

# Product Assessment

## KKR Credit Income Fund

Report data as at 31 Jul 2020  
 Rating issued on 02 Jun 2020

### VIEWPOINT

The Trust, managed by KKR, accesses two discrete portfolios of US and European high yield bonds and loans. Using an active, value-based approach, KKR invests across the full spectrum of sub-investment grade securities, from traditional high yield bonds to deeply discounted, distressed opportunities. Zenith highlights KKR's proven expertise in managing the underlying strategies, positioning the Trust as an attractive option in the Listed Investment Trust (LIT) segment, for those investors seeking more aggressive fixed income returns with attendant drawdown risk.

In terms of the Trust and its underlying investment strategies, San Francisco-based, Chris Sheldon, Head of Leveraged Credit, is the Lead Portfolio Manager for the Global Credit Opportunities Fund (GCOF), while London-based, Matthieu Boulanger, Key Business Head and Investment Committee member, is responsible for the European Direct Lending (EDL) portfolio. In Zenith's opinion, Sheldon is highly experienced with specific skills in investing in lower quality credit securities, where his ability to understand the intrinsic value of a business is a key source of value-add.

The Trust inter-funds into the US-centric GCOF strategy and a recently launched European Direct Lending (EDL) portfolio, representing approximately 55% and 45% of the underlying portfolio at full investment, respectively. The GCOF is KKR's flagship 'traded' credit portfolio, representing the 'best ideas' from across its credit platform with the investable universe including high yield bonds, bank loans, structured products and distressed securities. Opportunistically, KKR can invest in more bespoke investment opportunities including warrants, exchange-traded funds, equity or debt tranches of collateralised debt and loan obligations.

Achieving diversification across regions, issuers and different fixed interest sub-sectors, Zenith highlights the complementarity between the two strategies, with the EDL allocation expected to smooth the mark-to-market volatility of the GCOF portfolio and ultimately the Trust.

Post listing, 100% of capital was fully invested in the GCOF portfolio which is an existing pool of assets. The allocation will reduce over the next six to 24 months and reallocated to the EDL portfolio, as new loans are originated and funded. The first allocation is expected to be made in the fourth quarter of 2020 and KKR will implement a staggered approach thereafter.

Zenith notes that while the capital deployment process was managed efficiently, the process has been structured with a high degree of path-dependency risk. Moreover, investing in a sub-investment grade credit quality portfolio for less than 12 months introduces significant drawdown and sequencing risk. To illustrate this, if the current drawdown in the net asset value (NAV) of the GCOF portfolio persists (approximately -20% as at 31 March 2020), investors will potentially realise losses, to fund the EDL strategy.

The final portfolio is expected to be managed with a credit spread duration range of between two and five years with a bias to senior secured securities which includes both loans and bonds. Consistent with the targeted opportunity set, KKR typically invests in lower quality credit securities with a typical credit rating of B and CCC and below (based on S&P's rating methodology).

Zenith notes that this cohort of securities is subject to a high level of mark-to-market volatility and potential default risk, particularly during stressed equity periods or cyclical downturns. Accordingly, investment outcomes will be closely tied to the quality and depth of KKR's bottom-up due diligence process. To this end, Zenith highlights that KKR has consistently outperformed the CCC component of the broader high yield indices, achieving higher returns and at the same time, demonstrating superior capital preservation qualities.

### FUND FACTS

- Deep and highly-experienced investment team
- Focus on sub-investment grade securities
- Structural diversification across US and European bonds and loans

### APIR Code

ASX:KKC

### Asset / Sub-Asset Class

International Fixed Interest  
 Listed Investment Entities – LICs/LITs

### Investment Style

Active

### Investment Objective

Aims to deliver a net distribution yield of 4% to 6% p.a., with a total return of 6% to 8% over the medium-term, by investing in US Traded Credit and European Private Credit.

### Zenith Assigned Benchmark

Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index  
 KKC Net Portfolio Returns

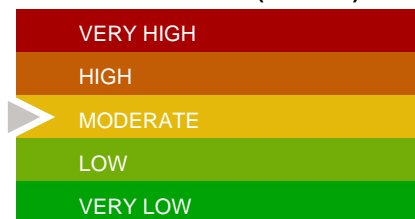
### Net Returns (% p.a.)

	Incpt.	6 mth	3 mth
LIC	-22.36	-22.04	7.41
Benchmark	0.40	0.25	0.03

### Fees (% p.a., Incl. GST)

Management Cost: 0.93%  
 Performance Fee: 5% of any excess return of the net portfolio return over the RBA  
 Cash Rate plus 4% p.a.

#### ABSOLUTE RISK (SECTOR)



#### RELATIVE RISK (FUND WITHIN SECTOR)



#### INCOME DISTRIBUTIONS PER



#### INVESTMENT TIMEFRAME



## APPLICATIONS OF INVESTMENT

### SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS

#### Listed Investment Trusts (LITs)

In assessing the performance of LITs, it is vital to understand how their structure affects the final performance figures as it is materially different to unlisted funds. As listed vehicles, the portfolio returns generated are exposed to additional volatility from unit price movements and can trade at significant premiums or discounts to Net Asset Value (NAV).

As an indication however, a series of return data can be viewed on the basis of the returns generated by:

- Unit price and distributions
- Change in NAV and distributions
- Returns generated internally by the investment portfolio

For comparison purposes, the use of the internal portfolio returns versus the benchmark gives the closest measure of the investment manager's skill in generating returns. However, these returns may not be able to be fully crystallised for holders given the potential for unit price movements on the ASX.

At various times when assessed on a purely quantitative basis, a LIT can trade away from its NAV which may represent good buying or selling opportunities. While these instances may boost investment returns, there is no guarantee that the discount or premium will converge to NAV, therefore, gains cannot be crystallised.

LITs differ in several important ways from Listed Investment Companies (LICs). Of particular note, owing to the trust structure used by LITs, 100% of net trust income must be paid as a distribution in the year it is earned. As a company, LIC's will pay dividends at the election of the Board in accordance with the LIC's dividend policy. LIC profits may be retained in order to create a more even flow of dividends.

#### International Fixed Interest

The sector typically comprises funds that invest predominantly in the higher-yielding sectors of the global fixed interest market. These sectors typically include high-yield, securitised loans and emerging market debt. The category includes funds that invest in specific underlying markets or a combination of each. Given the idiosyncratic nature of the sectors, managers commonly add value through security selection and/or sector rotation.

Zenith benchmarks all funds in this space against the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index. However, Zenith only uses this benchmark as a common reference point, and it may not be reflective of the underlying benchmark used by many managers in this category.

