

# MFG Global Plus

## Key Facts

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Portfolio Manager                       | Hamish Douglass        |
| Strategy Inception Date                 | 1 July 2013            |
| Total Global Equity Assets <sup>1</sup> | USD \$23,087.6 million |
| Total Strategy Assets                   | USD \$2,697.3 million  |

## USD Gross Performance<sup>2</sup>

|                                       | Composite | MSCI World NTR | MSCI World Qual. Mix NTR | MSCI World Min. Vol. NTR |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 Months (%)                          | -4.0      | -8.4           | -5.9                     | -2.5                     |
| 6 Months (%)                          | -2.6      | -8.2           | -6.3                     | -4.1                     |
| 1 Year (%)                            | 4.1       | -5.1           | -1.7                     | 4.3                      |
| Since Inception <sup>3</sup> (% p.a.) | 8.5       | 6.5            | 14.5                     | 16.6                     |

|               | Composite | MSCI World NTR | MSCI World Qual. Mix NTR | MSCI World Min. Vol. NTR |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2013 (%)*     | 13.4      | 16.8           | 24.5                     | 18.6                     |
| 2014 (%)      | 6.6       | 4.9            | 7.3                      | 11.4                     |
| 2015 CYTD (%) | -0.7      | -6.0           | -4.0                     | -0.4                     |

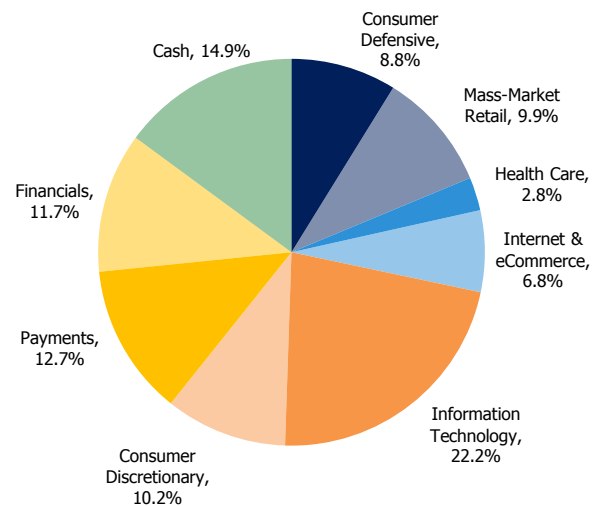
## Top 10 Holdings

|                     | GICS Sector            | %           |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Microsoft Corp      | Information Technology | 7.2         |
| Lowe's              | Consumer Discretionary | 5.7         |
| Visa Inc            | Information Technology | 5.2         |
| Yum! Brands Inc     | Consumer Discretionary | 4.7         |
| Home Depot          | Consumer Discretionary | 4.5         |
| PayPal Holdings Inc | Information Technology | 4.5         |
| IBM Corp            | Information Technology | 4.4         |
| Intel Corp          | Information Technology | 4.3         |
| Target Corp         | Consumer Discretionary | 4.0         |
| eBay Inc            | Information Technology | 3.7         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        |                        | <b>48.2</b> |

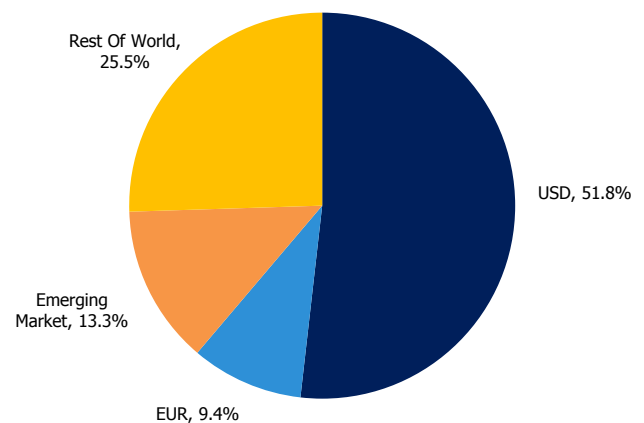
## Strategy Fundamentals

|   | Strategy <sup>5</sup> | Index <sup>3</sup> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Number of Holdings                        | 26                    | 1,643              |
| Return on Equity                          | 25                    | 15                 |
| P/E Ratio (1 year forward)                | 15.2                  | 14.7               |
| Interest Cover                            | 26                    | 10                 |
| Debt/Equity Ratio                         | 20                    | 45                 |
| Active Share                              | 84                    |                    |
| Weighted Average Market Cap (USD million) | 112,032               |                    |

## Industry Exposure by Source of Revenues<sup>4</sup>



## Geographical Exposure by Source of Revenues<sup>4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Comprised of all Global Equity strategies.

<sup>2</sup> Returns and risk measures are for the Global Plus Composite and denoted in USD. Refer to the end of the document for further information.

