



Fund Portrait



Nordea 1 – North American Stars Equity Fund

LU0772958525 (BP-USD) / LU0772957808 (BI-USD)



Highlights

- A North American Equities solution where ESG investing meets performance. Leveraging the proven track record of our ESG STARS equity strategies¹
- High conviction portfolio with a long-term fundamental bottom-up approach
- A true ESG-investing solution where our dedicated Responsible Investment team conducts detailed ESG research and aims at engaging actively on all portfolio companies
- A two-tier portfolio, combining stocks with high expectation gaps and stocks with strong tailwinds and sustainable competitive advantages, or Moat

Asset Management at Nordea

As an active investment manager, Nordea Asset Management manages asset classes across the full investment spectrum and aims to serve its clients in every market condition. Nordea's success is based on a sustainable and unique multi-boutique approach which combines the expertise of specialized internal resources with exclusive external competences with the aim to deliver alpha over time for the benefit of our clients².

Investment Management Team

Since reengineered into one of our ESG STARS products in November 2018, the Nordea 1 – North American Stars Equity Fund (NASEF) has been internally managed by Joakim Ahlberg (Lead Portfolio Manager) and Johan Swahn (Co-Portfolio Manager), the same investment team as the Global Stars Equity Strategy (5y track record, and a large overlap with the NASEF). The portfolio managers are part of Nordea's Fundamental Equities Team (FET). The FET consists of around 30 investment professionals, mainly focusing on sustainability themed strategies, where they apply a fundamental bottom-up investment process in order to identify and analyse mispriced companies relative to their ability to generate future cash flows.

The investment team cooperates with Nordea's Responsible Investment (RI) team which provides company specific and general research regarding Environmental, Social and Governance risks and opportunities. Formed in 2009, the RI Team is one of the largest and most experienced teams in Europe. It encompasses around 20 ESG professionals working hand in hand with the portfolio managers. This creates synergies by actively integrating ESG research throughout every step of the investment process, from the idea generation stage to the engagement with the company. We believe this set-up of combining a full ESG integration with fundamental analysis is key when it comes to delivering alpha.

Introduction to the ESG STARS concept

Nordea's ESG STARS funds proactively select high-quality companies with the objective to identify tomorrow's winners, which, we believe, have sustainable business models and conduct their businesses responsibly in relation to their stakeholders – employees, suppliers, customers, investors and society at large. The FET works closely with the RI team in order to deliver a solution able to:

- **Outperform the benchmark:** actively managing a concentrated high conviction portfolio²
- **Meet Nordea's ESG standards:** systematically analysing each stock to ensure the fund invests only in businesses which meet our ESG standards. We invest in companies that are either leaders in terms of their ESG profile or alternatively in those with a rising ESG potential, thus avoiding the laggards
- **Active ownership:** proactively engaging with companies and encouraging them to improve on material ESG issues as well as exercising our voting rights

Investment Strategy

The NASEF objective is to consistently outperform the North American equity markets by a minimum of 250bps (gross of fees) over a full investment cycle while aiming for a tracking error between 3% – 5%^{2,3}.

1) The performance represented is historical; past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results and investors may not recover the full amount invested. The value of your investment can go up and down, and you could lose some or all of your invested money. 2) There can be no warranty that an investment objective, targeted returns and results of an investment structure is achieved. The value of your investment can go up and down, and you could lose some or all of your invested money. 3) Relative to its benchmark the Russell 3000 NR USD Index.

The investment universe consists of approximately 3,000 companies and is based on listed North American equity securities with sufficient liquidity (typically at least USD 1–3 billion market capitalisation). The fund has a significantly high hurdle for inclusion, as a stock has to pass our internal ESG scoring process to be allowed into the portfolio. Our research process does not identify whether the stock is in the benchmark, but we monitor off benchmark positions at the portfolio level.

This high conviction global equity solution follows a bottom-up approach and invests in 40 to 70 companies and focuses on fundamental analysis.



Fundamental analysis

The investment team relies on **3 keys to unlock sustainable excess performance**, namely: Risk, Moat & Tailwind and Expectation Gaps.

