time to time within NBEL itself and the Neuberger Berman group of companies (the “**NB Group**”). The assessment of NBEL staff performance is based on a multi-year perspective in order to take into account the long-term performance of personnel, as well as the life cycle of the financial product under management. Performance objectives are therefore on a multi-year basis, ensuring that staff and end investors' interests are aligned.

Variable remuneration is dependent upon both corporate results and employee contribution to the NB Group's objectives. The determination of an individual's entitlement to variable remuneration will in all cases take into account the individual staff member's performance in the relevant performance period based on an assessment of both quantitative and qualitative criteria including but not exclusively based on conduct related matters. In addition, with respect to portfolio management teams, the entitlement to variable remuneration is not solely linked to the performance of the financial products managed by that particular team, but to the broader assets under management of the NB Group. This serves to discourage excessive risk taking, as no one individual can influence overall NB Group performance. Senior management within the NB Group is responsible for approving the award of remuneration and benefits at a group level, while the Neuberger Berman EMEA Compensation Committee provides oversight in relation to the awarding of team as well as individual remuneration and benefit levels. The EMEA Compensation Committee has a number of responsibilities including but not exclusively, the oversight and implementation of remuneration policies, the review of identified staff and or material risk takers, assessment of management information supplied by Risk, Compliance and Human Capital Management on behaviours and conduct. In addition, the Committee, as appropriate may recommend bonus pool reductions and individual staff deductions and clawbacks. In no circumstances will any senior staff member who is eligible to participate in a bonus pool have authority (either individually or as part of a committee) to give the final approval for any bonus pool in which he or she is eligible to participate in nor will he or she be in a position to approve his or her own individual remuneration outcome.

## Consideration of Principal Adverse Impacts

NBEL is supportive of the aims of the principal adverse impact indicators (“**PAIs**”) to improve transparency for investors and the wider market as to how it (and other financial market participants) integrate the consideration of adverse impacts of investment decisions on Sustainability Factors.

NBEL does not currently consider the PAIs of its investment decisions on Sustainability Factors<sup>1</sup> at entity level in the manner prescribed under the SFDR. Nonetheless, NBEL wishes to affirm its overall commitment to consider ESG factors as an important driver of long-term investment returns from both an opportunity and a risk-mitigation perspective.

NBEL has less than 500 employees, allowing it to ‘comply or explain’ under the SFDR Article 4(1) requirement to publish a principal adverse sustainability impact (“**PASI**”) entity level statement.

NBEL has opted against publishing a PASI entity level statement and has explained its reasons for doing so below.

NBEL took this decision because it believes that the current level of PAI data coverage combined with the volatility associated with PAI data (due to portfolio and market movements) would not provide reliable data that investors could consistently assimilate, use and compare from one reference period to another.

NBEL manages a range of different investment strategies across a variety of asset classes with varying investment objectives, some of which have a sustainable investment objective, targeting particular

<sup>1</sup> Sustainability Factors are defined in the SFDR as environmental, social and employee matters, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and anti-bribery matters.

sustainability outcomes and/or to promote environmental or social characteristics. These are disclosed at the product level.

NBEL adopts a decentralized investment management model, with each investment team being ultimately responsible for integrating sustainability considerations, and where relevant, PAIs in their investment decision-making in a manner that is tailored to their investment styles and Portfolios, subject to NBEL's oversight and overall control framework. In some cases, the investment team has determined that: i) the PAIs are not relevant to the investment strategy of the Portfolio; or ii) the investment objective of the Portfolio is better served by focusing on financial performance and financially material Sustainability Risks (without considering the PAIs).

Additionally, NBEL believes that the tailored approaches adopted by investment teams on sustainability matters (including consideration of the PAIs) for specific investment strategies and/or Portfolios means that an entity level statement on PAI consideration would not appropriately represent its approach.

Finally, NBEL is also mindful of the European Supervisory Authorities' (the "ESAs") ongoing review of the SFDR regulatory technical standards ("RTS") as well as the European Commission's review of SFDR, and the expected impact that these developments will have on the PAI indicators, PAI disclosures, PAI formulae and calculation methodologies and the future comparability of PAI data. NBEL believes that this further evidences its view that the PAI regime is still developing and remains subject to change.

