

## Web disclosure for the financial products referred to in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2019/2088

**Product name:** Medium Duration Corporate Bond

### 1. Summary

This official statement is published by Zurich Life Assurance plc (ZLAP) in accordance with the requirements, set by the EU Parliament and the Council of 27 November 2019 on sustainability-related disclosures in the financial services sector. As outlined in the description of the Regulation (EU) 2019/2088 also referred to as the Sustainable Finance Disclosures Regulation (SFDR), a financial product which falls under Article 8 is defined as one which promotes environmental or social ("E/S") characteristics but does not necessarily make in part sustainable investments with no significant harm. The fund promotes environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors in its investment process but does not intentionally make sustainable investments as defined in EU Regulation 2019/2088. It has been determined that the Fund meets the criteria in Article 8 of SFDR to qualify as a financial product which promotes ESG Characteristics. This document details the required disclosures under Article 10, as prescribed by the regulation. Information on the extent to which environmental or social characteristics are met or the overall sustainability-related impact of the financial product by means of relevant sustainability indicators will be disclosed in periodic reports as required by Article 11 SFDR.

The fund allocates at least 80% of the fund's portfolio to assets which promote environmental and/or social characteristics or to sovereign bonds/cash. As a bond fund the portfolio of investments consists of investment grade corporate bonds. The average duration of the bonds will typically be 5 to 7 years, but may extend down to 2 years or up to 10 years. It may also invest in supranational bonds and sovereign bonds.. Within each asset class investments are further diversified and are subject to the binding elements of the investment strategy.

The binding elements consist of a minimum asset allocation of 80% for investments that promote E/S characteristics or are sovereign bonds/cash. The fund also has the following specific aims:

- A carbon reduction ambition to reduce the carbon intensity of the credit portfolio within the fund by 25% by 2025 versus end 2019 levels.
- The exclusion of activities from the fund that are irreconcilable with Zurich's sustainability strategy. The exclusion criteria cover activities in thermal coal, oil sands and oil shale.

Active ownership of assets involves engagement. Engagement is undertaken for both equity and credit holdings and proxy shareholder voting is undertaken for equity holdings.

Zurich uses third party data, active ownership, and analysis of investee company disclosures in assessing holdings. The continuous monitoring of good governance and E/S characteristics of the investments that form the allocations within the fund is central to the approach in promoting these characteristics.

### 2. No sustainable investment objective

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

### 3. Environmental or social characteristics of the financial product

The fund has the following specific aims:

- A carbon reduction ambition to reduce the carbon intensity of the credit portfolio within the fund by 25% by 2025 versus end 2019 levels.
- The exclusion of activities from the fund that are irreconcilable with Zurich's sustainability strategy. The exclusion criteria cover activities in thermal coal, oil sands and oil shale. Zurich has also engaged in divestment from investee companies that derive greater than 30% of their revenues from mining thermal coal or generate more than 30% of their electricity from coal. The criteria also exclude investment in companies which produce, stockpile, distribute, market, or sell banned cluster munitions or anti-personnel landmines.

In addition, the fund:

- Integrates ESG factors into the investment process. ESG integration is an approach in which information on environmental, social and governance metrics are used systematically as an integral part of the process to select securities or assets for actively managed portfolios. ESG integration is an approach that is focused on those ESG factors that are deemed economically material, i.e. deemed to impact the risk and returns associated with the assets in which we invest. ESG factors impact the bottom line: integrating them into the investment process will support us in delivering better risk-adjusted returns in the long run. ESG integration helps us to 'do well'.
- Active ownership through engagement with investee companies. Zurich considers active ownership an essential aspect of driving a sustainable world. Zurich undertakes active ownership of its investee companies through engaging with investee companies directly. On engaging with investee companies Zurich has put in place a framework to engage with some of the largest carbon emitters through direct meetings. This is recognised as a key feature of responsible investing.

A reference benchmark which would promote Environmental and/or Social characteristics has not been designated for the fund.

The fund does not make a minimum commitment to invest in sustainable investments

#### **4. Investment strategy**

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The Medium Duration Corporate Bond Fund is an actively managed bond fund. It primarily invests in investment grade corporate bonds. The average duration of the bonds will typically be 5 to 7 years, but may extend down to 2 years or up to 10 years. It may also invest in supranational bonds and sovereign bonds. Zurich identifies and prioritises adverse impact indicators as part of Zurich's responsible investment and sustainability risk strategy, with the help of data and analysis provided by third party providers.

#### **5. Proportions of investments**

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The fund commits to investing 80% of the funds value in assets which are designated to promoting environmental and/or social characteristics or are sovereign bonds/cash. The fund has no binding commitment to make sustainable investments as defined in EU Regulation 2019/2088. The asset allocation within the fund changes on a daily basis based on market movements and the active investment decision of the Zurich investment team. The equity and credit allocations within the fund represent investments which are aligned with environmental and social characteristics.