It should be noted that the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index is typically used as a benchmark to measure the investment performance of a passively managed short-term cash portfolio. The Index is comprised of 13 domestic bank bills of equal face value, each with a maturity seven days apart.

Given the funds in the "International Fixed Interest – High Income" sector invest in longer dated, higher default risk securities, they will potentially display higher downside volatility relative to the Zenith assigned Index i.e. while the index is used as a performance benchmark, it should not be used as an

indication of the risk involved in investing in the sector.

### PORTFOLIO APPLICATIONS

KKR employs a credit-focused fixed income strategy, investing in high yield securities on an opportunistic basis. While the investable universe is relatively broad, KKR's focus is on sub-investment grade securities with a focus on US and European credit markets. As such, Zenith has elected to place the Trust in the 'International Fixed Interest - Listed Investment Entities' category.

Zenith believes the Trust may be suitable for investors seeking exposure to a higher yielding portfolio with 'equity like' return expectations which may improve a portfolio's potential risk/return profile. However, given the Trust can invest in sub-investment grade and unrated assets, it may not be suitable for the more risk-averse investor.

From a portfolio perspective, the Trust may be suitable as a component in the income-producing portion of a well-diversified portfolio. The Trust is considered appropriate as a component of a defensive allocation; however, given the higher return and volatility profile of the strategy, Zenith believes that investors may partly fund the allocation from the growth portion of a portfolio.

Zenith does not believe the Trust is appropriate as a core holding within the defensive allocation of a portfolio. Due to the anticipated moderate to high levels of volatility, with the potential for capital losses, Zenith recommends taking a medium to long-term investment time frame. Investors also need to be aware that as a listed Trust, the units will have their own trading patterns and may trade away from their NTA which at times may impact the effectiveness of KKR's investment process and/or expected risk-return profile.

The Trust seeks to pay distributions of between 4% p.a. to 6% p.a. (net of fees and expenses), and total returns of between 6% p.a. to 8% p.a. over the medium term. The distribution yield may be lower than the net profit of the Trust due to unrealised gains on loans/bonds which are marked at fair value.

To access the underlying investment strategies, KKR employs a master/feeder structure with the Australian Trust investing in a Singapore domiciled partnership (referred to as a feeder fund), which in turn, invests in the GCOF strategy a Cayman's-based company (the master fund).

The Trust gains its exposure to the underlying investment strategy via a Profit Participating Note (PPN) which is issued by the Singapore-based entity. The PPN is a debt instrument paying a variable investment return based on the underlying performance of the GCOF and EDL portfolios.

Zenith highlights that the investment structure is complex, including the use of an interposed entity to manage potential Controlled Foreign Company (CFC) obligations. While our preference is for a more simplified approach, in our opinion, the structure effectively creates the same investment and tax outcomes as a direct investment, albeit with less risk of being taxed on an accruals basis under the CFC provisions.

CFC is a complex area of tax legislation and Zenith recommends investors seek their own personal tax advice with respect to the suitability of the structure.

Despite the relative attractiveness of the strategy, Zenith

highlights that the performance of the Trust reflects the movement in the underlying portfolio, as well as the performance of the ASX vehicle. The latter being subject to the impact of market sentiment, which can result in the Trust trading at a significant discount/premium to net tangible assets.

## RISKS OF THE INVESTMENT

### SECTOR RISKS

Funds within the 'International Fixed Interest - Listed Investment Entities' sector are exposed to the following broad risks:

**BUY/SELL SPREAD INCREASES:** Global markets are experiencing significant volatility due to the COVID-19 situation. As a result, the cost of transacting has risen significantly. In addition, funds employing currency hedging have also been impacted with an increase in foreign exchange transaction costs. In response to this, many managers have been frequently adjusting the buy/sell spreads for many funds, often daily. In some cases, the adjustments have been material. Zenith encourages all advisers/investors to reconfirm the buy/sell spread on each fund prior to making any investment decision and prior to issuing trade instructions. As markets stabilise, Zenith expects spreads to revert to historical levels, however, this may take several months.

**MARKET RISK:** Changes in economic, technological, environmental or political conditions and market sentiment may lead to a decline in general security prices and overall market volatility. During a general downturn in the securities markets, multiple asset classes may decline in value simultaneously.

**INTEREST RATE RISK:** Fixed interest securities are generally sensitive to changes in interest rates. An increase in interest rates may result in a fall in the value of these securities, while a decrease in interest rates can result in an increase in value.

**CREDIT SPREAD RISK:** In addition to being sensitive to general interest rate changes, non-government securities are also sensitive to changes in credit spreads (commonly the difference in yield between a government bond and a corporate security). A widening of spreads results in a fall in the value of these securities.

**DEFAULT RISK:** Given fixed interest securities represent loans to borrowers (including governments, banks and companies), there is a risk that these borrowers may default on interest or principal repayments. Credit risk is often reflected in credit ratings assigned by various credit agencies, which are subject to change.

**CURRENCY RISK:** In addition to being exposed to general market risk, investments in international markets are exposed to changes in value of the Australian dollar relative to other foreign currencies. This may lead to increased volatility, independent of market moves. While fixed interest funds typically hedge their foreign investments back into Australian dollars, there can be no guarantee that the funds will be hedged at all times, or that a manager will be successful in employing the hedge.

**LIQUIDITY RISK:** Fixed interest markets can experience periods of illiquidity which can result in difficulties in buying or selling securities without adversely impacting the price.

**DERIVATIVE RISK:** Derivatives are commonly employed by fixed interest managers to hedge currency and other risks and/or as an alternative to direct purchases or sales of underlying assets. There are multiple risks associated with the use of derivatives; for example, the value of the derivative may not move in line with the underlying asset, counterparties to the derivative may not be able to meet payment obligations, or a particular derivative may be difficult or costly to trade.

**LEVERAGE RISK:** Many derivatives have a leverage component. While leverage offers the opportunity to magnify gains, it can also magnify losses. An associated risk with leverage and magnification of gains/losses is that the portfolio's volatility may increase as a result. Investors need to be cognisant that the Trust may exhibit more volatility than one that is unlevered.

**PREMIUM / DISCOUNT TO NET ASSETS:** The listed structure means that the Trust's unit price may deviate substantially from its underlying net assets due to cyclical and/or sentiment driven factors. Movements in either premiums or discounts can be unpredictable and may have a significant impact on realisable value and the overall investment returns regardless of the investment managers skill.

**REGULATORY RISK:** The ASIC Regulatory Guide 97 'Disclosing Fees and Costs in Product Disclosure Statements and Periodic Statements' came into effect on 1 October 2017 and seeks to establish a common framework for disclosing fees with respect to registered managed investment schemes issued to retail investors.