<sup>3</sup> The inception date of the Composite and the Index, the MSCI World Net Total return in USD is 1 July 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Calculated on a look through basis based on underlying revenue exposure of individual companies held within the portfolio – MFG defined sectors.

<sup>5</sup> The data is based on a representative portfolio for the strategy. Refer to end of document for further information.

\* Part year

## Market Commentary

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Global equity markets have been dominated by much volatility for most of the quarter, dropping sharply late August, seemingly as a result of China allowing a fall in its currency versus the US dollar of about two percent over three days. This, together with the sharp falls in Chinese equity markets since June and associated government interventions in markets, sparked speculation that the Chinese economy might be slowing faster than previously thought and resulted in a global sell off, sending equity markets around the world to their lowest levels in seven months in just one day.

In Europe, signs that a recovery might be on its way remain choppy. Economic growth remains patchy despite stimulus from the European Central Bank's Quantitative Easing programme. Indeed, the effects of a low currency, interest rates and falling energy prices were partly counteracted by the escalation of the Greek debt crisis once again. After the expiry of its second bailout programme, reaching an acceptable and sustainable deal between the European Leaders and the anti-austerity Greek government was problematic. Nevertheless, Spain and Ireland, which implemented reforms post their bailout programmes, are growing at a healthier rate and unemployment is reducing across the Eurozone.

The strengthening of the US economy persists. Recent data is showing continued positive signs that a recovery is under way. Consumer spending and the housing market have held up relatively well despite the softening of the global economy exacerbated by uncertainties in China. The labour market was surprisingly strong, however, inflation fell short of expectations, leading the Federal Reserve to defer the first interest rate hike.

We continue to believe that the uncertainties as to where US monetary policy is headed over the next few years is the most important factor that could lead to a major market correction translating into material losses for investors. As a result, we remain focused on prudent portfolio construction and currently hold approximately 15% of the Strategy in cash to act as a partial hedge should interest rates increase.

## Strategy Commentary

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As of 30 September 2015, the Strategy consisted of investments in 25 companies, compared to 24 investments at 30 June 2015. The top ten investments represented 48.2% of the Strategy on 30 September 2015, while they represented 51.6% of the Strategy on 30 June 2015. The cash position was 14.9% compared with 15.3% at the end of the prior quarter.

The separation of eBay into PayPal and eBay marketplaces crystallised on 17 July and PayPal started trading independently on the NASDAQ on 20 July. eBay has been strong and is amongst the top contributors during the quarter. Post spin, eBay has been disclosing more information about the new eBay business and received a more granular coverage from research houses. This benefited the share price. Conversely, PayPal's share price was down 20% over the quarter, giving up some of its strength immediately after the split.

The performance of our technology holdings was generally mixed. Microsoft was amongst the major contributors. Despite incurring a record loss due to the \$7.5 billion write off of Nokia, Microsoft's results exceeded market expectations. Microsoft's software and cloud businesses continue to grow strongly. Elsewhere, weak PC demand and currency headwinds continue to be a drag on Intel's share price.

Visa posted increased earnings compared to last year, exceeding market expectations. Management also confirmed a potential purchase of Visa Europe (currently owned by European banks), which boosted the share price to a record high in July. Lowe's and Home Depot also contributed positively to performance. The two US home improvement companies continue to benefit from the US housing market recovery.

## Key Stock in Focus – Lloyds Banking Group

**LLOYDS  
BANKING  
GROUP**



Lloyds Banking Group is a leading financial institution in the United Kingdom. The Group serves more than 30 million customers and is the UK's leading provider of current accounts, savings, personal loans, credit cards, and mortgages. Lloyds has a multi-brand strategy, offering banking services in England and Wales through the Lloyds Bank brand and in Scotland through the Bank of Scotland brand. In addition, the Group includes the UK's leading "challenger bank" Halifax and the insurance, investments and pensions provider Scottish Widows. The Group was formed in 2009 when Lloyds TSB acquired HBOS, owner of Halifax and the Bank of Scotland.

### A Six Year Transformation

The UK banking industry was significantly impacted by the Global Financial Crisis. Household leverage was high, some banks had relatively risky offshore operations, and many banks held too little capital and were overly reliant on wholesale funding, much of it short-term. When wholesale funding markets largely closed in late 2008 and early 2009 there were real doubts about the ability some large UK banks to continue operating as going concerns, most notably RBS and HBOS.

The UK Government and the Bank of England were forced to intervene to stabilise the financial system, including approving the sale of HBOS to Lloyds and forcing all large banks to raise equity, either privately or through a government injection. The newly formed Lloyds Banking Group was not unscathed by the turmoil, with the Government emerging with a 43% stake in the company.

