

# Aberdeen Asia Pacific and Japan Equity Fund I Acc

## GB00BOXWNK36



## Analyst Notes

### Standard Life Investments & Aberdeen Asset Management Merger

#### Immaterial Change

08 Mar, 2017 | Standard Life Investments (SLI) and Aberdeen Asset Management confirmed over the weekend they are in late stage discussion to merge in an all-share deal that would see the two Edinburgh-based firms create the UK's largest asset manager with combined assets of over GBP 660 billion. If the deal were to be completed Standard Life would own two thirds of the combined group; Keith Skeoch, Standard Life's Chief Executive would co-lead the merged entity alongside Aberdeen's Chief Executive Martin Gilbert. In addition, Rod Paris of Standard Life is expected to become CIO for the combined group. A new board is likely to be formed with equal representation from both companies, led by Standard Life chairman Sir Gerry Grimstone, while Aberdeen's chairman, Simon Troughton, would become deputy chairman.


Aberdeen's strength lies in equities, particularly Asian and emerging markets--areas that have seen significant outflows over the last few years. The firm has looked to broaden its product offering, placing a heavier emphasis on fixed income and moving into areas such as alternatives more recently, as was evident in its bid for Pioneer in late 2016. It has also seen departures of some key individuals such as Anne Richards, the global CIO, who left to become CEO of M&G in February 2016. Standard Life Investments, which started out as the investment arm of the insurance firm, has made increasing head roads into asset management over the past decade. The firm has a diversified range of products, but in the years since the global financial crisis the success of its Bronze-rated Global Absolute Returns Strategies (GARS) and the resulting strong asset growth has led it to dominate other investment offerings in SLI's line-up. As with Aberdeen, SLI also saw significant outflows in 2016 driven by disappointing results from their GARS offerings.

Given Aberdeen's strength in emerging

market equities and Standard Life's more diversified stable of products dominated by their multi-asset range, we feel the merger of the two will be complementary -- and may not lead to much rationalisation of their offerings. That said, at this stage, we would caution investors against making any pre-emptive moves until there is greater clarity around the merger and the impact it might have on its underlying investment teams and product ranges. Until there is a clearer picture, we are maintaining our existing pillar ratings on both Parents and also the Morningstar Analyst Ratings on Aberdeen and Standard Life strategies.