In November 2019, ASIC released its final recommendations, with all proposed changes to be implemented by 30 September 2020.

In its current form, RG97 will not impact the actual costs (or after fee returns) on existing investments. Rather, the guide is focused on providing increased transparency with respect to the costs of management. Given this, it is feasible that under RG97, investors become more sensitive to the costs charged and seek lower cost alternatives, potentially leading to fund outflows.

### FUND RISKS

Zenith has identified the following key risks of the Trust. Although Zenith believes the risks noted are all significant, we have listed them in order of importance. In addition, we have not intended to highlight all possible risks.

**KEY PERSON RISK:** Given the collegiate nature of the business, Zenith considers key person risk to be low. However, if Sheldon was to depart, this would warrant a reassessment of our rating.

**STRUCTURING RISK:** The Trust invests in a Profit Participating Note (PPN) structure, which is issued by a separate KKR entity and effectively provides the Trust with an economic interest in the underlying GCOF and EDL portfolios. The use of interposed entities introduces additional structuring risk including complexity, regulatory risk and the inability of the Responsible Entity to effectively monitor the underlying investment portfolio.

**TIMING/SEQUENCING RISK:** Given the variable funding dates of the EDL portfolio, there is a risk that redemptions will

be made from the GCOF portfolio at the bottom of the credit cycle, potentially locking in capital losses. This risk is magnified given the sub-investment quality of the portfolio.

**LEVERAGE RISK:** The underlying KKR funds to which the Trust is exposed may use financing to manage their lending commitments and ultimately achieve their investment objectives. This may magnify gains and losses on underlying holdings

**VALUATION RISK:** Given the idiosyncratic nature of loans investing coupled with the limited secondary market, valuation risk is considered moderate for the Trust. While KKR has a robust and clearly defined valuation policy, there is a risk that the realisable value of securities may not align with the mark-to-market value carried by KKR.

**LIQUIDITY RISK:** As an over-the-counter 'private market', liquidity can vary significantly through different market conditions. While the listed structure obviates most of the liquidity risk, this can have an effect on market pricing and the mark-to-market of specific assets.

**SUB-INVESTMENT GRADE CREDIT RISK:** By its nature and as reflected by its rating, sub-investment grade debt has a higher potential of default. Although investors have historically been compensated, in the form of excess returns, there is the potential for the strategy to experience more defaults than the broader market. Additionally, defaults tend to cluster in certain years and therefore investors should expect periodic episodes of higher defaults. Nevertheless, given the Trust holds a significant proportion of sub-investment grade debt, investors should be aware of the increased risk involved in this allocation.

**RELATIVE PERFORMANCE RISK:** Investors should also acknowledge that the Trust may underperform traditional bond funds and those benchmarked against domestic or global bond indices in a falling interest rate environment, or in an environment where credit performs poorly relative to government bonds.

**UTILISATION RISK:** The Trust will invest in loans whose level of draw down may vary over time. Returns to the Trust will vary according to the level of utilisation by borrowers of such revolving credit facilities.

## QUALITATIVE DUE DILIGENCE

### ORGANISATION

KKR was founded in 1976 by Jerry Kohlberg, Henry Kravis and George Roberts with its origins as a private equity firm. Over time, the firm has expanded its business activities and currently includes the following divisions: Private Markets; Public Markets; and Capital Markets. While each business unit operates autonomously, a range of support functions are shared across the business including: KKR Capstone - a dedicated business unit that works closely with portfolio managers to extract operational efficiencies across portfolio companies; and a Stakeholder Management team, which is responsible for ensuring that all investment transactions are executed and managed in accordance with best practice.

As at 31 March 2020, KKR managed approximately \$US 207.1 billion, which includes \$US 67.6 billion across its credit

platform, KKR Credit. The division was established in 2004 and is comprised of 130 investment professionals based in 10 countries. The team manages a suite of strategies encompassing leveraged loans, high yield bonds, direct lending and collateralised loan obligations (CLOs).

In terms of its Australian operations, KKR has maintained a presence since 2006 investing in a number of private equity, real estate and credit transactions. In addition, KKR manages \$US 4.8 billion (as at 31 March 2020) on behalf of Australian superannuation funds, family offices and endowments. Due to the nature of the asset classes i.e. limited liquidity, KKR has primarily focused on the institutional market, with the Trust representing its first entry to the retail/wholesale market.

Zenith highlights the depth of KKR's Credit platform, which extends across origination, execution and deal servicing. Consistent with the firm's heritage in private equity, co-alignment of interest is a consistent feature across all of KKR's investment capabilities. To this end, KKR's Balance Sheet and Employees have approximately \$US 2.1 billion invested across a number of strategies (as at 31 March 2020). Zenith is supportive of this approach, which in our opinion, ensures the interests of shareholders are closely aligned with portfolio managers.

KKR currently manages \$US 2.8 billion in the GCOF strategy, which includes \$US 500 million on behalf of the Trust (as at 31 March 2020). The European Direct Lending (EDL) portfolio is a newly created vehicle with approximately \$US 500 million of commitments. Furthermore, KKR manages earlier vintages of the EDL strategy and currently manages approximately \$US 17.5 billion of Direct Lending FUM and has deployed approximately \$US 11.4 billion in European private credit (as at 31 March 2020) since 2010.

### INVESTMENT PERSONNEL

Name	Title	Tenure
Nathaniel Zilkha	Head of Alternative Credit	13 Yr(s)
Chris Sheldon	Head of Leveraged Credit	16 Yr(s)
Frances Lim	Co-Portfolio Manager & Member of Global Macro and Asset Allocation Committee	9 Yr(s)
Matthieu Boulanger	Business Head and Investment Committee Member	3 Yr(s)
Jeremiah Lane	Portfolio Manager, Leveraged Credit	15 Yr(s)

KKR's credit platform is comprised of 130 investment professionals (as at 31 March 2020), principally located in San Francisco and London and is led by Nathaniel Zilkha, Head of Alternative Credit. Zilkha joined KKR in 2007 and oversees the firm's private credit, principal finance and special situations businesses.

In terms of the Trust and its underlying investment strategies, Chris Sheldon, Head of Leveraged Credit, is the Lead Portfolio Manager for the GCOF strategy, while Matthieu Boulanger, Key Business Head and Investment Committee member, is responsible for the EDL portfolio. Sheldon is based in San Francisco and responsible for a number of KKR's traded credit

and private credit strategies. In Zenith's opinion, Sheldon is a highly experienced and well-credentialed credit investor. In our opinion, he has specific skills in investing in lower quality credit securities, where his contrarian mindset and ability to understand the intrinsic value of a business is a key contributor to the success of the underlying strategy.