NBEL has classified the following separate account as an Article 8 financial product under SFDR:

1. EMD Local Currency – DANISH CLIENT 1

**This disclosure is accurate as at 4 December 2024**

## Website Disclosures

Article 10 EU Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (“**SFDR**”) disclosure – in accordance with Chapter IV, Section 2 of Delegated Regulation 2022 / 1288 (“**Level 2 RTS**”)

*In accordance with Article 10 of the SFDR, and Chapter IV, Section 2 of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/1288, this document provides information on the environmental and social characteristics promoted by Portfolio and the methodologies that are used to assess, measure and monitor these characteristics.*

*Defined terms used in this disclosure (unless defined herein) are as set out in Portfolio offering documents. Terms used in the summary have the same meaning as in the rest of this website disclosure.*

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### EMD Local Currency – DANISH CLIENT 1 (the “Portfolio”) - summary

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#### Summary

The Portfolio is categorised as an Article 8 financial product for the purposes of SFDR.

As part of the investment process, Neuberger Berman Europe Limited (the “**Investment Manager**”) considers a variety of environmental and social characteristics, as detailed below. These environmental and social characteristics are considered using a proprietary Neuberger Berman ESG rating system (the “**NB ESG Quotient**”). The NB ESG Quotient is built around the concept of sector specific ESG risk and opportunity, and produces an overall ESG rating for issuers by assessing them against certain ESG metrics.

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#### No Sustainable Investment Objective

This Portfolio promotes environmental or social characteristics, but does not have as its objective sustainable investment.

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#### Environmental or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio

The following environmental and social characteristics are considered as part of the NB ESG Quotient rating for sovereign issuers:

- **Environmental Characteristics:** sovereign energy efficiency; climate change adaptation; deforestation; greenhouse gas (“**GHG**”) emissions; air and household pollution; and unsafe sanitation.
- **Social Characteristics:** progress towards UN Sustainable Development Goals (“**SDGs**”); health and education levels; regulatory quality; political stability and freedoms; gender equality; and research and development.

The following environmental and social characteristics are considered, where relevant to the specific industry and issuer, as part of the NB ESG Quotient rating for corporate issuers:

- **Environmental Characteristics:** biodiversity and land usage; carbon emissions; opportunities in clean technologies; water stress; toxic emissions & waste; financing environmental impact; product carbon footprint; environmental policy; environmental management system; GHG reduction programme; green procurement policy; and non-GHG air emissions programmes.
- **Social Characteristics:** health & safety; human capital development; labour management; privacy & data security; product safety & quality; financial products safety; discrimination policy; community involvement programmes; diversity programmes and human rights policy.

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#### Investment Strategy

The Portfolio will primarily invest in debt securities and money market instruments which are issued by governments, government agencies or corporate issuers which

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have their head office or exercise an overriding part of their economic activity in emerging market countries and which are denominated in or are exposed to the currencies of such emerging market countries.

Assessment of Good Governance

Governance factors that the investment team tracks may include: (i) senior management experience and sector expertise; (ii) ownership/board experience and alignment of incentives; (iii) corporate strategy and balance sheet strategy; (iv) financial and accounting strategy & disclosure; and (v) regulatory / legal track record.

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**Proportion of Investments**

The Portfolio aims to directly hold a minimum of 80% investments that are aligned with the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio. The Portfolio does not commit to holding sustainable investments.

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**Monitoring of environmental or social characteristics**

The investment team considers a variety of sustainability indicators to measure the environmental and/or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio, including:

- (a) the NB ESG Quotient; and
- (b) NB ESG exclusion policies.

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**Methodologies for environmental or social characteristics**

The investment team will track and report on the performance of the above sustainability indicators. These sustainability indicators will be used to measure the attainment of each of the environmental and social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio and will be included in the Portfolio's mandatory periodic report.

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**Data sources and processing**

ESG data inputs are derived from multiple datasets including international financial organisations, external vendors, company direct disclosures, company indirect disclosures, development agencies and specialty ESG research providers.

ESG data feeds are monitored and reconciled by our data quality assurance team and critical data elements are closely reviewed as part of internal reporting.

