RBC BlueBay
Asset Management

RBC Global Asset Management (UK) Limited

Website disclosure
SFDR Article 8 Portfolio

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SFDR Article 8 Strategy – RBC Emerging Markets Equity Portfolio - Segregated Account 55 ("the Portfolio")

This disclosure applies to the following strategy: Segregated Account 55[1]

Summary

The Portfolio follows the RBC Global Asset Management Emerging Markets Equity Strategy and promotes environmental and social characteristics but does not have sustainable investments as its objective. The Portfolio promotes environmental and social characteristics by investing in companies that are assessed using a proprietary ESG rating methodology, where companies are given a rating between 0 and 100, while excluding companies on the client's ESG exclusion list. Companies given a rating above 70 are assessed as having high quality ESG practices. ESG ratings assigned to each company are reviewed regularly and updated as new material information becomes available. An assessment of good governance contributes to the investment strategy.

Where relevant, environmental characteristics promoted by the strategies, include, but are not limited to, appropriate and responsible management of climate change and waste. The social characteristics promoted by the strategies, where relevant, include, but are not limited to, appropriate and responsible management of employee relations and health and safety practices.

The Portfolio commits to only owning assets that are deemed to be aligned to the environmental or social characteristics of the strategies, excluding cash and cash equivalents. Therefore, a minimum of 90% of the NAV of the strategies will be in assets that promote the environmental or social characteristics (and have ratings of 70 or above). If a company is assessed to not have a rating of 70 or above, it will be disposed of in a timely manner and consistent with the best interests of the client.

The investment team may use multiple ESG data sources to perform its assessment of an asset. Sources include, but are not limited to, direct disclosures from the company, third-party data vendors, and independent research. The data utilised covers environmental, social, and governance data, as well as ESG-related controversies. As part of the investment process, the investment team uses this data and its own due diligence on a company to assess the environmental and social characteristics of a company.

The investment team engages with many issuers, and other stakeholders on material ESG issues. The majority of engagements are with issuers, where the investment team seeks information on how an issuer is addressing its material ESG risks and opportunities and conveys its views on those risks and opportunities. The investment team meets with many issuers in which it invests on an ongoing basis and develops an in-depth dialogue with issuers over time. The team will generally keep the particulars about its engagements confidential to foster a constructive relationship with investee companies.

[1] Please note product names are anonymised for client confidentiality purposes.

Samenvatting

De Emerging Markets Equity Portefeuille volgt de ESG-methodiek van RBC Global Asset Management en bevordert milieu- en sociale kenmerken, maar heeft geen duurzame beleggingen als doelstelling. De Portefeuille bevordert deze kenmerken door te beleggen in bedrijven die hier aandacht aan besteden en daarmee waarde creëren voor zowel belanghebbenden als de maatschappij. Bedrijven worden beoordeeld aan de hand van een eigen ESG-ratingmethode, waarbij bedrijven een score krijgen tussen 0 en 100, met uitsluiting van bedrijven op de ESG-uitsluitingslijst van de klant. Bedrijven met een score boven de 70 worden geacht een netto positieve bijdrage te bieden aan belanghebbenden en de maatschappij. ESG-scores worden regelmatig herzien en geactualiseerd wanneer nieuwe materiële informatie beschikbaar komt. Een beoordeling van goed ondernemingsbestuur draagt bij aan de beleggingsstrategie.

De milieu kenmerken die door de Portefeuille worden bevorderd omvatten, waar relevant maar niet uitsluitend, een passend en verantwoord beheer van klimaatverandering en afval. De sociale kenmerken die door de Portefeuille worden bevorderd omvatten, waar relevant maar niet uitsluitend, een passend en verantwoord beheer van arbeidsrelaties, gezondheids- en veiligheidspraktijken.

De Portefeuille belegt uitsluitend in activa die in lijn zijn met de bevorderde milieu- of sociale kenmerken, met uitzondering van kasposities. Minimaal 90% van de NAV van de strategie wordt belegd in bedrijven die deze kenmerken bevorderen (en een score hebben van 70 of hoger). Indien wordt vastgesteld dat een bedrijf niet langer een score van 70 of hoger heeft, dan zal de positie tijdig in het belang van de klant worden afgestoten.

Het beleggingsteam maakt gebruik van diverse ESG-gegevensbronnen om een belegging te beoordelen. Deze bronnen omvatten onder meer bedrijfsrapportages, gegevens van externe leveranciers en onafhankelijk onderzoek. De gebruikte gegevens omvatten milieu-, sociale en governance factoren, evenals ESG-gerelateerde controverses. Als onderdeel van het beleggingsproces combineert het beleggingsteam deze gegevens met eigen due diligence om te beoordelen in hoeverre het bedrijf een positieve ESG-bijdrage levert.