#### **6. Monitoring of environmental or social characteristics**

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The firm has established an Asset Liability Management and Investment Committee (ALMIC) to assist and support the firm's CEO in managing, controlling, overseeing, and coordinating the firm's investment risk and concentration risk management and in ensuring adherence to the Investment Risk Policy. The ALMIC determines this policy which is aligned with the general risk appetite of the firm as determined by the Board. Investment risk is considered alongside asset liability management (ALM) risk and it captures risks arising from the investment process and implementation decisions. This oversight includes the monitoring of the environmental and social characteristics of the Fund.

Zurich's investment team review a range of relevant metrics on a regular basis such as engagement volume, carbon intensity reduction aim progress, regulatory updates and ESG integration metrics (e.g. ESG scores, review of controversies etc).

#### **7. Methodologies**

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Zurich assesses, measures, and monitors its environmental characteristics via a number of methodologies. Our sustainability metrics includes the majority of the mandatory principle adverse indicators as prescribed under SFDR. Adverse impacts on sustainability factors have been taken into account within the fund through active ownership, exclusions, Zurich's carbon ambition, Zurich being a signatory to the UN Global Compact and through the monitoring and voting on ESG characteristics of assets. The activity to support a consideration of each PAI will continue to evolve in line with regulatory requirements. For example, the RIF monitors ESG controversy flags for investee companies, which includes an assessment of an investee companies exposure to toxic emissions and waste. The RIF will report and escalate relevant matters arising directly to formal governing committees, including the MIF and ALMIC, as required.

Further, assessing the governance practices of investee companies is an important part of the Zurich investment process. Zurich only invests in securities traded on regulated stock markets. In addition to this, Zurich considers good governance criteria which relate to sound management structures, employee relations, remuneration of staff and tax compliance. Zurich uses 3rd party data, active ownership, and analysis of investee company disclosures to identify potential governance issues. In cases where insufficient levels of governance are identified, Zurich has an escalation process to review the issues in detail and ensure that management of the investee company are taking steps to rectify the issues. Where governance issues are not rectified to a sufficient standard within an acceptable time period, Zurich will divest from these companies.

## 8. Data sources and processing

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Zurich sources ESG data from Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI), a third-party specialist data vendor, which we appointed as our ESG data provider in 2013. In addition, Zurich uses S&P Global Trucost data for the greenhouse gas emissions. All of our in-house portfolio managers have access to ESG data on MSCI's 'ESG Manager' online platform. Relevant information in respect to exclusions and ESG information is also available in real time via our integrated Bloomberg 'Asset and Investment Manager' front office system. Relevant data is also held and processed within a number of proprietary in-house investment data systems, at both a local and Group level.

## 9. Limitations to methodologies and data

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The market for sustainability related data is still relatively new. Therefore, there is not as much choice as there is with other investment related data sets. The methodology employed by individual data providers can also differ and in some cases requires subjectivity. Similarly, metrics can be calculated or assessed differently and lead to different results or conclusions depending on the data provider. Not all investee companies are reporting on individual sustainability characteristics and indicators. Therefore, the overall coverage across the investment universe is not as complete when compared with other available statistics. However, there is sufficient qualitative and quantitative information available to ensure that the fund promotes environmental and/or social characteristics. We will continue to develop this process as more data becomes available.

## 10. Due diligence

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When assessing environmental, and social and governance characteristics for investment decisions Zurich incorporates ESG data from a broad range of sources. MSCI is one of Zurich's prime sources of data for ESG metrics, providing in-depth research, ratings and analysis of the environmental, social and governance-related business practices of companies worldwide. Zurich also utilises information from Bloomberg which is integrated into Bloomberg terminals used by in-house investment managers. The use of third-party information is undertaken with the relevant training for investment managers to ensure accurate use as an input to security selection. As part of due-diligence process, Zurich engages with investee companies which are subject to certain thresholds below the expectations or where there is lack of information on specific issues.

Zurich also participates in the UN Global Compact which means operating in ways that, at a minimum, meet fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. This involves steps which help to ensure the binding elements of the investment strategy are carried out.

The ongoing monitoring of securities within the fund to ensure that E/S characteristics are being promoted along with conversations with third party research parties also aids in ensuring the binding elements are being carried out. Multiple perspectives and monitoring forms the due diligence process with respect to the fund's promotion of E/S characteristics and consideration of PAIs.

## 11. Engagement policies

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Active ownership is a vital part of Zurich's role as a responsible investor. Zurich has adopted an engagement policy strategy where we seek to improve investee practices with a specific objective in mind.

This engagement policy describes Zurich's engagement process in terms of:

- Scope
- Objectives

- Prioritising our engagement
- Method of engagement
- Conflicts of interest

This policy framework also describes Zurich's commitment to providing transparency and regular reporting on engagement activities, and how Zurich participates in collaborative engagements.

## **12. Disclaimer**

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Zurich Life Assurance plc is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

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