London-based, Boulanger is a portfolio manager for a number of KKR's private credit funds and ultimately responsible for the composition of the EDL portfolio. Prior to joining KKR, Boulanger was employed at HPS Investment Partners and Citigroup, where he held a number of senior investment roles, focusing on private credit, special situations and infrastructure/energy opportunities.

KKR's investment teams are supported by a well-defined governance structure, with a number of investment committees responsible for both approving investments and monitoring the composition and performance of underlying portfolios. At the highest level, a Credit Portfolio Management Committee is ultimately responsible for the performance of all KKR funds including adherence with investment guidelines and limits. The seven-person committee meets on a weekly basis and is comprised of the aforementioned portfolio managers, Zilkha and four other members.

At the strategy level, a U.S. Leveraged Credit Investment Committee is responsible for approving and maintaining eligible securities for the GCOF portfolio, while the European Direct Lending Investment Committee, reviews and approves all lending proposals. Zenith is supportive of KKR's investment structure, noting the additional layer of governance from the committee approach. While each committee is effectively a sub-set of senior investment professionals, the centralised decision-making structure ensures that all proposals are rigorously tested prior to investment.

An Investment Committee (IC) of four senior portfolio managers from KKR Credit has been established to oversee the implementation of the Trust's investment strategy and ensure the portfolio is managed in accordance with its stated investment objectives. The IC is comprised of Sheldon and Boulanger, who are supported by Portfolio Managers, Frances Lim and Jeremiah Lane.

In addition to the analyst team, a Portfolio Monitoring Unit (PMU), comprising ten investment professionals (as at 30 April 2019) is responsible for ongoing credit monitoring and providing an independent assessment of each issuer/borrower. The team leads the quarterly valuation process and monitors company performance versus KKR assumptions, which includes covenant compliance. In our opinion, the PMU introduces an important layer of separation between the research team and the portfolio monitoring/valuation process, which is important given the nature of the underlying assets (e.g. potentially illiquid) and the level of subjective inputs in the valuation process.

KKR's remuneration structure is based on a global approach where firm-wide profitability is used as the basis for all incentive payments. Senior members of the investment team receive an industry-benchmarked salary and are also eligible for a cash bonus and equity. The cash bonus/equity component is largely discretionary and reflects a combination of firm and business unit performance, individual contribution

and the performance of underlying funds managed.

To retain staff over the long-term, bonus payments are vested over multiple years and also include a portion that invests in underlying KKR funds under a system internally referred to as 'Dollars at Work'. In simple terms, the 'Dollars at Work' structure means that the economic return derived from the KKR investments changes over time, in line with each employees' overall contribution to performance. In our opinion, the approach embeds a strong co-alignment of interest, ensuring investment performance and remuneration are closely tied. To illustrate this, KKR currently manages \$US 2.1 billion from its own Balance Sheet and on behalf of senior executives (as at 31 March 2020).

In sum, Zenith is supportive of the resourcing structure, effectively combining specialist bottom-up investors with a strong governance framework and a range of ancillary support functions.

## INVESTMENT OBJECTIVE, PHILOSOPHY AND PROCESS

The Trust's investment objective is to deliver an absolute return of 6% p.a. to 8% p.a. (net of fees and expenses) over the medium-term, which includes a target distribution of 4% p.a. to 6% p.a. paid on a quarterly basis. This is achieved by investing in a mix of global credit strategies (both private and publicly-traded) with low correlation to traditional bond markets, and an emphasis on diversification across asset classes, regions and issuers.

KKR's investment philosophy is premised on the belief that intensive credit analysis is a sustainable source of excess returns, particularly when implemented with a capital preservation focus. In particular, KKR's approach is anchored by its fundamental analysis of a company/issuer, including detailed historical and projected financial modelling. In our opinion, given KKR's presence across public and private markets, the firm is well positioned to assess the enterprise value of a company with both a private and public lens.

Zenith highlights that KKR's focus on sub-investment grade securities is a point of differentiation and adds a layer of specialisation to its investment process. In our opinion, the approach is more resource-intensive and requires a contrarian mindset where the focus is on understanding the default risk of a business. This differs to traditional investment grade investing where the assessment is generally more relative-value based and understanding the relationship between spread and the potential for ratings migration.

The Trust inter-funds into the following investment strategies:

- Global Credit Opportunities Fund (GCOF) - 50% to 100%
- European Direct Lending (EDL) - 0% to 50%

The underlying strategy mix has been constructed to achieve diversification across regions, issuers and different fixed interest sub-sectors. For example, GCOF is a US-centric strategy investing primarily in corporate bonds and loans, while the EDL portfolio invests in European loans. Further, the key return drivers of each strategy are complementary, extending across credit quality, interest rate sensitivity, risk premia etc.

In practical terms, GCOF invests in publicly traded bonds and loans and therefore will exhibit greater variability of

performance, whereas the EDL strategy comprises a portfolio of private loans which is priced less frequently, with performance variations generally representative of the credit worthiness of the pool of borrowers. Zenith highlights the embedded level of diversification between the two strategies, with the EDL allocation expected to smooth portfolio volatility (as measured by Standard Deviation) at the Trust level.

The following section includes a detailed overview of each of the underlying strategies.

### **GCOF Portfolio**

The GCOF strategy is KKR's flagship credit portfolio, representing the 'best ideas' from across KKR's credit platform. The investable universe is relatively broad, including high yield bonds, bank loans, structured products and distressed securities. Opportunistically, KKR can invest in more bespoke investment opportunities including warrants, exchange-traded funds, equity or debt tranches of collateralised debt and loan obligations.

In constructing the portfolio, the portfolio managers employ a range of bottom-up strategies, which are classified based on the following:

- **Event driven** - identifying securities with short-term catalysts for price appreciation which can include mergers and acquisition activity, restructuring and/or positive ratings movements
- **Dislocation/relative value** - high yielding securities from companies experiencing earnings/revenue challenges and/or its underlying sector is facing structural challenges
- **Proprietary sourcing** - leveraging the firm's industry networks to access niche financing opportunities, which can include cornerstone or large block trades
- **Stressed credits** - distressed companies that require refinancing or restructuring of debt arrangements. Typically these companies operate in structurally challenged industries or sectors going through transition.
- **Structured products** - can include a range of structured credit opportunities, including investing in lower tranches of CLOs

The event driven and dislocation strategies are expected to account for the majority of portfolio risk, however the underlying portfolio weightings will change over time and reflect the prevailing opportunity set.