Het beleggingsteam gaat actief in dialoog met bedrijven en andere belanghebbenden over materiële ESG-kwesties. Daarbij wordt informatie verzameld over de wijze waarop bedrijven omgaan met ESG-risico's en -kansen en wordt een visie gevormd op deze aspecten. Doorlopend contact met managementteams leidt tot constructieve en verdiepende dialogen. Details van deze engagements worden doorgaans vertrouwelijk behandeld om een effectieve relatie met de bedrijven te waarborgen.

No sustainable investment objective

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

However, whilst the Portfolio does not have as its objective a sustainable investment, it will have a proportion of sustainable investments, of at least 25% of its in-scope investments. But where it has sustainable investments with an environmental objective in economic activities, these do not qualify as environmentally sustainable under the EU taxonomy.

Environmental or social characteristics of the financial product

The Portfolio will invest in companies identified as having quality ESG practices based on a proprietary ESG rating methodology and as assessed by the investment team, while excluding those included in the client's exclusion list.

Where relevant, environmental characteristics promoted by the strategies, include, but are not limited to, appropriate and responsible management of climate change and waste. The social characteristics promoted by the strategies, where relevant, include, but are not limited to, appropriate and responsible management of employee relations and health and safety practices.

No reference benchmark has been designated for the purpose of attaining the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the strategies.

Investment strategy

The Portfolio seeks to invest in a long term, high conviction portfolio of companies operating in Emerging Markets with strong ESG credentials. The team's approach to ESG comprises of three key pillars: Stock Selection; Active Ownership; and Research.

The investment team use a proprietary investment checklist as the final stage of its bottom-up research process. Within the checklist, the investment team review the questions geared towards ESG and sustainability factors to produce a stock specific "ESG Rating". Examples of the checklist questions include:

- Do the company's activities have a negative impact on the climate?
- Is the franchise socially useful?
- Does the company work in the best interests of all shareholders?

This assessment results in an overall company rating as well as a dedicated ESG rating from 0-100 (100 being the highest). Investee companies are assessed closely by the investment team on an ongoing basis, through regular company meetings and engagement with company management and key stakeholders. The ESG Rating will be reviewed and reported on a regular basis to capture any changes in the ESG assessment of a company. If a company is given an ESG Rating less than 70 after a review, it will be divested in a timely manner that is consistent with the best interests of the client.

The investment team engages with many issues and other stakeholders on material ESG issues. Focus areas of engagement may include ESG disclosure, executive remuneration, workforce diversity and climate change.

Binding elements of the investment strategy used to select the investments to attain each of the environmental or social characteristics promoted

The Portfolio will only invest in companies with an ESG Rating of 70 or above. If a company is given an ESG Rating less than 70 after a review, it will be divested in a timely manner that is consistent with the best interests of the client.

The portfolio also excludes issuers in accordance with the client's exclusion list provided to the investment manager. The following exclusions list applied to the Portfolio as provided by the client are as follows relating to issuers which

- are engaged in, or are otherwise exposed to, the production of weapons (including, but not limited to, civilian firearms, civilian small arms, cluster munitions, anti-personnel mines, white phosphorus used in incendiary weapons or munitions, depleted uranium munitions, biological, chemical and nuclear weapons).
- are engaged in the production of tobacco.
- derive more than:
  - 5% of revenue from distribution or supply of retail small arms.
  - 5% of revenue from thermal coal extraction or power generation.
  - 5% of revenue from oil tar sands production (also known as oil sands).
  - 5% of revenue from oil and gas production
  - 5% of revenue from tobacco distribution, retail, and supply of certain tobacco-related products.
  - 25% of revenue from the production of alcohol or 25% of revenue from the retail, and supply of certain alcohol-related products.
  - 5% of revenue from the development or 15% of revenue from the growth of genetically modifying plants and other organisms intended for agricultural use or human consumption.
  - 5% of revenue from the operation of gambling related activities or 15% of revenue from products, services, equipment or facilities related to gambling.
  - 5% of revenue from the production or 15% of revenue from the distribution of adult entertainment materials.
- have been indicated as involved in one or more very severe controversies by MSCI ESG Controversies relating to: (i) biodiversity and land use; (ii) water stress; (iii) operational waste (non-hazardous); and (iv) toxic emissions and waste.

The client provides the investment manager with a list of securities which are compliant with the client's positive sustainable investments inclusion list. The investment manager shall maintain a minimum aggregate exposure of 25% of the Net Asset Value(NAV) of the managed portion from the sustainable investment inclusion list provided by the client.