# Aberdeen Asia Pacific and Japan Equity Fund I Acc

## GB00BOXWKN36

**Morningstar Analyst Rating**  
 **Bronze**  
 8 Mar 2017  
 11:10, UTC-0600

**Morningstar Category**  
 Asia-Pacific incl Japan Equity

**Category Index**  
 MSCI AC Asia Pacific NR USD

**Total Assets**  
 139.80  
 Mil GBP

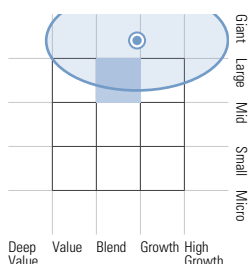
**Current Yield %**  
 —

**Inception Date**  
 01/10/12

**Domicile/Currency**  
 GBR/GBP

**Morningstar Rating**  
 ★★☆☆

### Equity Style Map



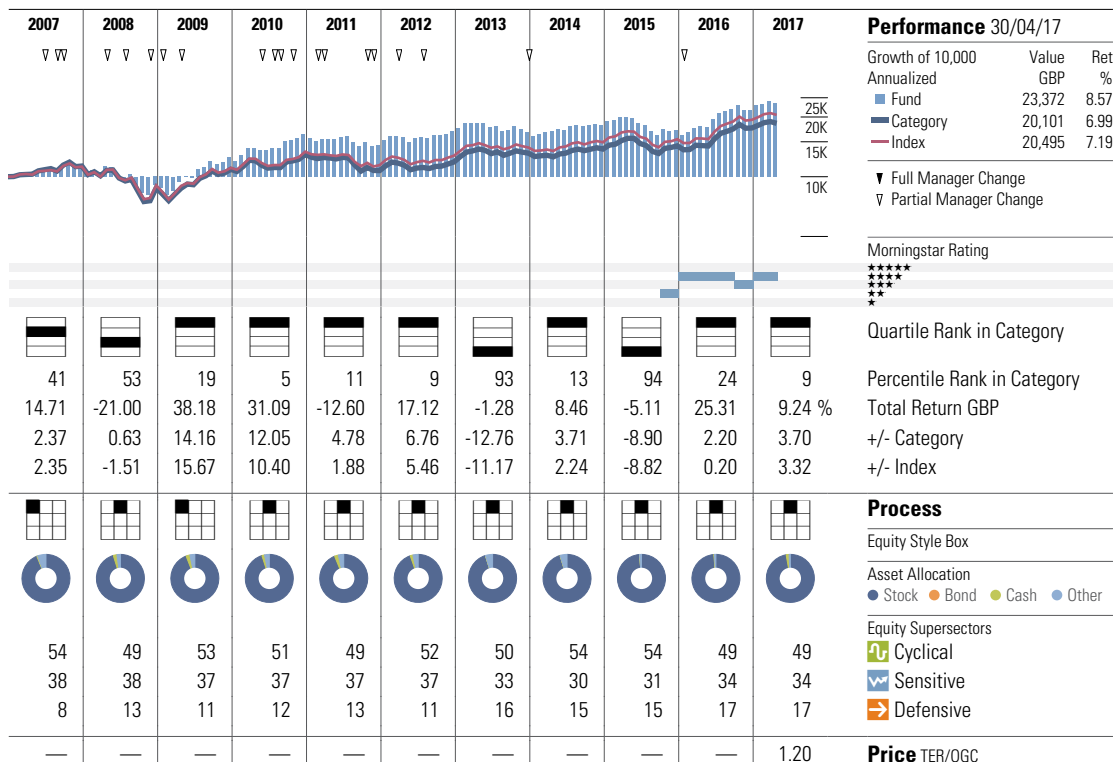
### People

Hugh Young	11/88
Flavia Cheong	08/96
Robert Penaloza	11/97

Total Named Managers 40

### Morningstar Pillars

Process	Positive
Performance	Neutral
People	Positive
Parent	Neutral
Price	Negative



### Analyst View

Mark Laidlaw, Senior Analyst

## The star is shining a little less bright at Aberdeen Asia Pacific and Japan Equity.

The conduct of Morningstar's analysts is governed by Morningstar's Code of Ethics, Securities Trading and Disclosure Policy, and Morningstar Manager Research Integrity Policy. For information regarding conflicts of interest, please click <http://global.morningstar.com/managerdisclosures>

### Morningstar Analyst Rating

Morningstar evaluates mutual funds based on five key pillars, which its analysts believe lead to funds that are more likely to outperform over the long term on a risk-adjusted basis.

Analyst Rating Spectrum

Gold Silver Bronze Neutral Negative

The Morningstar Analyst Rating for Funds is a forward-looking analysis of a fund. Morningstar has identified five key areas crucial to predicting the future success of a fund: People, Parent, Process, Performance, and Price. The pillars are used in determining the Morningstar Analyst Rating for a fund. Morningstar Analyst Ratings are assigned on a five-tier scale running from Gold to Negative. The top three ratings, Gold, Silver, and Bronze, all indicate that our analysts think highly of a fund; the difference between them corresponds to differences in the level of analyst conviction in a fund's ability to outperform its benchmark and peers through time, within the context of the level of risk taken over the long term (defined as a full market cycle or at least five years). Neutral represents funds in which our analysts don't have a strong positive or negative conviction over the long term (defined as a full market cycle or at least five years) and Negative represents funds that possess at least one flaw that our analysts believe is likely to significantly hamper future performance over the long term (defined as a full market cycle or at least five years). Past performance of a security may or may not be sustained in future and is no indication of future performance. For detailed information about the Morningstar Analyst Rating for Funds, please visit <http://global.morningstar.com/managerdisclosures>

27 Dec, 2016 | Aberdeen Asia Pacific and Japan Equity remains an attractive choice but is no longer one of our top picks in this space. The peer group has been getting stronger, while, if anything, Aberdeen's Asian capability is a little weaker than it was.