Following the crisis Lloyds set about transforming its operations:

- Higher risk businesses have been either sold or wound down. Many of these businesses were acquired as part of the HBOS acquisition and were located offshore where the bank had little competitive advantage. In total Lloyds exited more than 20 countries and now derives approximately 95% of revenue from the attractive UK market.
- Capital levels have more than doubled.
- Wholesale funding has declined from a peak of more than £320 billion to approximately £120bn, the majority of which is long-term. The bank's Loan to Deposit ratio, which measures lending relative to deposit funding, has fallen from more than 170% to 110%.

We judge that Lloyds' management, under the leadership of CEO António Horta Osório, are effectively executing their strategy of transforming the company into a relatively low risk, customer focused, UK retail bank. In light of the operational improvement the UK government has commenced selling its stake in the bank, which has fallen to less than 12%. The government is likely to complete its sell down in 2016, recently announcing plans for a

retail offer of part of its remaining stake. In addition, following a five year hiatus, Lloyds resumed paying dividends earlier this year.

### **Favourable Industry Structure**

The domestic UK banking market is large and structurally attractive. There are roughly £2 trillion of loans and deposits outstanding in the system. Notwithstanding the large size of the market, it is relatively concentrated, with the top six financial institutions having a market share of more than 80%. Lloyds is the dominant bank in the retail market, accounting for almost a quarter of loans and deposits, a market share approximately 10% larger than its closest peer.

There are high barriers to entry in retail banking. Banking involves significant economies of scale, with large banks able to spread information technology, regulatory, and distribution costs over a larger customer base, allowing them to price competitively. In addition, customer switching tends to be quite low, with a study by Ofcom (the UK communications regulator) finding that only 21% of customers have ever changed their main banking relationship. In particular, older customers, who are valuable as they tend to have higher deposit balances, rarely switch. The combination of economies of scale and low customer switching makes it difficult for potential competitors to significantly encroach on established market leaders.

There is a reasonable level of competition between the major banks, though it is rational and tends to focus on non-price factors. This reflects the economics of banking; all large banks have a significant existing book of business (outstanding loans and deposits). Consequently, if a bank were to compete aggressively on price it would be likely to result in a significant decline in the bank's own profitability as its existing book of business reprices. In addition, due to low customer switching, any offsetting market share gains are likely to be limited. In any event, as an oligopoly, competitors would be expected to eventually respond, further limiting incentives to compete aggressively on price. These economic forces tend to result in rational competition amongst the large banks.

The economic forces highlighted amount to an economic moat, which allows the large UK banks to generate strong returns on their domestic retail banking operations. Lloyds is the most exposed to this business, reflecting its leading market share and lack of significant offshore or investment banking operations, which tend to be less profitable.

### **Risks and Valuation**

UK banks are exposed to political and regulatory risk. Regulatory requirements have been increasing for banks around the world and the UK is no exception. While much of the new regulatory regime is in place, some rules are still to be finalised. In addition, tax changes have impacted near-term profitability and there is an outstanding competition review focusing on current accounts and small business banking. Nonetheless, the political environment appears to be stabilising, reflecting the recent election of a majority government, and we judge Lloyds well placed to meet any additional requirements given its strong capital position.

UK banks have also been impacted by significant fines and redress costs for financial misconduct. By far the most material issue for Lloyds has been Payment Protection Insurance (PPI) redress costs. Many PPI insurance policies were found to have been mis-sold to customers (policies were not appropriate to their circumstances or simply not needed) and the banks have been forced to pay redress costs to affected customers. For Lloyds, these costs have totalled more than £13 billion over the past four years. The impact of these costs has, to a degree, masked the significant improvement in Lloyds' underlying profitability over the period. Lloyds now appears to be through the bulk of PPI payments, with the regulator recently announcing they will consult on the implementation of a deadline for PPI complaints, though further financial misconduct costs cannot be ruled out.

In addition, banks are always impacted by the performance of the economy within which they operate. In this case the UK appears relatively well placed compared to many parts of the world, with steady economic growth and an unemployment rate of just 5.5%, providing a solid economic backdrop for Lloyds.

Lloyds Banking Group's valuation is attractive, with the bank trading on a price to forward earnings ratio of less than ten times. We judge the bank likely to deliver strong returns over the next few years.

### **Summary**

While it has been a tough period for Lloyds and the UK bank sector more generally, the future is looking more promising. The economy is performing well and the banking system has largely addressed its imbalances. The market is an attractive oligopoly, with Lloyds enjoying a very strong market position. Consequently, we are expecting a significant improvement in reported profits going forward. The bank trades on an attractive valuation and is forecast to deliver solid returns to shareholders over our investment horizon.

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^ The representative portfolio is an account in the composite that closely reflects the portfolio management style of the strategy. Performance is not a consideration in the selection of the representative portfolio. The characteristics of the representative portfolio may differ from those of the composite and of the other accounts in the composite. Information regarding the representative portfolio and the other accounts in the composite is available upon request. Industry and Geographical Exposures are calculated on a look through basis based on underlying revenue exposure of individual companies held within the portfolio.