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**Limitations to methodologies and data**

Limitations in both methodology and data are listed under this heading in the main body of the website disclosure. Neuberger Berman is satisfied that such limitations do not affect the promotion of environmental or social characteristics as explained further under this heading in the main body of the website disclosure.

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**Due Diligence**

Before making investments, Neuberger Berman will conduct reasonable and appropriate due diligence based on the facts and circumstances applicable to each investment.

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**Engagement Policies**

Engagement is an important component of the Portfolio's investment process.

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**Designated Reference Benchmark**

N/A

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## SFDR Level 2 Article 8 website disclosure – EMD Local Currency – DANISH CLIENT 1 (the "Portfolio") – extended disclosure

### No sustainable investment objective of the financial product

This financial product promotes environmental or social characteristics, but does not have as its objective sustainable investment.

The financial product will not make any sustainable investments.

### Environmental or social characteristics of the financial product

As part of the investment process, Neuberger Berman Europe Limited (the "**Investment Manager**") considers a variety of environmental and social characteristics, as detailed below. These environmental and social characteristics are considered using a proprietary Neuberger Berman ESG rating system (the "**NB ESG Quotient**"). The NB ESG Quotient is built around the concept of sector specific ESG risk and opportunity, and produces an overall ESG rating for issuers by assessing them against certain ESG metrics.

The Investment Manager uses the NB ESG Quotient to promote the environmental and social characteristics listed below by prioritising investment in securities issued by issuers with a relatively favourable and/or an improving NB ESG Quotient rating. Pursuant to this, the Investment Manager will limit exposure to issuers with the poorest NB ESG Quotient rating unless there is a reasonable expectation that the NB ESG Quotient rating will improve over time.

The following environmental and social characteristics are considered as part of the NB ESG Quotient rating for sovereign issuers:

- **Environmental Characteristics:** sovereign energy efficiency; climate change adaptation; deforestation; greenhouse gas ("**GHG**") emissions; air and household pollution; and unsafe sanitation.
- **Social Characteristics:** progress towards UN Sustainable Development Goals ("**SDGs**"); health and education levels; regulatory quality; political stability and freedoms; gender equality; and research and development.

The following environmental and social characteristics are considered, where relevant to the specific industry and issuer, as part of the NB ESG Quotient rating for corporate issuers:

- **Environmental Characteristics:** biodiversity and land usage; carbon emissions; opportunities in clean technologies; water stress; toxic emissions & waste; financing environmental impact; product carbon footprint; environmental policy; environmental management system; GHG reduction programme; green procurement policy; and non-GHG air emissions programmes.
- **Social Characteristics:** health & safety; human capital development; labour management; privacy & data security; product safety & quality; financial products safety; discrimination policy; community involvement programmes; diversity programmes and human rights policy.

Performance in relation to these environmental and social characteristics will be measured through the NB ESG Quotient, and will be reported in aggregate in the Portfolio's mandatory periodic report template (as per the requirements of Article 11 of SFDR).

The NB ESG Quotient methodology will evolve over time and all ESG characteristics included therein are reviewed regularly and are subject to annual review to ensure that the most pertinent ESG characteristics



are captured. Accordingly, the environmental and social characteristics considered as part of the NB ESG Quotient are subject to change. For the avoidance of doubt, if the environmental or social characteristics considered as part of the NB ESG Quotient change, this website disclosure will be updated accordingly.

Exclusions are also applied (as further set out below) as part of the construction and ongoing monitoring of the Portfolio. These represent additional environmental and social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio.

A reference benchmark has not been designated for the purpose of attaining the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio.

### **Investment strategy**

The Portfolio will primarily invest in debt securities and money market instruments which are issued by governments, government agencies or corporate issuers which have their head office or exercise an overriding part of their economic activity in emerging market countries and which are denominated in or are exposed to the currencies of such emerging market countries.

The Investment Manager implements a systematic and disciplined framework for analysing sovereign and corporate local currency debt securities. The Investment Manager will conduct fundamental analysis on the issuers that they track in order to identify undervalued and overvalued securities and exploit investment opportunities. The fundamental analysis used for the selection of governments or government-related issuers incorporates quantitative macroeconomic data and qualitative aspects such as political stability, structural reforms and other ESG characteristics. The fundamental analysis used for the selection of corporates incorporates assessments of the issuer's financial performance such as revenue/earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortisation ("**EBITDA**") growth, cash flow growth, capital expenditures, leverage trends and liquidity profile. Qualitative factors aim to complement the evaluation of corporate credit worthiness by including such factors as corporate governance, quality of earnings and debt structure.