Policy to assess good governance practices of the investee companies

The investment team assesses the governance of investee companies through detailed research as well as company engagement, which forms a component of its investment checklist and contributes to its ESG rating. Factors considered include the appropriateness of executive remuneration; company track records in areas such as integrity and business ethics; company focus and practices related to the board, management, and workforce diversity; treatment of minority shareholders; and board independence, among other factors.

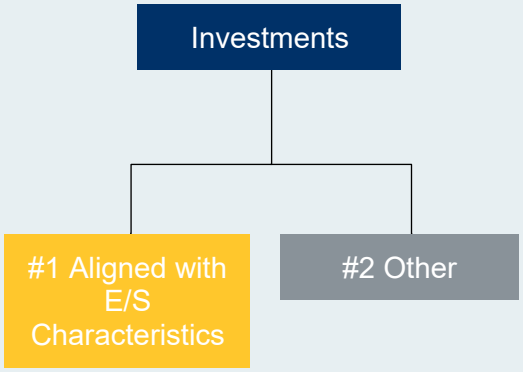
Good governance practices include sound management structures, employee relations, remuneration or staff and tax compliance.

Understanding how management thinks about important ESG issues and what actions they are implementing is a critical component of the investment team's view on a company's governance practices and ESG standards more broadly.

Proportion of investments

The Portfolio will generally invest 100% of its NAV (excluding cash, cash equivalents, hedging instruments or other securities not designed to provide equity exposure) in companies aligned with the environmental and social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio (#1). A minimum of ninety percent (90%) of an entire strategy will be invested in companies aligned with the E/S characteristics promoted by the Portfolio (#1), subject to re-ratings which will be divested in a manner consistent with the best interests of the client and, in any event, within three months.

The remaining ten percent (10%) - which will be cash or cash equivalents – will not incorporate environmental or social characteristics and will fall under #2.



#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.

Investments included under "#2 Other", what is their purpose and any minimum environmental or social safeguards:

The Portfolio may hold certain instruments which do not contribute directly to the investment strategy such as cash or cash equivalents.

There are no environmental or social safeguards applicable to such instruments, which do not provide direct exposure to investee companies

Monitoring of environmental or social characteristics

Proprietary ESG ratings for each holding company are reviewed quarterly and may also be reviewed and updated should new material information become available. The investment team monitors environmental and/or social controversies and news flows on an ongoing basis. Independent research and monitoring are used to inform any changes to the ESG rating. The environmental or social characteristics of the constituent companies are discussed regularly in team meetings.

The investment team engages with many issuers on environmental and/or social issues which are chosen and prioritised using a risk-based approach.

Methodologies

The investment team uses a proprietary ESG rating methodology to assess each company. The investment team assigns a rating to each assessed company from 0 to 100.

Companies assigned a rating above 70 are deemed to have high quality ESG practices, as determined by the investment team.

The investment team use a proprietary investment checklist as the final stage of its bottom-up research process. Within the checklist, the investment team review the questions geared towards ESG and sustainability factors to produce a stock specific "ESG Rating". Examples of the checklist questions include:

- Do the company's activities have a negative impact on the climate?
- Is the franchise socially useful?
- Does the company work in the best interests of all shareholders?

This assessment results in an overall company rating as well as a dedicated ESG rating from 0-100 (100 being the highest). Investee companies are assessed closely by the investment team on an ongoing basis, through regular company meetings and engagement with company management and key stakeholders. The ESG Rating will be reviewed and reported on a regular basis to capture any changes in the ESG assessment of a company. If a company is given an ESG Rating less than 70 after a review, it will be divested in a timely manner that is consistent with the best interests of the client.

ESG negative screening

The exclusion list is provided by the client to the investment manager for implementation. To undertake the analysis to apply the exclusionary criteria and generate the list, the client has used data provided by one or more external ESG research providers.

ESG positive screening (sustainable investments)

Eligible Sustainable Investments are detailed in the client's positive list. According to the Sustainable Investment methodology provided by the client, an investment will be assessed as contributing to Environmental and/or Social Objectives where a) A minimum proportion of the issuer's business activity contributes to an Environment and/or Social Objective; or b) The issuer's business practices contribute to Environmental and/or Social Objective.