All that said, this is still a quality outfit, with a large, well-resourced investment team led by Flavia Cheong. Like a number of senior members in the team, she has spent the majority of her investment career at the firm, having joined back in 1996. She was appointed head of Asia ex-Japan equities in July 2015 when the strategy's longtime steward Hugh Young moved on to a broader role within the firm. This was a logical decision, in our eyes. She leads a flat-structured team, where members are generalists rather than having sector-specific responsibilities, thereby minimising the level of key-person risk. There have been a couple of senior departures in the last few years, but so far Aberdeen has been able to promote suitably experienced replacements from the bench.

Aberdeen applies a consistent approach across all equity strategies, and the keys are quality and valuation. Aberdeen is a patient investor, willing to back quality businesses that are

well managed. A potential criticism is that the team may not be critical enough when a business makes a mistake or begins to deteriorate. To its credit, Aberdeen has attempted to address this by reviewing long-term positions that have stumbled. Examples include Standard Chartered Bank, which the team decided to keep, and Li & Fung, which was sold as the team determined the investment thesis no longer held true.

The strategy faces additional challenges. Capacity has been a factor for a number of years, though this has been lessened by net outflows of GBP 4.8 billion over the year to 30 June 2016, seemingly because of negative sentiment toward the asset class and poor performance.

Aberdeen Asia Pacific and Japan Equity remains a quality choice, but a few missteps have enabled rivals to get a leg up. As a reflection of this, we are downgrading the Morningstar Analyst Rating to Bronze from Silver.

# Morningstar Global Fund Report

## Disclosure

The Morningstar Global Fund Report ("Report") is for informational purposes, intended for financial professionals and/or qualified investors ("Users") and should not be the sole piece of information used by such Users or their clients in making an investment decision.

The analysis within this report is prepared by the person(s) noted in their capacity as an analyst for Morningstar. The opinions expressed within the Report are given in good faith, are as of the date of the Report and are subject to change without notice. Neither the analyst nor Morningstar commits themselves in advance to whether and in which intervals updates to the Report are expected to be made. The written analysis and Morningstar Analyst Rating within this Report are statements of opinions; they are not statements of fact.

Morningstar believes its analysts make a reasonable effort to carefully research information contained in their analysis. The information on which the analysis is based has been obtained from sources which are believed to be reliable such as, for example, the fund's prospectus and shareholder reports (or their equivalents), fund company website, interviews with fund company personnel, and relevant and appropriate press sources as well as data, statistics and information within Morningstar's own database. Morningstar does not perform an audit or seek independent verification of any of the data, statistics, and information it receives.

Unless otherwise provided in a separate agreement, Users accessing this Report may only use it in the country in which the Morningstar distributor is based. Unless stated otherwise, the original distributor of the report is Morningstar Inc., a U.S.A. domiciled financial institution.

This Report is for informational purposes only and has no regard to the specific investment objectives, financial situation or particular needs of any specific recipient. This publication is intended to provide information to assist institutional investors in making their own investment decisions, not to provide investment advice to any specific investor. Therefore, investments discussed and recommendations made herein may not be suitable for all investors; Users and User clients must exercise their own independent judgment as to the suitability of such investments and recommendations in the light of their own investment objectives, experience, taxation status and financial position.

The information, data, analyses and opinions presented herein are not warranted to be accurate, correct, complete or timely. Unless otherwise provided in a separate agreement, Morningstar makes no representation that the Report contents meet all of the presentation and/or disclosure standards applicable in the jurisdiction the recipient is located.




Except as otherwise required by law or provided for in a separate agreement, the analyst, Morningstar and its officers, directors and employees will not be responsible or liable for any trading decisions, damages or other losses resulting from, or related to, the information, data, analyses or opinions within the report. Morningstar encourages Users and User clients to read all relevant issue documents (e.g., prospectus) pertaining to the security concerned, including without limitation, information relevant to its investment objectives, risks, and costs before making an investment decision and when deemed necessary, to seek the advice of a legal, tax, and/or accounting professional.

The Report and its contents are not directed to, or intended for distribution to or use by, any person or entity who is a citizen or resident of or located in any locality, state, country or other jurisdiction where such distribution, publication, availability or use would be contrary to law or regulation or which would subject Morningstar or its affiliates to any registration or licensing requirements in such jurisdiction.