The Investment Manager considers and evaluates ESG characteristics, as an important component of their credit analysis discipline, when making investment decisions. The Investment Manager utilises the NB ESG Quotient criteria, as part of the Portfolio construction and investment management process. As noted above, the NB ESG Quotient assigns weightings to environmental, social and governance characteristics to derive the NB ESG Quotient rating. Issuers with a favourable and/or an improving NB ESG Quotient rating have a higher chance of ending up in the Portfolio. Issuers with a poor NB ESG Quotient rating especially where these are not being addressed by that issuer, are more likely to be removed from the investment universe or divested from the Portfolio.

The ESG analysis is performed internally, with the support of third-party data, and is not outsourced.



ESG characteristics are considered at three different levels:

I. Integrating proprietary ESG analysis:

The NB ESG Quotient ratings are generated for issuers in the Portfolio. The NB ESG Quotient rating for issuers is utilised to help to better identify risks and opportunities in the overall credit and value assessment.

The NB ESG Quotient is a key component of the internal credit ratings and can help to identify business risks (including ESG risks), which would cause deterioration in an issuer's credit profile. Internal credit ratings can be notched up or down based on the NB ESG Quotient rating, and this is monitored by the Investment Manager and as an important component of the investment process for the Portfolio.

By integrating the investment team's proprietary ESG analysis (the NB ESG Quotient) into their internal credit ratings, there is a direct link between their analysis of material ESG characteristics and portfolio construction activities across their strategy.

Issuers with a favourable and/or an improving NB ESG Quotient rating have a higher chance of ending up in the Portfolio. Issuers with a poor NB ESG Quotient rating especially where these are not being addressed by that issuer, are more likely to be removed from the investment universe or divested from the Portfolio.

II. Engagement:

The Investment Manager engages directly with management teams of issuers through a robust ESG engagement program.

The Investment Manager also engages with sovereign issuers in developed and Emerging Market Countries. As part of its sovereign engagement, the Investment Manager's portfolio managers and analysts speak regularly to government officials, policy makers and international financial organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and Asian Development Bank, with onsite visits whenever possible, and utilise such meetings to engage with sovereign issuers on ESG topics, where the Investment Manager sees scope for improvement for the relevant country.

The sovereign engagement process tends to focus on the various areas relating to SDGs under the UN Global Compact, and the UNGP. In addition, the Investment Manager monitors and engages with countries on reducing GHG emissions and improving policies towards net zero alignment. Sovereign engagement is also carried out with countries to improve fiscal transparency, tackle corruption and comply with Financial Action Task Force ("**FATF**") recommendations to address strategic deficiencies in counter money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing. Progress on sovereign engagement is tracked centrally in the Investment Manager's engagement log.

The Investment Manager views this direct engagement with issuers, as an important part of its investment process (including the investment selection process). Issuers that are not receptive to engagement are less likely to be held (or to continue to be held) by the Portfolio.

This program is focused on in-person meetings, email and conference calls to understand ESG risks, opportunities, and assess good corporate governance practices of issuers. As part of the direct engagement process, the Investment Manager may set objectives for the issuers to attain. These objectives as well as the issuers' progress with respect to same are

monitored and tracked by the Investment Manager through an internal Neuberger Berman ("**NB**") engagement tracker.

In addition, the Investment Manager will seek to prioritise constructive engagements with corporate issuers which have high impact controversies, or which have a poor NB ESG Quotient rating, in order to assess whether those ESG controversies or what the Investment Manager deems as weak ESG efforts, are being addressed adequately.

The Investment Manager firmly believes this consistent engagement with issuers can help reduce credit risk and promote positive sustainable corporate change. It is an important tool to identify and better understand an issuer's risk factors and performance. The Investment Manager also uses it to promote change, when necessary, which it believes will result in positive outcomes for creditors and broader stakeholders. Direct engagement when paired with other inputs, creates a feedback loop that allows analysts in the investment team to evolve their ESG scoring process and prioritise risks that are most relevant to a sector.