Data sources and processing

Data sources used

The investment team has access to a range of ESG data from third-party data providers, including MSCI ESG Research LLC, Sustainalytics, Institutional Shareholder Services Inc. and Glass, Lewis & Co, in addition to accessing ESG data directly from company disclosures. Which sources, factors, and methods used varies according to the ESG materiality and relevance of each factor to the company. These include, but are not limited to, the following ESG data and inputs:

- Third Party ESG ratings: Includes top level ratings, and both ratings and weights for component environmental, social, and governance factors.
- ESG controversies and severity levels related to factors including, but not limited to: labour rights, corruption, customer practices, privacy, land use management, climate change, supply chains, water and waste management, executive compensation, governance practices, human rights, community, business ethics, accounting.
- Environmental: carbon emissions, low-carbon transition risk exposure and management, temperature alignment, pollution and waste, resource use, land use management, biodiversity, ewaste, water consumption and use, green building, and energy demand.
- Social: product safety, employee health and safety, human capital management, labour management, privacy, supply chain, social opportunities.
- Governance: board independence, audit and accounting, executive compensation, shareholder rights, anti-competitive practices, bribery, and corruption.

ESG negative screening

The exclusion list is provided by the client to the investment manager for implementation. To undertake the analysis to apply the exclusionary criteria and generate the list, the client has used data provided by one or more external ESG research providers.

ESG positive screening (sustainable investments)

The positive sustainable investment list is provided by the client to the investment manager for implementation. To undertake the analysis to apply the select Sustainable Investments, the client has used data provided by one or more external ESG research providers.

Measures taken to ensure data quality

The client provides an exclusion list and a sustainable investments inclusions list to the investment manager for implementation. It includes a list of securities to either be excluded or are eligible for investment. In generating these lists the client has used data provided by one or more external ESG research providers.

There are several steps undertaken to ensure that the provider and quality of data/research will meet expectations:

1. Before purchasing data or research from a provider, market analysis is conducted to compare the potential product with its competitors.
2. Where applicable, the RBC GAM Quantitative Investments team back tests data being considered for core investment and stewardship functions, and both the RBC Quantitative Investments team and Investment Risk group may assist in reviewing prospective subscriptions for data quality and consistency, where appropriate. Where inaccuracies and shortcomings in methodology are found, and it is unlikely the provider will be able to address them and meet expectations, the provider is removed from consideration.
3. During a trial period, investment teams may test potential research and data provider subscriptions within the context of the portfolios they manage. Investment teams then provide feedback on any research or data issues, including systemic issues that would prevent the provider from being applicable or useful to the investment process or minor issues that can be resolved through engagement with the provider.
4. Once the provider is on-boarded, open dialogue and engagement is maintained between users of the data and the providers themselves to ensure that the quality and accuracy of data and research continues to meet expectations. For example, direct training opportunities may be sought for users of the data to understand the product and new ways to integrate it. Investment teams may also discuss research findings directly with research providers' sector analysts or research managers to ensure a thorough and complete understanding between both parties.
5. In certain cases, where inaccuracies on issuers have been identified, RBC GAM may facilitate engagements between the issuers and research providers to discuss and resolve inconsistencies in data/research. Historically, these inaccuracies have resulted from issuers failing to disclose policies or practices on which the research provider is evaluating them, or providers' review cycles lagging issuers' publications/data releases.

In cases where existing research or data providers fail to meet expectations despite engagement efforts or where superior research or products are identified, RBC GAM may terminate the subscription. Subscriptions and contracts are reviewed by the internal legal department prior to signing and upon contract renewal to stipulate the conditions where termination may be appropriate.

How data is processed

The exclusion and sustainable investments inclusions lists provided by the client to the investment manager include identifier information for securities and issuers. The compliance and investment policy functions of the investment manager use this information to manage their internal investment systems for implementing, maintaining, and monitoring issuers restricted from investment (resulting from the ESG negative screening approaches).

The identifier information can also be used to monitor and track sustainable investments within the Portfolio which feature on the positive sustainable investment list provided by the client.

The investment team focuses on the ESG factors that it considers have the potential to impact the value of the investment and tailors the ESG integration tools and processes used for the investment strategy. This includes using, but is not limited to the following:

- Issuer-level reports that identify and discuss material ESG issues, based on third-party ESG research, company reports, and internal analyst/manager views.
- Internal ESG checklists and questionnaires for issuers held in a Portfolio.
- ESG engagement questions and engagement tracking.
- ESG data from third-party vendors considered in the fundamental investment framework.
- ESG controversies monitored on an ongoing basis.
- Climate data and climate scenario analysis.
- The Principle Adverse Impact indicators considered by the Portfolio.

The investment team integrates material ESG factors into the investment process by selecting the ESG tools and processes that work best for the investment decision-making process. Sustainability risks are deemed material if they have the potential to impact the risk-adjusted returns of the investments.

The investment team places particular focus on the ESG factors that have the potential to impact the value of the investment, with the extent of these impacts depending on the issuer, the industries and geographies in which it operates and the nature of the investment vehicle for which it is purchased.