In sum, the GCOF portfolio is a mature investment strategy, drawing on the extensive network of the broader KKR business. In our opinion, the quality and depth of KKR's bottom-up due diligence allows it to invest lower down the risk continuum to generate strong risk-adjusted returns.

Zenith highlights that following the initial raising, the Fund's proceeds were fully invested in the GCOF portfolio, pending the sourcing of loans for the EDL portfolio (detailed below). While the deployment process was implemented efficiently, it also highlighted the path-dependent risk embedded in KKR's approach.

More specifically, the net tangible asset (NTA) of the GCOF portfolio had declined by approximately 20% (as at 31 March 2020). Thus, if the NTA is maintained at its current level, investors will be effectively realising losses when funding the

EDL portfolio.

### **EDL Portfolio**

The EDL portfolio is a newly created portfolio of loans, that is expected to be sourced and funded over the next three years, managed by KKR's European Private Credit investment team. The team currently oversees approximately \$US 1.9 billion in direct lending deals (as at 31 March 2020), which includes an earlier vintage of the EDL strategy.

Zenith highlights that a common feature of investing in direct loans, is the ramp-up period while loans are sourced and executed. Given the time and resource intensive nature of the asset class, portfolios are generally built loan-by-loan, which can take up to three years to complete. As a consequence, there is limited visibility on the nature of the underlying assets (at fund launch), while there is also the potential for greater issuer concentration risk until the portfolio reaches final maturity.

Notwithstanding the above, KKR manages an earlier version of the EDL strategy which was launched in 2015. As a lender, KKR prioritises larger transactions, where the borrower has a minimum of \$EUR 25 million of EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Depreciation and Amortisation), coupled with strong credit fundamentals and high quality manager. A typical tranche size is generally between \$EUR 100 million and \$EUR 250 million, with a preference for being the sole lender on the majority of deals.

The majority of loans are floating rate in nature, with borrowers paying a spread above LIBOR (London Inter-Bank Offered Rate), generally in the range of 5% p.a. to 7% p.a., subject to market pricing. Further, KKR typically invests in senior and senior stretch loans (which is a form of combining senior and subordinated loans to generate a blended exposure), with a lower exposure to second lien loans.

Prior to investing in a loan, all lending proposals need to be unanimously approved by KKR's Credit European Direct Lending Investment Committee which is responsible for all private credit investments made by the team, including privately originated senior and subordinate lending opportunities.

The position sizing of loans across the portfolio is subject to the underlying Trust's diversification guidelines. Further, this can be an outworking of the origination pipeline and the maturity profile of the Fund. When fully invested, the EDL portfolio's maximum exposure to an individual borrower is limited to 20%, albeit the actual exposure maybe higher through the ramp up phase.

Zenith notes that investing in loans is a highly specialised skill set, that extends well beyond traditional credit investing. For example, this includes a detailed understanding of the origination process, funding structures i.e. revolving facilities, term loans with different amortisation features, and the ability to manage impaired assets. In addition, KKR's approach is augmented by its vast networks and business relationships which should ensure a strong pipeline of lending opportunities.

In sum, Zenith is supportive of the stabilising role that the EDL portfolio plays in the Trust structure. Notwithstanding this, the underlying loan exposures are expected to cover the full

continuum of risk assets including senior secured borrowers to deeply subordinated loans / mezzanine debt financing and first and second lien loans. Therefore, the Trust is expected to exhibit both equity and debt properties, with the potential for meaningful drawdowns.

## SECURITY SELECTION

The security selection process involves traditional bottom-up credit analysis which applies across both the GCOF and EDL strategies. Each approach has a number of discrete steps, which varies depending on the nature of the opportunity i.e. buying a bond in the secondary market versus originating a direct loan. The following section outlines the key steps of KKR's security selection process..

The first step involves sourcing potential investment opportunities which can be identified across a range of channels and networks. KKR's global network of CEO's of large companies, co-investors, advisory firms and other intermediaries all provide a source of investment ideas. As detailed earlier, investment opportunities can range from companies experiencing short-term liquidity needs, seeking M&A financing and/or industries facing transient challenges such as the oil and gas sector in late 2015.

Each opportunity is supported by deep diligence analysis, where a clear investment thesis is identified and formalised in a proposal. While the approach varies based on the nature of the investment i.e. loan or bond, it typically includes traditional financial statement and pro forma analysis and qualitative research with a focus on understanding a borrower's operating environment.

The analysis also includes a comparison with the broader peer group, both in terms of pricing and risk. With respect to qualitative research, some of the key metrics assessed include: industry structure; management strategy and governance; corporate structure; capital structure of the firm i.e. level of subordination and equity support and the level of operational risk. In terms of durability of earnings, each proposal includes earnings stress tests under a number of downside scenarios.

Prior to investment, all credit submissions are reviewed and ratified by an external investment committee. In the case of GCOF, the U.S. Leveraged Credit Investment Committee is responsible for approving and maintaining eligible securities on an approved credit list. For the EDL portfolio, all European private credit investments are approved by a European Direct Lending Investment Committee, which meets twice per week or more frequently if required.

In our opinion, the quality and depth of KKR's bottom-up research process is a key competitive advantage, particularly when assessed relative to the nature of the underlying investments i.e. sub-investment grade or potentially dislocated assets. Further, the role of each committee in reviewing and approving all credit submissions adds a layer of oversight.

## Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

In terms of the GCOF portfolio, ESG considerations are not formally assessed, however, where ESG risk has the potential to impact a company's earnings and profitability, this will be considered as part of the due diligence process. When material ESG issues are identified, they will typically be explored and discussed at the Investment Committee, with the option of

appointing specialist ESG advisors to undertake additional due diligence.

In the instance where ESG-related risks have been identified, a detailed remediation plan will be outlined and agreed upon, and remain a standing item for the Investment Committee until resolution.

## PORTFOLIO CONSTRUCTION

The portfolio construction process involves combining the two underlying investment strategies, while managing the funding and liquidity requirements of each portfolio. The process is overseen by the IC (detailed earlier) who meet on a quarterly basis to review the underlying performance of each portfolio and address any funding or asset allocation decisions.

Post listing, 100% of capital was invested in the GCOF portfolio which is an existing pool of assets. The allocation will reduce over the next six to 24 months and reallocated to the EDL portfolio, as new loans are originated and funded. The first allocation is expected to be made in the fourth quarter of 2020 and KKR will implement a staggered approach thereafter. At full investment, the GCOF and EDL portfolios are expected to account for 55% and 45% of the Trust's net asset value (NAV), respectively, albeit this could change in line with market conditions and lending opportunities.