### III. ESG sectoral exclusion policies:

To ensure that the environmental and social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio can be attained, the Portfolio will apply the ESG exclusion policies explained in more detail in the "Methodologies for environmental or social characteristics" section.

#### Policy to assess good governance practices of the investee companies

The governance factors that the Investment Manager tracks for corporate and quasi-sovereign issuers may include: (i) senior management experience and sector expertise; (ii) ownership/board experience and alignment of incentives; (iii) corporate strategy and balance sheet strategy; (iv) financial and accounting strategy & disclosure; and (v) regulatory / legal track record.

Engagement with management is an important component of the Portfolio's investment process, and the Investment Manager engages directly with management teams of issuers through a robust ESG engagement program. This program is focused on in-person meetings, email and conference calls to understand risks, opportunities and assess good corporate governance practices of investee issuers. The Investment Manager views this direct engagement with issuers, as an important part of its investment process.

While the prioritisation assessment is ongoing, the timing of the engagement may be reactionary in certain cases, opportunistic in cases of industry events or pre-planned meetings, or proactive where time allows and without undue restrictions such as during quiet periods or M&A events that may prevent outreach actions. Ultimately, the Investment Manager aims to prioritise engagement that is expected, based on the Investment Manager's subjective analysis, to have a high impact on the protection of and improvement to the value of the Portfolio, be it through the advancement of actionable disclosure, understanding of risks and risk management at an issuer, or through influence and action to mitigate risks (including sustainability risks) and take advantage of investment opportunities.

Additionally, the Investment Manager also tracks governance factors for emerging market countries such as: (i) the political sphere of the relevant country, (ii) the adherence to the rule of law, (iii) control of corruption, political uncertainty related to upcoming elections and (iv) a focus of the quality of economic governance, namely the government's role as an effective regulator and support of the private sector through responsible financial, macroeconomic and international trade policies.

## **Proportion of Investments**

The Portfolio aims to hold a minimum of 80% investments that are aligned with the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio. The Portfolio does not commit to holding sustainable investments. The Portfolio aims to hold a maximum of 20% investments that are not aligned with the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio and are not sustainable investments, and which fall into the 'other' section of the Portfolio.

Please note that while the Investment Manager aims to achieve the asset allocation targets outlined above, these figures may fluctuate during the investment period and ultimately, as with any investment target, may not be attained.

The exact asset allocation of this Portfolio will be reported in the Portfolio's mandatory periodic report SFDR template, for the relevant reference period. This will be calculated based on the average of the four quarter ends.

The Investment Manager has calculated the proportion of environmentally and/or socially aligned investments in the Portfolio by reference to the proportion of issuers in the Portfolio: i) that hold an NB ESG Quotient rating or a third party equivalent ESG rating that is used as part of the portfolio construction and investment management process of the Portfolio; and/or ii) with whom the Investment Manager has engaged directly. The calculation is based on a mark-to-market assessment of the Portfolio. This calculation may rely on incomplete or inaccurate issuer or third party data.

While the Portfolio may use derivatives for investment purposes and/or hedging, it will not use derivatives to promote environmental or social characteristics.

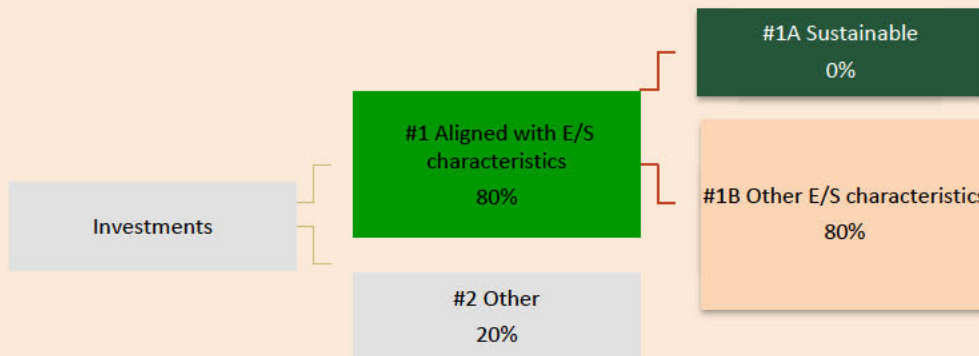
"Other" includes the remaining investments of the financial product which are neither aligned with the environmental or social characteristics, nor are qualified as sustainable investments.