Proportion of data estimated

Where possible, data used will always be the most recently published by an investee company. This is received either directly from the investee company or via a third-party data vendor. Where no data has been published, an estimation of that data point may be used. These estimations may be produced through an industry standard model or from a third-party vendor internal methodology. Where this is not available no data will be used.

Limitations to methodologies and data

Limitations to methodologies and data

The assessment of a company's environmental or social characteristics is limited by the investment team's reliance on publicly available information. This also applies to data availability.

The investment team may use third-party research to evaluate the ESG characteristics, risks, and opportunities regarding an issuer. Such research information and data may be incomplete, inaccurate, or unavailable, resulting in incorrect assessments of the ESG practices of an issuer. Legislative and regulatory changes, market developments and/or changes in data availability and reliability could also materially affect the quality and comparability of such research information and data.

How limitations do not affect the environmental or social characteristics promoted.

To undertake the analysis to apply the exclusionary criteria and select Sustainable Investments, the client has used data provided by one or more external ESG research providers. In turn the ESG research provider(s) are reliant on the publicly available information derived from the issuer's own public reporting but also includes data from various other stakeholders and sources. The scope of issuer coverage, quality (e.g., accuracy, timeliness etc.) and reliability of data, differing ESG assessment methodologies of the externa research provide could materially affect the accuracy of the investment restrictions applied.

The investment team performs due diligence on holding companies. If following the due diligence and assessment of the ESG characteristics of the company the investment team determines the quality of the company's ESG practices has meaningfully changed, it will be reflected in the ESG rating given to the company.

The investment team uses multiple ESG data and research sources, where possible, including company disclosures. This mitigates the limitations of inaccurate, incomplete, or unavailable research from third-party providers.

However, there may be some non-public information that the investment team could not be aware of at the time of the assessment, which could harm the promoted environmental or social characteristics.

Due diligence

As part of the investment process the investment team performs an analysis of the underlying issuers before investing. Analysis continues throughout the ownership of a company, including through regular reviews on a company's proprietary ESG rating.

The team utilises site visits, assesses publicly available information, data, research, and information learned from engagements to monitor performance of the company on its environmental and social characteristics. From time to time, the investment team may commission independent research into a company in order to fully assess its environmental and social characteristics.

The compliance of the Portfolio with its investment mandate is monitored through internal systems by the RBC GAM's Investment Policy team.

Engagement policies

The investment team engages with many issuers and other stakeholders on material ESG issues. The majority of engagements are with issuers, where the investment team seeks information on how an issuer is addressing its material ESG risks and opportunities and conveys its views on those risks and opportunities. The investment team meets with many issuers in which it invests on an ongoing basis and develops an in-depth dialogue with issuers over time. The team will generally keep the particulars about its engagements confidential to foster a constructive relationship with investee companies.

Typically, the purpose of engagements includes:

1. Information gathering on ESG risks and opportunities and the steps the issuer is taking to address them. This may result in continued monitoring of an existing or emerging ESG risk or opportunity, or an update to the analysis and assessment of an issuer.
2. Seeking better public disclosure of material ESG risks and opportunities and the steps the issuer is taking to address them.
3. Encouraging more effective management of material ESG factors when the team believes they may impact the value of an investment.
4. Where an issuer is lagging its peers on a material ESG issue, or insufficiently managing a material ESG issue, requesting a commitment for change, monitoring any changes, and encouraging continued improvements that are expected to positively impact the long-term value of an investment.

A majority of engagements are for information gathering but there are cases where a specific outcome is desired. In these instances, where engagement efforts have been unsuccessful and the issue being discussed is material, RBC GAM may comment publicly, either alone or in collaboration with other investors, or take more formal steps, such as filing a shareholder resolution for equity investments, if there is the belief that it is consistent with the best interest of the client to do so.

Ultimately, at any stage of engagement with an issuer, the investment team may choose to divest from the investment entirely. This may occur when the investment team does not believe that the ESG issue is being appropriately managed, despite ongoing engagement and stewardship efforts, and deems that the issue materially affects the investment case overall. The outcomes of an engagement generally are not the sole factor in an investment decision but can help inform the investment case. It is at the discretion of the investment team to decide whether to continue with an investment or to divest.

The specific ESG factors engaged on will differ based on sector, asset class, and geography. Seeking to understand each issuer individually and through the lens of local norms and the laws and regulations of the market in which it operates.

NOTE: the client remains in charge of proxy voting activity for the portfolio.

Designated reference benchmark

No reference benchmark has been designated for the purpose of attaining the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the Portfolio.

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