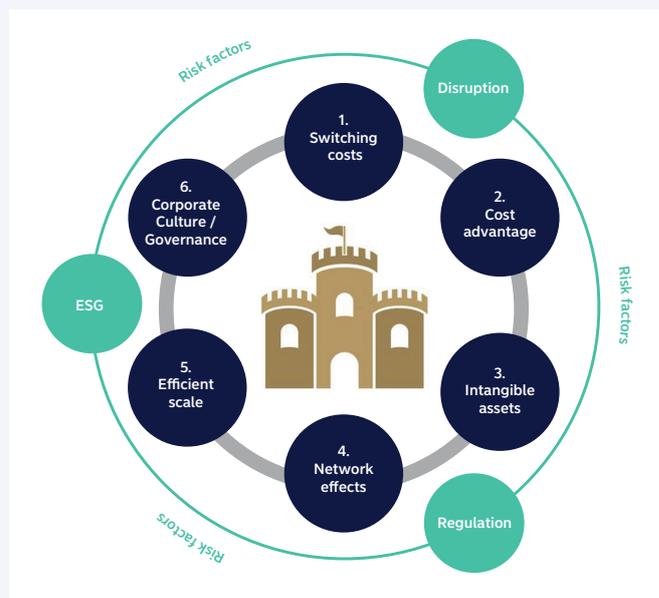
Risk Management. The portfolio construction is focussed on creating a balanced portfolio of the best bottom-up ideas. Our thorough fundamental analysis allows a constant evaluation of risk and reward on a stock level, where we manage risk through sizing our positions in accordance with our view of their **relative attractiveness from a risk vs. reward perspective**, as well as the level of conviction we have in each investment thesis.

We strive to **concentrate risk to our highest conviction ideas** and aim to have up to 40% of the portfolio in our top 10 positions (expectation gap picks), and complement it with a large number of smaller positions with wide moats and solid operating tailwinds providing significant diversification benefits.

We believe the majority of **active risk for the fund should come from stock selection** as opposed to sector allocation or investment style. We however tolerate some deviations from the benchmark because of stock selection or even long-term views on relative value creation. We look for an appropriate level of active risk as we aim for a tracking error of 3% – 5% and an active share above 80%⁴.

Due to our strong focus on risk, we monitor the total portfolio risk and ensure strong diversification through a two tier approach:

- **Expectation Gaps to drive strong returns.** We perform extensive work based on our proprietary discounted cash flow (DCF) models to determine the upside potential of an investment. The Expectation Gap is the **difference between our expectations and the market valuation**. We collect and analyse all relevant data to verify our expectations and understand the market's expectations through a two-stage process:
 - We build conviction in the company outlook by analysing its financial data, industry data, industry expert comments, sell-side research and a variety of other sources
 - We gauge market's expectations through consensus estimates and implied valuation
- **Moat & Tailwinds to absorb shocks and offset risk.** Before investing, we assess the companies' strategic position. We believe that companies with a positive exposure to external factors (Tailwinds) and with sustainable competitive advantages (wide Moats) have a better opportunity to maintain stable cash flows, attain **stronger long-term growth** and exhibit **higher risk adjusted returns**⁴



ESG research

As an integrated component to the investment process of all our ESG STARS products, a thorough in-house ESG analysis is performed by our independent and seasoned RI team. The team uses multiple sources of information in their proprietary analysis (the most important being the companies themselves) where we aim that each ESG-analysis is achieved through a face-to-face conference with the relevant representatives.

4) There can be no warranty that an investment objective, targeted returns and results of an investment structure is achieved. The value of your investment can go up and down, and you could lose some or all of your invested money.

All companies considered for investment are analysed by our RI team. The analysis is performed “bottom-up” and focuses on how the company operates with stakeholders, particularly on potential conflict areas. For each sector we have identified their material ESG issues, which are included in our evaluation. These inputs are used to form our own company view, meaning that we are not bound by any external ESG assessments. Moreover, when assessing a company’s ESG risk profile we also focus on specific themes utilising the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Additionally, our ESG research is systematically impacting the valuation model. In the DCF framework, companies with strong ESG profiles tend to generate superior excess returns above their cost of invested capital. Other things being equal, this results in a greater fair value estimate for strong ESG performers.

Engagement & Impact Management

Being a key part of the investment process, Engagement means having a constructive dialogue with the companies we invest in or that we are considering for investment. Such dialogue enables us to understand how a company is thinking about and addressing ESG risks or opportunities that are relevant for its business. The portfolio managers and RI Team together build an engagement roadmap, where they identify the most relevant and material ESG topics for each company. Engagement can take various forms, from conference calls to face-to-face meetings, field visits and even active ownership & voting. While the RI Team typically takes the lead in engagement activities, our portfolio managers often participate as well. We hold upwards of 150 meetings a year. We see engagement as a way to preserve and enhance long-term shareholder value, as well as a great opportunity to create a positive impact for the broader society.