The "Other" section in the Portfolio is held for a number of reasons that the Investment Manager feels will be beneficial to the Portfolio, such as, but not limited to, achieving risk management, and/or to ensure adequate liquidity, hedging and collateral cover.

The Portfolio will be invested in compliance with ESG exclusion policies, on a continuous basis.

The Investment Manager believes that these policies prevent investment in issuers that most egregiously violate environmental and/or social minimum standards and ensures that the Portfolio can successfully promote its environmental and social characteristics.

The above steps ensure that robust environmental and social safeguards are in place.



**#1 Aligned with E/S characteristics** includes the investments of the financial product used to attain the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the financial product.

**#2 Other** includes the remaining investments of the financial product which are neither aligned with the environmental or social characteristics, nor are qualified as sustainable investments.

The category **#1 Aligned with E/S characteristics** covers:

- The sub-category **#1A Sustainable** covers sustainable investments with environmental or social objectives.
- The sub-category **#1B Other E/S characteristics** covers investments aligned with the environmental or social characteristics that do not qualify as sustainable investments.

## Monitoring of environmental or social characteristics

Following investment, the Investment Manager monitors issuers on an ongoing basis to track their performance with respect to environmental and social characteristics. In particular, the Investment Manager will track and report on the performance of (i) the NB ESG Quotient, and (ii) the adherence to the ESG exclusion lists applied to the Portfolio. These sustainability indicators will be used to measure the attainment of each of the environmental and social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio and will be included in the Portfolio's mandatory periodic report (as per the requirements of Article 11 of SFDR).

## Methodologies for environmental or social characteristics

As part of the investment process, the Investment Manager considers a variety of sustainability indicators to measure the environmental and/or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio. These are listed below:

1. The NB ESG Quotient:

The NB ESG Quotient (as explained in the section headed “Environmental or social characteristics of the financial product”) is used to measure the environmental and social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio.

The NB ESG Quotient assigns weightings to environmental, social and governance factors for countries and for corporate sectors to derive the NB ESG Quotient rating. Issuers with a favourable and/or an improving NB ESG Quotient rating have a higher chance of being included in the Portfolio. Issuers with a poor NB ESG Quotient rating, especially where a poor NB ESG Quotient rating is not being addressed by an issuer, are more likely to be removed from the investment universe or divested from the Portfolio. In addition, the Investment Manager will seek to prioritise constructive engagements with issuers that have a poor NB ESG Quotient rating, in order to assess whether concerns are being addressed adequately.

2. ESG exclusion policies:

To ensure that the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio can be attained, the Portfolio will not invest in securities issued by issuers whose activities breach the Neuberger Berman Controversial Weapons Policy issuers whose activities breach the Neuberger Berman Controversial Weapons Policy and the Neuberger Berman Thermal Coal Involvement Policy. Additionally, the Portfolio is phasing out its exposure to thermal coal and currently prohibits investment in securities issued by issuers that derive more than 10% of revenue from thermal coal mining or are expanding new thermal coal power generation, as determined by internal screens. The Portfolio also prohibits investments in issuers in the power generation industry that use thermal coal as an energy source for more than 95% of their installed power generation capacity, are expanding into new thermal coal power generation, or whose expansionary capital expenditure budgets do not include a minimum threshold for non-coal investments, as determined by internal screens.

The investments held by the Portfolio will not invest in securities issued by issuers whose activities have been identified as breaching the Neuberger Berman Global Standards Policy which excludes violators of (i) the United Nations Global Compact Principles (“**UNGC Principles**”), (ii) the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (“**OECD Guidelines**”),

(iii) the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (“**UNGPs**”) and (iv) the International Labour Standards (“**ILO Standards**”). In addition, the Portfolio excludes securities issued by issuers which are involved in direct child labour, in the tobacco industry, as well as certain issuers that derive more than 10% of revenue from oil sands.