Where this report is made available in a language other than English and in the case of inconsistencies between the English and translated versions of the report, the English version will control and supersede any ambiguities associated with any part or section of a report that has been issued in a foreign language. Neither the analyst, Morningstar, or Morningstar affiliates guarantee the accuracy of the translations.

This Report may be distributed in certain localities, countries and/or jurisdictions ("Territories") by independent third parties or independent intermediaries ("Distributors"). Such Distributors are not acting as agents or representatives of the analyst or Morningstar. In Territories where a Distributor distributes our Report, the Distributor, and not the analyst or Morningstar, is solely responsible for complying with all applicable regulations, laws, rules, circulars, codes and guidelines established by local and/or regional regulatory bodies, including laws in connection with the distribution third-party research reports.

### Morningstar Analyst Rating

	2015	2016	2017
 Gold			
 Silver			
 Bronze			
Neutral			
Negative			
Under Review			
Not Ratable			

For a list of funds which Morningstar currently covers and provides written analysis on please contact your local Morningstar office. For information on the historical Morningstar Analyst Rating for this fund or any Fund Morningstar covers, please contact your local Morningstar office.

Please note that investments in securities (including mutual funds) are subject to market and other risks and there is no assurance or guarantee that the intended investment objectives will be achieved. Past performance of a security may or may not be sustained in future and is no indication of future performance. A security investment return and an investor's principal value will fluctuate so that, when redeemed, an investor's shares may be worth more or less than their original cost. A security's current investment performance may be lower or higher than the investment performance noted within the report. Morningstar's Risk, Return and Star Rating serves as useful data points with respect to evaluating a fund's risk profile.

A current yield percentage is not a reflection of the actual return an investor will receive in all cases as market prices for securities are constantly changing due to such things as market factors. Where a security is denominated in a

different currency than the currency of the User or User's clients, changes in rates of exchange may have an adverse effect on the value, price or income of or from that investment.

Indexes noted within the report are unmanaged, their returns do not include payment of any sales charges or fees an investor would pay to purchase securities, and cannot be invested in directly.

In certain jurisdictions, the Report contents, except for the Morningstar Analyst Rating and key analysis/opinions, may be shared with the fund company prior to publication. In the unlikely event that Morningstar would change their analysis/opinions and/or the Morningstar Analyst Rating based on feedback as result of such review, the Report would disclose such a fact.

### Conflicts of Interest:

- Analysts may own (actual or beneficial) interests in the financial products that are the subject of the Report. No material interests are held by Morningstar, the analyst or their immediate family in the financial products that are the subject of the Report.\*
- Analysts' compensation is derived from Morningstar's overall earnings and consists of salary, bonus and in some cases restricted stock. Analysts' receive no compensation or material benefits from product issuers or third parties in connection with the Report.#
- Morningstar does not receive commissions for providing research and does not charge financial product issuers to be rated.
- Analysts may not pursue business and employment opportunities outside Morningstar within the investment industry (including but not limited to, working as a financial planner, an investment adviser or investment adviser representative, a broker-dealer or broker-dealer agent, a financial writer, reporter, or analyst).
- Morningstar may provide the product issuer or its related entities with services or products for a fee and on an arms' length basis including software products and licenses, research and consulting services, data services, licenses to republish our ratings and research in their promotional material, event sponsorship and website advertising.
- Morningstar affiliates (i.e., its investment management group) may have arrangements with a fund company's affiliate to provide investment consulting advice some of which an analyst may issue an investment research reports on one or more of the fund company's funds. However, analysts do not have authority over Morningstar's investment management group's business arrangements nor allow employees from the investment management group to participate or influence the analysis or opinion prepared by them.
- Morningstar, Inc. is a publically traded company (Ticker Symbol: MORN) and thus a fund which is the subject of this Report may own more than 5% of Morningstar, Inc.'s total outstanding shares. Please access Morningstar, Inc.'s proxy statement, "Security Ownership of Certain Beneficial Owners and Management" section <http://investorrelations.morningstar.com/sec.cfm?doctype=Proxy&year=12>. A fund's holding of Morningstar stock has no bearing on and is not a requirement for funds Morningstar determines to cover.