Zenith notes that while the capital deployment process was managed efficiently, the process has been structured with a high degree of 'path dependency' risk. Moreover, investing in a sub-investment grade credit quality portfolio for less than 12 months introduces significant drawdown and sequencing risk. To illustrate this, If the current drawdown in the net asset value (NAV) of the GCOF portfolio persists (approximately -20% as at March 31 2020), investors will potentially realise portfolio losses, to fund the EDL strategy. Zenith would have preferred a lower risk short-term strategy, where the level of credit risk was better calibrated to the investment horizon.

Given the quarterly redemption profile (and additional notice period) of the GCOF strategy, a funding or leverage facility is in place, to manage cashflows between the two underlying strategies. In practice, the facility will be drawn to fund new loans, while a corresponding redemption is processed from the GCOF portfolio. While the investment exposure can be leveraged on a short-term basis, this is limited to 30% of NAV.

In terms of portfolio composition, the GCOF portfolio comprises 60 to 80 core holdings (including bonds and loans) with position sizes ranging between 1.5% and 4.0%. The final portfolio is managed with a credit spread duration range of between two and five years with a bias to senior secured securities which includes both loans and bonds. Consistent with the targeted opportunity set, KKR typically invests in lower quality credit securities with an indicative credit rating of B and CCC and below based on S&P's rating methodology.

Zenith notes that this cohort of securities is subject to a high level of mark-to-market volatility and potential default risk, particularly during stressed equity periods or cyclical downturns. Accordingly, investment outcomes will be closely tied to the quality and depth of KKR's bottom-up due diligence process. To this end, Zenith highlights that KKR has consistently outperformed the CCC component of the broader high yield indices, achieving higher returns and at the same

time, demonstrating superior capital preservation qualities i.e. lower default experience.

The EDL portfolio is a newly created portfolio of loans that is expected to be sourced and funded over the next three years. KKR manages an earlier version of the EDL strategy which was launched in 2015 and comprises 32 borrowers with an average position size of \$EUR 34 million and weighted average EBITDA of approximately \$EUR 60 million (as at 30 June 2019).

The majority of loans are floating rate in nature, with borrowers paying a spread above LIBOR (London Inter-Bank Offered Rate), generally in the range of 5% p.a. to 7% p.a., subject to market pricing. Further, KKR typically invests in senior and senior stretch loans which is a form of combining senior and subordinated loans to generate a blended exposure, with a lower exposure to second lien loans.

The Trust's currency exposure is expected to be hedged back to Australian dollars with the process supported by a proprietary currency management tool. This system allows KKR to monitor foreign exchange exposures against derivatives and liability-based hedges at the currency, portfolio and asset levels.

Overall, Zenith considers KKR's portfolio construction process to be well structured and consistent with attaining the Trust's investment objective. While there are structural challenges with managing two asset classes with differing liquidity profiles, KKR has a long and proven track record in managing sub-investment grade portfolios and their attendant risk and liquidity profiles.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Portfolio Constraints	Description
EDL Portfolio (at Full Investment)	
First Lien Senior Secured Debt	Minimum 70% of Portfolio
Non-European Portfolio Exposure (%)	0% to 10%
Single Issuer Limit (%)	Up to 20% of Portfolio NAV
Maximum Exposure to KKR Affiliates	Up to 15% of Portfolio NAV
ESG Constraints - Sector Exclusions	N/A

KKR's risk management process is largely an outworking of the firm's application of its credit and investment selection process, which is complemented by issuer and diversification limits detailed in the above table (applying to the EDF portfolio).

Zenith highlights that the GCOF portfolio is managed with no formal limits or restrictions, albeit in practical terms, the portfolio is highly diversified across issuers and sectors. In our opinion, this aspect of the process could be enhanced with the inclusion of a range of position, asset class, sector, industry and credit quality limits.

The process is supported by the PMU team which is a separate body within KKR, responsible for monitoring all private credit investments. This team is most active through the post-investment phase with its remit including: monitoring

company performance versus KKR assumptions; compliance with covenants; leading the quarterly valuation process and managing a 'Watch List' of underperforming companies. In terms of the latter, this is list of distressed or impaired companies that is subject to more intensive scrutiny and monitoring by the Credit Portfolio Management Committee.

Zenith is supportive of the role of the PMU, highlighting the separation from the investment team. In our opinion, this ensures that underlying investments are monitored with a dedicated focus, and at the same time, minimises the risk of any personal biases or relationships influencing the monitoring process.

The Risk team is comprised of four Risk Managers with a reporting line to KKR's Market Risk Committee. The team utilises a number of risk management tools and is integrated with the investment team to promote real-time discussions between portfolio managers, analysts and traders. The firm uses a range of external tools including FactSet, Black Mountain, Risk Metrics and Credit QB.

In terms of valuation, the portfolio is valued externally by Lincoln International with each valuation comprised of the following: 50% based on the pricing of comparable bonds (including credit quality, tenor etc) and 50% based on a standardised discounted cash flow (DCF) methodology. The DCF approach is coordinated by Lincoln in consultation with the responsible analyst.

Zenith highlights the quarterly valuation frequency of the EDL portfolio versus the proposed monthly quoting of the Trust's Net Tangible Assets (NTAs) on the ASX. While this creates a potential mismatch between the underlying value of the portfolio versus the NTA, this is common for these strategies where an illiquidity premium is being harvested. Notwithstanding this, Zenith is confident that the quoted NTA will be representative of the most recent valuation of the underlying portfolio.

In terms of external oversight, the Trust is subject to the governance and compliance structures designed by the Responsible Entity (RE) (Perpetual Group). The RE has formulated a monitoring and review process to ensure adherence to service agreements, including minimum standards. The Trust will be externally audited by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, including an audit of KKR's adherence to its obligations under its AFS Licence.

In Zenith's opinion, the most significant risk to the Trust pertains to valuation risk of the EDL portfolio, or more specifically the determination of fair value of each underlying loan. While KKR has a clearly defined set of valuation policies, the nature of the underlying asset class means that there is an absence of observable market data, which can make it problematic to accurately value securities. Zenith will continue to monitor this going forward, noting that KKR has a well-documented process, that is subject to external review.

Overall, Zenith believes KKR's risk management framework is robust and consistent with best practice.

## INVESTMENT FEES

The sector average cost (in the table below) is based on the average management cost of all flagship LIC/LIT funds



surveyed by Zenith. We highlight that the sector includes a diverse range of asset classes and investment approaches, making peer group comparisons less relevant.

The Trust has a management cost of 0.93% p.a. which is comprised of investment management fees and a range of other indirect costs associated with managing the structure (including valuation agents, administrators, audit etc). In addition, a performance fee of 5.125% is payable subject to exceeding a performance fee hurdle of RBA Cash plus 4% p.a. Zenith notes that the fee is subject to a high watermark (HWM) and non-resettable.