The Investment Manager will implement the exclusion list supplied by the Client.

### **Data sources and processing**

The Investment Manager derives ESG data inputs from multiple datasets including international financial organizations, external vendors, company direct disclosures (e.g., sustainability reports, annual reports, regulatory filings, and company websites), company indirect disclosures (e.g., government agency published data; industry and trade association data; and third-party financial data providers), development agencies and specialty ESG research providers.

ESG data is a key domain and part of the internal data governance of the Investment Manager with an assigned ESG Data Steward and a dedicated ESG Technology team. The Investment Manager’s ESG Data Steward has periodic engagements with ESG data vendors to discuss issues such as data coverage and will evaluate options to help resolve data gaps. The Investment Manager subscribes to multiple data vendors to enable it to evaluate company coverage and quality of data between vendors. In addition, the Investment Manager continues to explore new data products and vendors to evaluate potential enhancements to its existing data coverage.

The Investment Manager’s ESG data feeds are monitored and reconciled by its data quality assurance team and critical data elements are closely reviewed as part of its internal reporting. ESG Data is integrated throughout the Investment Manager’s operating management system, compliance and risk management systems, providing those stakeholders transparency into the Portfolio’s ESG metrics in real time.

In addition, the Investment Manager’s internally derived data team work collaboratively with the ESG Investing team to identify innovative and non-traditional data sources which may provide additional insights. The Investment Manager continuously seeks to identify additional data and research, which may enhance its analysis.

The Investment Manager believes that the most effective way to integrate ESG into an investment process over the long term is for investment teams themselves to research ESG factors and consider them alongside other inputs into the investment process. For this reason, ESG research is included in the work of the Investment Manager’s research analysts rather than employing a separate ESG research team. The Investment Manager embeds such research in the work of its security research analysts.

The Investment Manager can then choose how best to apply all the tools of active management, whether that is to engage or ultimately to sell a security when it no longer offers an attractive risk-adjusted potential return.

The Investment Manager expects that a low proportion of data will be estimated. The proportion of data that is estimated will depend on the composition of investee companies – the nature of their business and sectors in which they operate. The Investment Manager expects that data availability and quality will improve as the market and methods for obtaining and reporting data mature.

### **Limitations to methodologies and data**

Limitations in both methodology and data, experienced by the Investment Manager, include but are not limited to:

- Lack of standardization;
- Gaps in company coverage especially in private companies and companies that reside in Emerging Markets;
- Limitations in application for both Public and Private Debt markets versus Public Equity;
- Some data sets such as Carbon Emissions are reported at a significant time-lag; and
- Some of the available third-party data is calculated based on data estimates.

As such, the Investment Manager is not dependent on raw data. The Investment Manager has developed a firm-wide proprietary ratings system, called the Neuberger Berman ESG Quotient, which is under continual testing to enhance methodology and data coverage.

In addition, the Investment Manager continues to advocate for greater standardized disclosures; for example, the Investment Manager is a member of the International Financial Reporting Standards (the “**IFRS**”) Sustainability Alliance, which aims to develop a more coherent and comprehensive system for corporate disclosure.

The Investment Manager is also a formal supporter of the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate Related Financial Disclosure (“**TCFD**”) because we believe that climate change is a material driver of investment risk and return across industries and asset classes. The TCFD will help develop voluntary, consistent climate-related financial risk disclosures.

The Investment Manager is satisfied that such limitations do not affect the attainment of environmental or social characteristics, in particular because of the steps taken to mitigate such limitations:

- As noted above, the Investment Manager periodically engages with data vendors on data quality, and the third party sources relied upon are the same as those relied upon by the broader market and so are likely to be refined as the market for products with environmental or social characteristics matures;
- The Investment Manager engages directly with management teams of corporate issuers through a robust ESG engagement program; and
- Each investment opportunity’s environmental and social characteristics are evaluated in detail by the Investment Manager, in accordance with its internal frameworks and using a variety of data sources, having regard to these limitations as well (where appropriate).