Analysts do not have any other material conflicts of interest at the time of publication. Users wishing to obtain further information should contact their local Morningstar office or refer to <https://corporate.morningstar.com/us/asp/subject.aspx?xmfile=540.xml>

### The Morningstar Analyst Rating™ for Funds

The Morningstar Analyst Rating™ for Funds is a forward-looking analysis of a fund. The Analyst Rating does not express a view on a given asset class or peer group; rather, it seeks to evaluate each fund within the context of its objective, an appropriate benchmark, and peer group.

The date shown next to the Morningstar Analyst Rating is the date on which Morningstar Manager Research Analyst assigned or reaffirmed the current rating for the fund based on the analyst's latest review and research report for the fund.

### The Five (5) Pillars

Morningstar has identified five key areas that we believe are crucial to predicting the future success of funds: People, Parent, Process, Performance, and Price. Each pillar is evaluated when assessing a fund as well as the interaction between the pillars, which we believe is crucial to understanding a fund's overall merit.

### People

The overall quality of a fund's investment team is a significant key to its ability to deliver superior performance relative to its benchmark and/or peers. Evaluating a fund's investment team requires that analysts assess several relevant items including how key decisions are made.

### Parent

We believe the parent organization is of utmost importance in evaluating funds. The fund's management set the tone for key elements of our evaluation, including capacity management, risk management, recruitment and retention of talent, and incentive pay. Beyond these operational areas, we prefer firms that have a culture of stewardship and put investors first to those that are too heavily weighted to salesmanship.

### Process

We look for funds with a performance objective and investment process (for both security selection and portfolio construction) that is sensible, clearly defined, and repeatable. In addition, the portfolio should be constructed in a manner that is consistent with the investment process and performance objective.

### Performance

We do not believe past performance is necessarily predictive of future results, and this factor accordingly receives a relatively small weighting in our evaluation process. In particular, we strive not to anchor on short-term performance. However, we do believe that the evaluation of long-term return and risk patterns is vital to determining if a fund is delivering to our expectations.

### Price

To reflect actual investor experience, price is evaluated within the context of the relevant market or cross-border region—for example, the United States, Australia, Canada, or Europe. In recognition of differences in scale and distribution costs in various markets, the level at which a fund is penalised for high fees or rewarded for low fees can vary with region. In Europe, for example, funds are penalised if they land in the most expensive quintile of their Morningstar category and are rewarded if they land in the cheapest quintile. The assessment is made using annual expense ratios, but in the case of funds with performance fees, expenses are evaluated excluding any performance fees and then the structure of the performance fee is evaluated separately.

**Morningstar Analyst Ratings**

Morningstar Analyst Ratings are assigned on a five-tier scale running from Gold to Negative. The top three ratings, Gold, Silver, and Bronze, all indicate that our analysts think highly of a fund; the difference between them corresponds to differences in the level of analyst conviction in a fund's ability to outperform its benchmark and peers through time, within the context of the level of risk taken.

**Gold**

Represents funds that our analyst has the highest-conviction in for that given investment mandate. By giving a fund a Gold rating, we are expressing an expectation that it will outperform its relevant performance benchmark and/or peer group within the context of the level of risk taken over the long term (defined as a full market cycle or at least five years). To earn a Gold rating, a fund must distinguish itself across the five pillars that are the basis for our analysis.

**Silver**

Represents funds our analyst has high-conviction in, but not in all of the five pillars. With those fundamental strengths, we expect these funds will outperform their relevant performance benchmark and/or peer group within the context of the level of risk taken over the long term (defined as a full market cycle or at least five years).

**Bronze**

Represents funds that have advantages that clearly outweigh any disadvantages across the pillars, giving analyst the conviction to award them a positive rating. We expect these funds to beat their relevant performance benchmark and/or peer group within the context of the level of risk taken over a full market cycle (or at least five years).

**Neutral**

Represents funds in which our analysts don't have a strong positive or negative conviction. In our judgment, these funds are not likely to deliver standout returns, but they aren't likely to seriously underperform their relevant performance benchmark and/or peer group either.