Zenith highlights that while the performance fee structure includes a number of threshold tests that must be satisfied prior to fees becoming payable (i.e. recouping any previous losses), it will generally apply on the absolute return generated by the Trust (subject to achieving the RBA Cash plus 4% return hurdle). In our opinion, while the quantum of the performance fee is highly competitive, we would prefer that it was only applied to the excess return component.

Zenith considers the overall cost structure to be consistent with the specialised nature of the asset class and investment approach.

Investment Fees		
Product	KKR Credit Income Fund	
Asset Class	International Fixed Interest	
Sub-Asset Class	Int. Fixed Interest - High Income	
Management Structure	Externally Managed	
Management Cost	0.93%	
Performance Fee	5.125% of the net annualised return for a Performance Period, multiplied by the Adjusted NAV providing the net annualised return exceeds the RBA cash rate plus 4% per annum	
Annual Management Fee Comparison		
	% p.a.	
International Fixed Interest	Peer Average - LICs/LITs (Internally Managed) <sup>1</sup>	N/A
	Peer Average - LICs/LITs (Externally Managed)	0.89%

<sup>1</sup> Internally Managed LICs/LITs data use published Management Cost as a percentage of assets. All other vehicles quote management fees and costs inclusive of GST, less Reduced Input Tax Credits where available.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

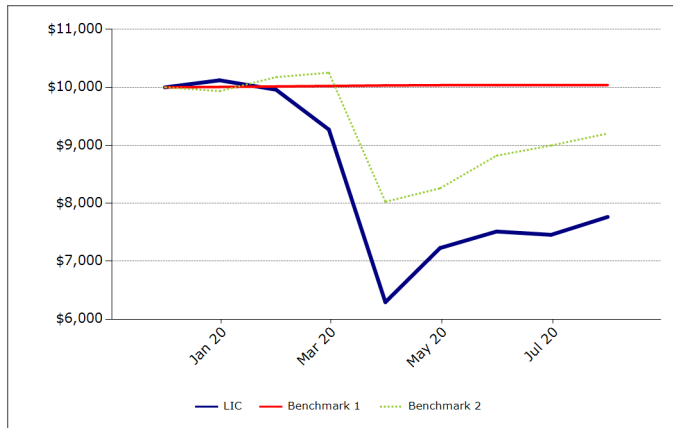
Report data: 31 Jul 2020, product inception: Dec 2019

**Monthly Performance History (% , net of fees)**

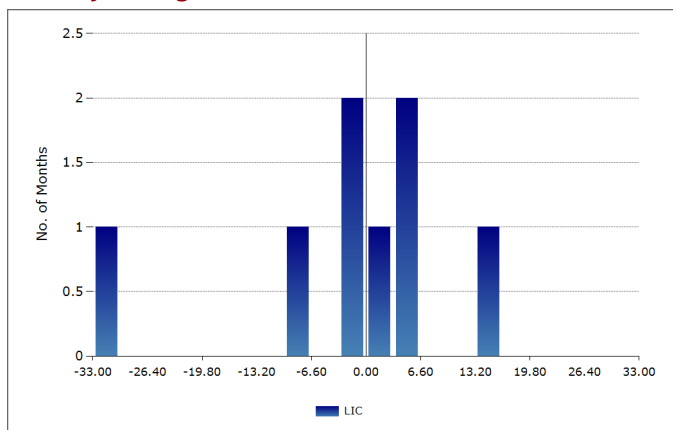
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	LIC YTD	BM1 YTD	BM2 YTD
2020	-1.60	-6.91	-32.11	14.84	3.93	-0.75	4.13						-23.29	0.33	-7.35
2019												1.21	1.21	0.07	-0.65

Benchmark 1: Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index, Benchmark 2: KKC Net Portfolio Returns

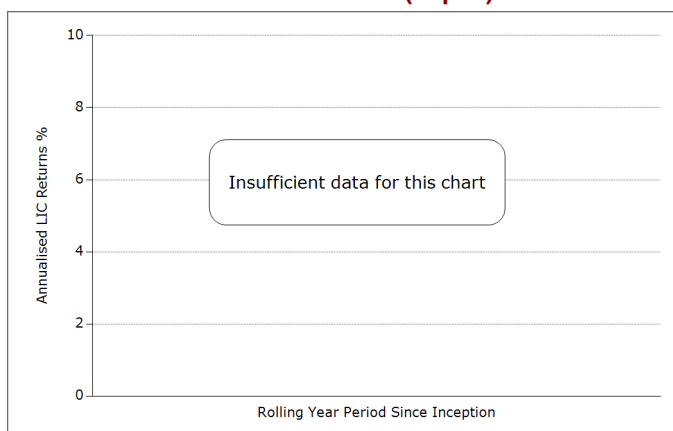
**Growth of \$10,000**



**Monthly Histogram**



**Minimum and Maximum Returns (% p.a.)**



**ABSOLUTE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

Return	Incpt.	6 mth	3 mth
LIC (% p.a.)	-22.36	-22.04	7.41
Benchmark 1 (% p.a.)	0.40	0.25	0.03
Benchmark 2 (% p.a.)	-7.96	-9.55	11.45
Ranking within Sector	Incpt.	6 mth	3 mth
Fund Ranking	2 / 2	2 / 2	1 / 2
Quartile	2nd	2nd	1st
Standard Deviation	Incpt.	6 mth	3 mth
LIC (% p.a.)	44.14	50.69	7.82
Benchmark 1 (% p.a.)	0.12	0.12	0.00
Downside Deviation	Incpt.	6 mth	3 mth
LIC (% p.a.)	36.08	40.39	1.23
Benchmark 1 (% p.a.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Risk/Return	Incpt.	6 mth	3 mth
Sharpe Ratio - LIC	-0.52	-0.44	0.94
Sortino Ratio - LIC	-0.63	-0.55	6.01

Readers should note that unless otherwise indicated, all performance, consistency and risk/return data is referenced to the Zenith assigned benchmark (as represented by Benchmark 1 in the above table) with the LIC returns representing those attributable to shareholders (i.e. unit price + dividends). Zenith typically includes the ongoing net returns of a LIC's investment portfolio as we believe this is the best measure of the investment manager's skill.

Zenith benchmarks funds in the "International Fixed Interest - Listed Investment Companies" peer group against the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index. While this benchmark may not be consistent with the one adhered to by all rated participants, it has been adopted to provide investors with a common reference point against which similarly structured strategies may be assessed.

The following commentary is effective as at 31 March 2020.