Adhering to Nordea’s Responsible Investment policy, we do not invest in companies involved in the production of illegal or nuclear weapons, including cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines. Moreover, we exclude some companies with exposure to coal mining, oil sands, oil and gas extraction through arctic drilling and Tobacco. The ESG STARS strategies are also subject to a number of formal exclusion criteria and adhere to our PAFF (Paris-Aligned Fossil Fuel Policy). Exclusions will, however, rarely be triggered as companies subject to exclusion would typically not be selected as potentially investible in the first place. However, it is worth noting that the ESG STARS concept aims for positive selection with the objective to influence companies to improve their ESG profiles, that’s why excluding a company from our portfolios is always the last resort for us.

Engagement takes a new dimension with our ESG STARS products. It does not only consist of the traditional forms of engagement, like the exercise of voting rights or entering into a dialogue to encourage companies to improve their management systems, their ESG performance or their reporting. When

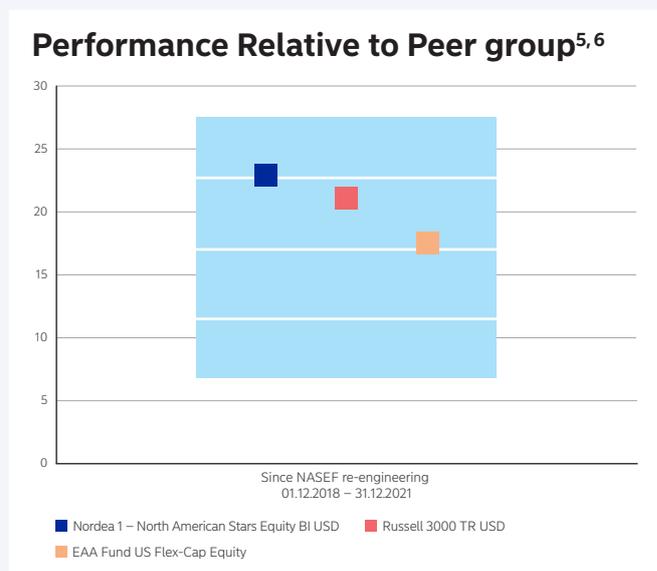
assessing a company’s ESG risk profile, the RI team pays attention to specific themes utilising the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We distinguish between two types of engagement:

- **Risk Engagement:** if a company is not managing its material ESG risks well, the RI team engages with the company on the issue. The ESG risks can be company specific or stem from the country in which the company operates or its industry. Violations of international norms and conventions are also addressed under Risk Engagement
- **SDGs Engagement:** we believe the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form a useful framework, which helps us to understand company strategy in the context of global ESG themes. While companies’ exposure to SDGs varies greatly, these exposures can be both a source of opportunity and risk, and hence a valuable area for engagement

Delivering shareholder value

Since it was repurposed into one of our ESG STARS equity solutions in November 2018, the fund has outperformed its benchmark and ranked amongst the best performing funds in its category according to Morningstar.^{5,6}



5) Source © 2022 Morningstar, Inc. All Rights Reserved as of 31.12.2021, EAA Fund US Large-Cap Blend Equity. Performance in USD. Period under consideration: 01.12.2018 – 31.12.2021. 6) The performance represented is historical; past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results and investors may not recover the full amount invested. The value of your investment can go up and down, and you could lose some or all of your invested money.

Nordea 1 – North American Stars Equity Fund	
Fund manager	Fundamental Equities Team
Fund domicile	Luxembourg
ISIN codes*	LU0772958525 (BP-USD) LU0772957808 (BI-USD)
Annual management fees	1.50% (BP-USD) 0.75% (BI-USD)
Base currency	USD
Reference index	Russell 3000 – Net Return Index
Launch date	30.05.2012

Risks

Please be aware that there are risks associated with investing in this sub-fund, amongst others in: **Derivatives**. For further details, please refer to the Key Investor Information Document, which is available as described in the disclaimer at the end of this document.

*Other share classes may be available in your jurisdiction.

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