**Negative**

Represents funds that possess at least one flaw that our analysts believe is likely to significantly hamper future performance, such as high fees or an unstable management team. Because of these faults, we believe these funds are inferior to most competitors and will likely underperform their relevant performance benchmark and/or peer group, within the context of the level of risk taken, over a full market cycle.

Morningstar may also use two other designations in place of a rating:

**Under Review**

This designation means that a change that occurred with the fund or at the fund company requires further review to determine the impact on the rating.

**Not Ratable**

This designation is used only where we are providing a report on a new strategy or on a strategy where there are no relevant comparators, but where investors require information as to suitability.

For more information about our Analyst Rating methodology please go to

<http://corporate1.morningstar.com/ResearchLibrary/>

**Morningstar Star Rating**

The Morningstar Star Rating is a proprietary data point that is quantitatively driven. Funds are rated from one to five stars based on how well the fund performed (after adjusting for risk and accounting for sales charges) in comparison to similar funds. Within each Morningstar Category, the top 10% of funds receive five-stars and the bottom 10% receives one-star. Funds are rated for up to three time periods—three-, five-, and ten-years—and these ratings are combined to produce an overall star rating, which is noted within the Report. Funds with less than three years of history are not rated. Morningstar Star Ratings are based entirely on a mathematical evaluation of past performance. Morningstar Star Ratings are in no way to be considered a buy or sell signal nor should be viewed as a statement of fact.

**For Recipients in Australia:** This Report has been issued and distributed in Australia by Morningstar Australasia Pty Ltd (ABN: 95 090 665 544; ASFL: 240892). Morningstar Australasia Pty Ltd is the provider of the general advice ('the Service') and takes responsibility for the production of this report. The Service is provided through the research of investment products. To the extent the Report contains general advice it has been prepared without reference to an investor's objectives, financial situation or needs. Investors should consider the advice in light of these matters and, if applicable, the relevant Product Disclosure Statement before making any decision to invest. Refer to our Financial Services Guide (FSG) for more information at [www.morningstar.com.au/fsg.pdf](http://www.morningstar.com.au/fsg.pdf).

**For Recipients in Hong Kong:** The Report is distributed by Morningstar Investment Management Asia Limited, which is regulated by the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission to provide services to professional investors only. Neither Morningstar Investment Management Asia Limited, nor its representatives, are acting or will be deemed to be acting as an investment advisor to any recipients of this information unless expressly agreed to by Morningstar Investment Management Asia Limited. For enquiries regarding this research, please contact a Morningstar Investment Management Asia Limited Licensed Representative at <http://global.morningstar.com/equitydisclosures>.

**For Recipients in India:** This Investment Research is issued by Morningstar Investment Adviser India Private Limited. Morningstar Investment Adviser India Private Limited is registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Registration number INA000001357) and provides investment advice and research. Morningstar Investment Adviser India Private Limited has not been the subject of any disciplinary action by SEBI or any other legal/regulatory body. Morningstar Investment Adviser India Private Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Morningstar Investment Management LLC. In India, Morningstar Investment Adviser India Private Limited has one associate, Morningstar India Private Limited, which provides data related services, financial data analysis and software development.

The Research Analyst has not served as an officer, director or employee of the fund company within the last 12 months, nor has it or its associates engaged in market making activity for the fund company.

\*The Conflicts of Interest disclosure above also applies to relatives and associates of Manager Research Analysts in India

#The Conflicts of Interest disclosure above also applies to associates of Manager Research Analysts in India. The terms and conditions on which Morningstar Investment Adviser India Private Limited offers Investment Research to clients, varies from client to client, and are detailed in the respective client agreement.

**For recipients in Japan:** The Report is distributed by Ibbotson Associates Japan, Inc., which is regulated by Financial Services Agency. Neither Ibbotson Associates Japan, Inc., nor its representatives, are acting or will be deemed to be acting as an investment advisor to any recipients of this information.

**For recipients in Singapore:** For Institutional Investor audiences only. Recipients of this report should contact their financial adviser in Singapore in relation to this report. Morningstar, Inc., and its affiliates, relies on certain

exemptions (Financial Advisers Regulations, Section 32B and 32C) to provide its investment research to recipients in Singapore.