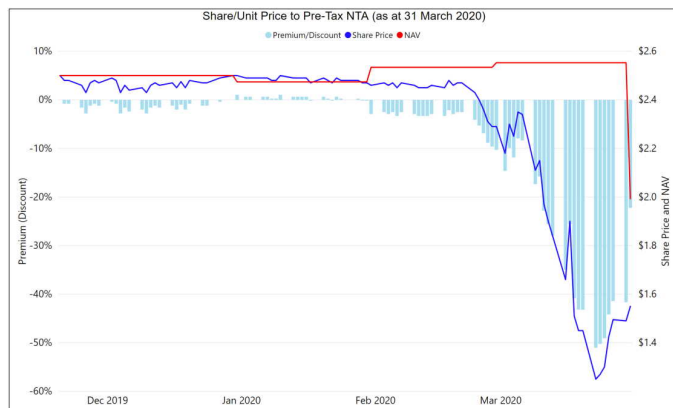
The Trust's investment objective is to deliver an absolute return of 6% p.a. to 8% p.a. (net of fees and expenses) over the medium-term, which includes a target distribution of 4% p.a. to 6% p.a. paid on a quarterly basis.

The Trust has an insufficient track record to draw any meaningful conclusion as to its performance. Notwithstanding this, KKR has managed the GCOF strategy since 2008 and

comparable EDL portfolios since 2015. Over this period, each portfolio has performed in line with Zenith's expectations.

### Unit Price vs. NTA

The following chart shows the Trust's premium/discount since inception.



**WARNING: Zenith ratings applied to LITs do not explicitly take into account share prices vs. NAV and do not represent a buy/sell recommendation based on a LITs valuation. Potential investors should make their own determination of the appropriateness of prevailing premiums or discounts to NAV when acquiring or disposing of a LIT.**

### RELATIVE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Alpha Statistics	Incpt.	6 mth	3 mth
Excess Return (% p.a.)	-22.76	-22.29	7.39
% Monthly Excess (All Mkts)	50.00	50.00	66.67
% Monthly Excess (Up Mkts)	50.00	50.00	66.67
Beta Statistics	Incpt.	6 mth	3 mth
Beta	-217.28	-287.47	3174.97
R-Squared	0.35	0.50	0.99
Tracking Error (% p.a.)	44.21	50.78	7.82
Correlation	-0.60	-0.71	1.00
Risk/Return	Incpt.	6 mth	3 mth
Information Ratio	-0.51	-0.44	0.95

The following commentary is effective as at 31 March 2020.

Zenith typically seeks to identify funds which can outperform their index in greater than 50% of months as we believe this represents a persistence of manager skill. The Trust has an insufficient track record to draw any meaningful conclusion as to its performance.

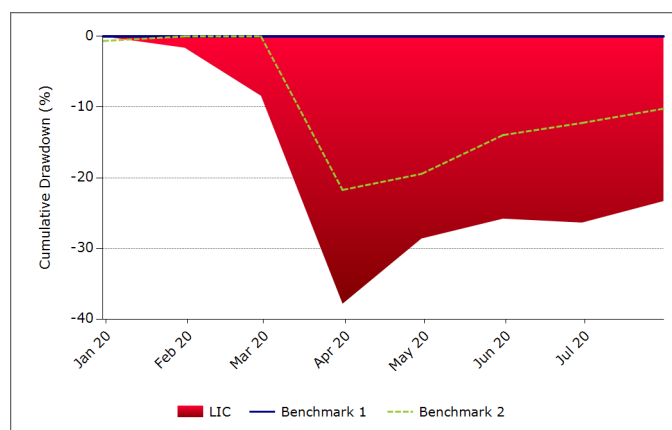
### DRAWDOWN ANALYSIS

Drawdown analysis assesses the relative riskiness of a Fund versus the benchmark, in reference to capital preservation. The maximum Drawdown is recorded as the percentage decline in the value of a portfolio from peak to trough (before a new peak

is achieved). All Drawdown analysis is calculated commencing from the inception date of the Fund in question, and Drawdown analysis for the Fund and benchmark(s) are calculated independently. That is, the largest drawdown for the Fund and benchmark(s) will not always refer to the same time period.

Drawdown Analysis	LIC	BM1	BM2
Max Drawdown (%)	-37.81		-21.72
Months in Max Drawdown	3		1
Months to Recover	-		-

Worst Drawdowns	LIC	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2
1	-37.81		-21.72
2			-0.65
3			
4			
5			



The following commentary is effective as at 31 March 2020.

The Trust has an insufficient track record to draw any meaningful conclusion as to its performance

Despite the relative attractiveness of the strategy, Zenith highlights that the performance of the Trust reflects the movement in the underlying portfolio, as well as the performance of the ASX vehicle. The latter being subject to the impact of market sentiment, which can result in the Trust trading at a significant discount/premium to net tangible assets.

### Distribution Policy

The Trust's investment objective is to deliver an absolute return of 6% p.a. to 8% p.a. (net of fees) over an economic cycle. The Responsible Entity intends to pay distributions to Unitholders quarterly and is expecting a distribution level in the range of 4% p.a. to 6% p.a.

To access the underlying investment strategies, KKR employs a master/feeder structure with the Australian Trust investing in a Singapore-domiciled partnership (referred to as a feeder fund), which in turn, invests in the GCOF strategy a Cayman's-based company (the master fund).

The Trust gains its exposure to the underlying investment strategy via a Profit Participating Note (PPN) which is issued by the Singapore-based entity. The PPN is a debt instrument paying a variable investment return based on the underlying performance of the GCOF and EDL portfolios.

Zenith highlights that the investment structure is complex, including the use of an interposed entity to manage potential Controlled Foreign Company (CFC) obligations. While our preference is for a more simplified approach, in our opinion, the structure effectively creates the same investment and tax outcomes as a direct investment, albeit with less risk of being taxed on an accruals basis under the CFC provisions.

CFC is a complex area of tax legislation and Zenith recommends investors seek their own personal tax advice with respect to the suitability of the structure.

Despite the relative merit of the underlying investment strategies, investors should give consideration to the method of access. Accessing through a LIT can result in capital volatility due to the Trust's own trading movements, as opposed to the investment performance of the underlying portfolios.

## REPORT CERTIFICATION

Date of issue: 2 Jun 2020

Role	Analyst	Title
Author	Rodney Sebire	Head of Alternatives & Global Fixed Interest
Sector Lead	Rodney Sebire	Head of Alternatives & Global Fixed Interest
Authoriser	Bronwen Moncrieff	Head of Research

## RATING HISTORY

As At	Rating
2 Jun 2020	Recommended
30 Sep 2019	Recommended

Last 5 years only displayed. Longer histories available on request.

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