## **Due diligence**

Before making investments, the Investment Manager will conduct due diligence that it deems reasonable and appropriate based on the facts and circumstances applicable to each investment. The Investment Manager will assess the investment’s compliance with the environmental and social characteristics promoted by the product using (as appropriate) internal analyses, screens, tools and data sources, and may also evaluate other important and complex environmental, social and governance issues related to the investment. The Investment Manager may select investments on the basis of information and data filed by the issuers of such securities with various regulatory bodies or made directly available to the Investment Manager by the issuers of the securities and other instruments or through sources other than the issuers.



The Portfolio will not invest in securities issued by issuers whose activities breach the Neuberger Berman Controversial Weapons Policy and the Neuberger Berman Thermal Coal Involvement Policy. Furthermore, the Portfolio does not invest in securities issued by issuers whose activities breach the Neuberger Berman Global Standards Policy. Please see above for a full list of the ESG exclusion policies applied by the Portfolio.

The Neuberger Berman Controversial Weapons Policy, Neuberger Berman Thermal Coal Involvement Policy and the Neuberger Berman Global Standards Policy are subject to internal review by the Neuberger Berman ESG Committee. The implementation of the Neuberger Berman Global Standards Policy is managed by the Neuberger Berman Asset Management Guideline Oversight Team in collaboration with legal and compliance.

The Investment Manager's investment professionals responsible for portfolio management are the first step in maintaining compliance with the Portfolio's investment guidelines and ESG exclusions. While the Investment Manager looks to the investment professionals as the first step in the compliance process, it recognizes the need for additional, independent oversight. To this end, the Investment Manager has a rigorous risk management framework that features dedicated investment and operational risk teams inclusive of independent guidelines oversight such as ESG exclusions who work to protect client assets and its reputation. The Investment Manager's risk professionals act as an independent complement to each investment team's portfolio construction process, driving investment and operational risk reviews in collaboration with other control units of the firm, such as information technology, operations, legal and compliance, asset management guideline oversight and internal audit.

### **Engagement policies**

The Investment Manager engages directly with management teams of issuers through a robust ESG engagement program.

The Investment Manager also engages with sovereign issuers in developed and Emerging Market Countries. As part of its sovereign engagement, the Investment Manager's portfolio managers and analysts speak regularly to government officials, policy makers and international financial organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and Asian Development Bank, with onsite visits whenever possible, and utilise such meetings to engage with sovereign issuers on ESG topics, where the Investment Manager sees scope for improvement for the relevant country.

The sovereign engagement process tends to focus on the various areas relating to SDGs under the UN Global Compact, and the UNGP. In addition, the Investment Manager monitors and engages with countries on reducing GHG emissions and improving policies towards net zero alignment. Sovereign engagement is also carried out with countries to improve fiscal transparency, tackle corruption and comply with Financial Action Task Force ("**FATF**") recommendations to address strategic deficiencies in counter money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing. Progress on sovereign engagement is tracked centrally in the Investment Manager's engagement log.

The Investment Manager views this direct engagement with issuers, as an important part of its investment process (including the investment selection process). Issuers that are not receptive to engagement are less likely to be held (or to continue to be held) by the Portfolio.

This program is focused on in-person meetings, email and conference calls to understand ESG risks, opportunities, and assess good corporate governance practices of issuers. As part of the direct engagement process, the Investment Manager may set objectives for the issuers to attain. These objectives as well as

the issuers' progress with respect to same are monitored and tracked by the Investment Manager through an internal Neuberger Berman ("**NB**") engagement tracker.

In addition, the Investment Manager will seek to prioritise constructive engagements with corporate issuers which have high impact controversies, or which have a poor NB ESG Quotient rating, in order to assess whether those ESG controversies or what the Investment Manager deems as weak ESG efforts, are being addressed adequately.

The Investment Manager firmly believes this consistent engagement with issuers can help reduce credit risk and promote positive sustainable corporate change. It is an important tool to identify and better understand an issuer's risk factors and performance. The Investment Manager also uses it to promote change, when necessary, which it believes will result in positive outcomes for creditors and broader stakeholders. Direct engagement when paired with other inputs, creates a feedback loop that allows analysts in the Investment Manager's investment team to evolve their ESG scoring process and prioritise risks that are most relevant to a sector.

#### **Designated reference benchmark**

A reference benchmark has not been designated by the Investment Manager for the purpose of attaining the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio.