

A year to prepare and react

2019 Outlook
(in-brief)



Investment implications and key themes



Cross-Asset

Key themes

- We raise our allocation to cash
- Bonds are offering increasing value, especially USD bonds
- The risk-reward for equities may deteriorate in 2019

Rising value in bonds and cash

We see increasing value in bonds and cash, especially relative to equities. US government bond yields have risen significantly over the past 12 months and, contrary to popular opinion, our assessment is that they will not rise dramatically in the coming 12 months (we believe 10-year yields will be capped at about 3.25%), especially if the pace of US interest rate hikes slows as we expect. Meanwhile, we have seen a significant widening of spreads, especially in the Emerging Market world, which presents both a short term tactical opportunity, as well as the prospect for healthy 12-month returns. Finally, cash deposit rates have risen from zero for a large part of the current cycle to a level where they offer a yield that is reasonably competitive relative to inflation and bonds, besides creating a source of dry power for tactical opportunities.

Equities could have a strong turn of the year, especially in Asia ex-Japan, but the longer-term risk-reward is deteriorating, in our assessment. December and January are typically strong months for equity markets and reducing trade tensions and US interest rate hike expectations suggest this year may not be very different. Asia ex-Japan equities look particularly interesting in the short term.

However, if we step back, at the risk of oversimplification, we see three potential scenarios for global equity markets in 2019: 1) equities rally strongly with limited volatility (as happened in 2017); 2) equity markets experience significant volatility, but close the year higher; and 3) equity markets fall over the course of the year. We believe the first scenario is the least likely, with the second scenario the most likely. This suggests that keeping a significant allocation to equities continues to make sense, but it is important to manage this exposure carefully. Finally, we are becoming more tactical, and will be ready to deploy cash in short-term opportunities as and when they arise, and also will not be shy about cutting these positions as the situation warrants.

Key asset class views

Equities ◆	Bonds ◆	Alternative Strategies ◆	Cash ▲	FX
US ▲	Govt DM IG ◆	Equity Hedge ◆	GBP ▲	
Euro area ▼	Govt EM USD ▲	Relative Value ◆	EUR ◆	
UK ◆	Govt EM LCY ◆	Event Driven ▼	CNY ▼	
Japan ◆	Corp DM IG ◆	Global Macro ▲	JPY ◆	
Asia ex-Japan ◆	Corp DM HY ▼			
Other EM ◆	Asian USD ◆			

▲ Most preferred | ▼ Least preferred | ◆ Core holding

Macro overview – at a glance



Key themes

We expect global growth to slow in 2019 for the first time in three years, led by the Euro area and China. We expect growth divergence between the US and other developed economies seen in H2 2018 to continue. US growth is likely to slow modestly, still supported by the tax cuts of 2017, while the Euro area decelerates to trend growth and China slows further.

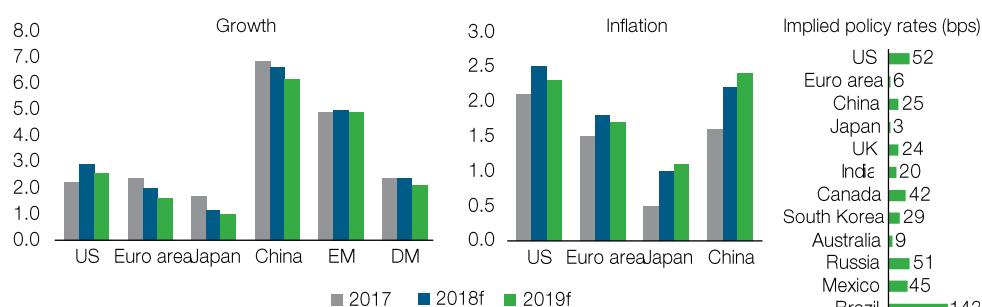
We expect inflationary pressures to abate in the US and Euro area, but rise in Japan and China. Still, US inflation may remain above the Fed's 2% target amid rising wages and shrinking spare productive capacity and a recovery in oil prices.

Monetary policy is likely to progressively turn less accommodative worldwide. We expect the Fed to continue with its rate hikes, albeit at a slightly slower pace than in 2018, and the ECB to raise rates for the first time in this cycle. However, inflation-adjusted policy rates will probably remain negative in the Euro area and Japan. Among Emerging Markets, China is likely to ease policy further, though other central banks are expected to tighten. Tighter global monetary policies should be partly offset by easier fiscal policies in the US and China, with significant scope for the Euro area to ease fiscal budgets.



Key chart

Global growth is likely to slow and inflation remain under control, but central banks are expected to raise rates further



Source: Bloomberg consensus estimates, Standard Chartered; market expectation of rate hikes over next 12 months.



Key drivers

Region	Growth	Inflation	Benchmark Rates	Fiscal Deficit	Comments
US	●	●	●	●	Growth to slow modestly, but remain above-trend amid strong job market. Fed to keep raising rates, albeit at a slower pace
Euro Area	●	●	●	●	Growth rate to fall back to long-term trend amid slowing global trade. ECB to hike rates for the first time in this cycle, but stay cautious
UK	●	●	●	●	Brexit uncertainty remains key risk. BoE, torn between Brexit risks and tight labour market, likely to raise rates at least once in 2019
Japan	●	●	●	●	Growth to remain close to long-term trend amid global trade uncertainty. BoJ to maintain ultra-loose monetary policy, offsetting a sales tax hike
Asia ex-Japan	●	●	●	●	China's growth to slow modestly again amid trade tensions. Rest of Asia's fundamentals remain strong, but trade tensions remain a key risk
Emerging Markets ex-Asia	●	●	●	●	Divergence within EMs likely to continue. Brazil, Russia to extend their recovery. Trade tensions, tightening global USD liquidity remain key risks

Source: Standard Chartered Global Investment Committee

Legend: ● Supportive of risk assets | ● Neutral

Bonds – at a glance



Key themes

Heading into 2019, we are more optimistic on bonds than we were at the start of 2018 and expect them to deliver positive returns. The yields on offer are higher, valuations are more attractive in some sub-asset classes and we do not expect bonds yields to rise dramatically.

Emerging Market (EM) USD government bonds are preferred owing to easing headwinds for EM assets, the attractive yield and relative value on offer. We also see better value in Asian USD bonds as we like the credit quality and yield available.

Within Developed Market government bonds, we see greater value in US Treasuries than in other major government bonds given the higher yield on offer and our view that bond yields are unlikely to rise significantly from here.

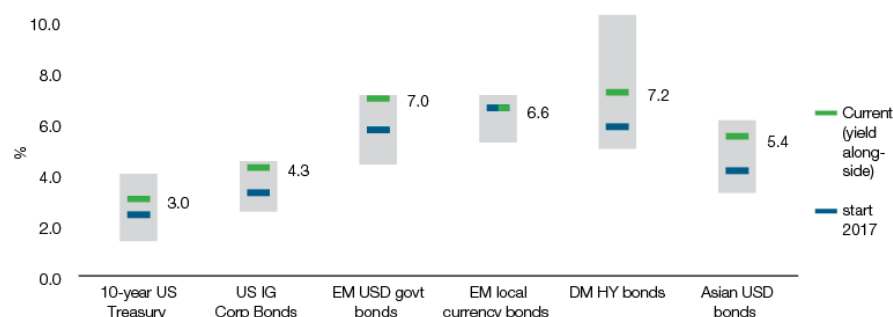
In our assessment, a maturity profile of around 5 years offers the best risk/reward for USD-denominated bond allocations.



Key chart

The increase in yields over the past few years has led to much better value in bonds

Note: Grey bars represent the highest and lowest yield since 2010



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered. As of 30 November 2018.



Key drivers

Asset Allocation	View	Rates Policy	Macro Factors	Valuation vs govt bonds	FX	Comments	Yield*
EM USD govt	▲	○	●	●	n/a	Attractive yields, relative value and stabilising credit quality are positive	7.0%
DM IG govt	◆	○	◐	n/a	◐	Yields to rise only modestly. High quality bonds which serve as a hedge during periods of market volatility	1.7%
– US Treasuries		○	●	n/a	n/a	10-year yields expected to close in the 3.0%-3.25% range. Fed to hike twice in 2019	3.0%
– German Bunds		○	○	n/a	○	ECB policy to drive yields significantly higher	0.3%
– Japanese govt bonds		◐	◐	n/a	◐	BoJ to maintain easy policy, anchoring yields near current level	0.1%
Asian USD	◆	○	●	◐	n/a	High average credit quality, defensive allocation. Influenced by China risk sentiment	5.4%
EM local currency	◆	◐	●	◐	◐	Attractive yield balanced by central bank stance and currency risks	6.6%
DM IG corporate	◆	○	◐	◐	◐	High credit quality and moderate yield premium offset by high interest rate sensitivity and downgrade risk	3.4%
DM HY corporate	▼	○	◐	○	◐	Attractive yields on offer, offset by expensive valuations	7.2%

Source: Citigroup, J.P. Morgan, Barclays, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered; * As of 30 November 2018. Traffic lights denote impact of factor on potential bond returns.

Legend: ▲ Most preferred | ▼ Least preferred | ◆ Core holding | ○ Not Supportive | ◐ Neutral | ● Supportive

Equity – at a glance



Key themes

We remain positive on global equity markets in 2019, but reduce it to a 'core holding' from 'preferred'. Earnings growth across markets are expected to converge to a high single-digit growth rate in 2019. Equity market valuations have already declined to reflect this growth moderation and are at the most attractive levels for five years.

US equities are preferred. US equities, on average, perform well in a late cycle environment. Corporate earnings growth will almost inevitably slow in 2019, but are expected to be in line with the long-term average.

Japan, Asia ex-Japan, Emerging Markets ex-Asia and UK equities are core holdings. The risks from an escalation in the trade war loom large for these regions. However, increased confidence that US interest rates are close to their peak may offset this. We are more constructive on UK equities as we do not expect a hard Brexit.

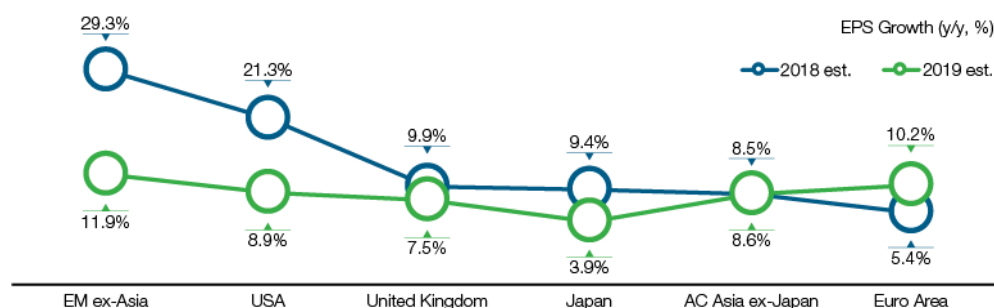
Euro area equities are least preferred. Banks, which are the largest sector in Euro area markets, have significant re-financing requirements and potential capital needs in 2019. Nevertheless, market valuations have declined to below long-term averages, which, in the absence of further bad news, may act as a sustainable base for a potential market recovery to build on.



Key chart

Earnings growth to converge across markets in 2019

Global equity market earnings growth estimates in 2018 and 2019



Source: FactSet, Standard Chartered



Key drivers

US is our most preferred equity market in 2019

Equity	View	Valuations	Earnings	Return on Equity	Economic Data	Bond Yields	Comments
US	▲	●	●	●	●	●	Valuations now fair, earnings supported by share buybacks in 2019
Asia ex-Japan	◆	●	●	●	●	●	Attractive valuations, but earnings under pressure. Trade war risks remain
Japan	◆	●	○	●	●	●	Valuations remain range-bound. Returns to shareholders structurally rising
EM ex-Asia	◆	●	●	●	●	●	Valuations attractive with catalyst from potential peak in level of US interest rates. Trade war risks remain
UK	◆	●	●	●	●	●	Soft Brexit is our base case, which could lead to market re-rating
Euro area	▼	●	●	●	●	●	Earnings growth recovering in 2019, but trade war risks a concern

Source: Standard Chartered

Legend: ▲ Most preferred | ▼ Least preferred | ◆ Core holding | ○ Not Supportive | ● Neutral | ● Supportive

FX – at a glance



Key themes

In our assessment, USD strength should continue into the few months of 2019. Relative US economic outperformance, global trade uncertainty and a likely continuation of real interest rate advantage against EUR and JPY is likely to underpin the USD.

Our evaluation of the medium-term view suggests that slower global growth and trade will eventually impact the US economy and asset markets, causing the Fed to slow hiking rates. The USD is expected to stabilise as interest rate differentials peak.

We expect US-China tensions will persist over the long-term. On balance, we expect the CNY to weaken in 2019 as China adopts a flexible monetary and fiscal response to a slowing economy.

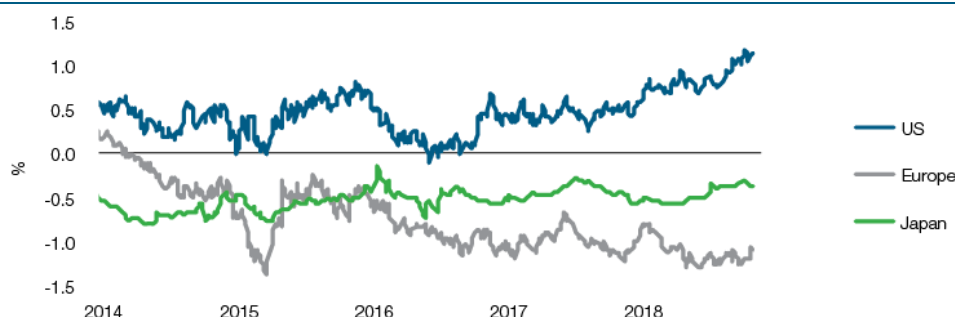
We determine the risk of a “hard” or “no-deal” Brexit is falling. Therefore we expect near-term dips to attract investors for an eventual GBP rally to fair value against the USD and EUR. Italy will likely remain a vulnerability for the EUR in 2019.



Key chart

USD real yields have a strong relative advantage

Real yields
(%; proxied by 10-year
inflation-linked bond yields)



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered



Key drivers

Currency	12M Outlook	Real Interest Rate Differentials	Commodity Prices	Broad USD Strength	Comments
USD	◆	●	n/a	n/a	US monetary policy divergence with the rest of the world likely to increase near-term before peaking
EUR	◆	●	n/a	●	Continued concerns over Brexit and Italian budget and slowing growth should limit ECB policy tightening
GBP	▲	●	n/a	●	GBP remains undervalued by some measures, but remains at risk from Brexit and domestic UK politics near term
CNY	▼	○	●	●	US-China trade tensions likely to remain a persistent issue that should lead to a controlled weakening for CNY
AUD	◆	○	●	●	Reduced industrial commodity demand from China and vulnerable domestic housing market may cap the AUD
JPY	◆	○	n/a	●	JPY may weaken on interest rate differentials and trade tensions, but its safe-haven status may cause bouts of sharp strength
Asia EM	▼	○	●	●	Vulnerability to tight global USD liquidity may increase before cheap currency valuation attracts capital inflows

Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

Legend: ▲ Bullish | ▼ Bearish | ◆ Neutral | ○ Not Supportive | ● Neutral | ● Supportive

Alternative Strategies – at a glance



Key themes

We continue to view Alternatives as a core holding going into 2019 alongside equities and bonds.

We continue to advocate a diversified alternatives allocation into Equity Hedge, Relative Value, Event Driven and Global Macro with a preference for Global Macro.

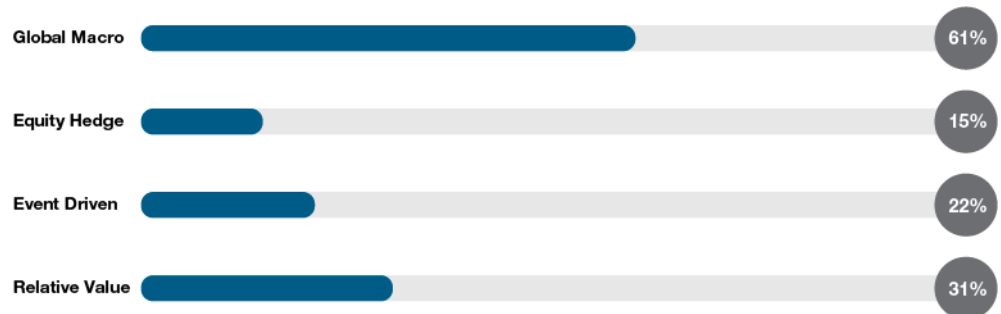
Historical analysis of each strategy under different volatility conditions show Global Macro to be a useful diversifier in volatile times.



Key chart

Global Macro provides the strongest diversification effect

Proportion of time with positive gains when VIX is high and rising



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered
Weekly VIX levels since April 2003 were sorted into quintiles. Within the top quintile (i.e. the highest 20% of VIX levels), we identified those weeks which saw a rise in the VIX and examined how each strategy performs when the VIX is high and rising. We distinguish between rising and falling VIX because risk-off sentiment is largely associated with a rising VIX.



Key drivers

	Description	View	Drivers for strategies to perform	
DIVERSIFIERS	Global Macro	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rising volatility and credit spreads Increasing cross asset dispersion Clear market trends (up/down) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ● ●
SUBSTITUTES	Equity Hedge	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positively trending equity markets Rising equity market dispersion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ●
	Event Driven	▼	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positively trending equity markets Rising mergers and acquisitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ●
	Relative Value	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower interest rate levels Cost of funding, narrowing credit spreads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ●

Source: Standard Chartered Global Investment Committee

Legend: ▲ Most preferred | ▼ Least preferred | ◆ Core holding | ○ Not Supportive | ● Neutral | ● Supportive

Multi-asset – at a glance



Key themes

We reduce risk in our diversified 'multi-asset balanced' allocation and 'multi-asset income' allocations given increasing headwinds to our central scenario of positive equity markets amid rising volatility.

We are neutral between multi-asset balanced and income allocations, as a balanced allocation may benefit from a late-cycle rally in risk assets, while multi-asset income would potentially be more resilient should bond yields continue to rise further.

A multi-asset income strategy could offer a yield of 4-5%, with many asset yields more attractive than at the start of 2018.

We showcase the impact on both allocations of potential scenarios: i) continued US outperformance ii) USD appreciation iii) rising yields iv) US recession.

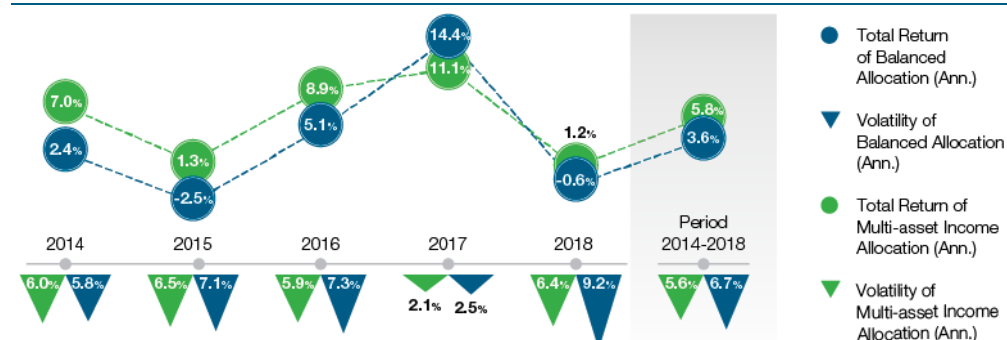
Investors should be mindful of higher volatility inherent when seeking greater returns in an Asian multi-asset income strategy when compared with a Global multi-asset income strategy.

For bond allocations, investors should be aware of downside risk when employing leverage in an environment of rising yields.



Key chart

Performance comparison of balanced and income allocations between 2014 and 2018 as of 30 November 2018



Source: Bloomberg, Fitch Ratings, Standard Chartered. For indices used, please refer to the end note at the conclusion of this section. Please see explanatory notes (page 15) for details on how allocations have been constructed.



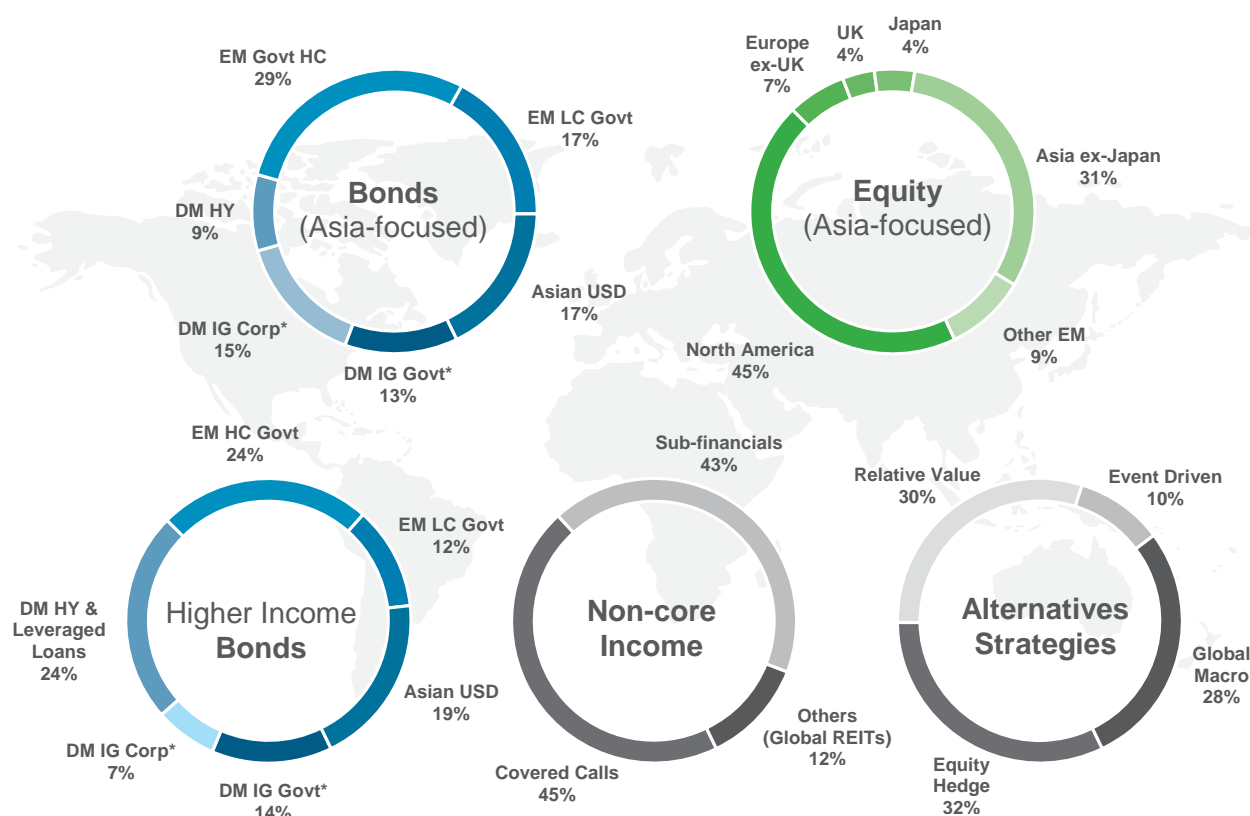
Key scenarios

Asset class performance during different scenarios

	Continued US outperformance		Dollar appreciating >5%	Rising US 10yr bond yield	Recession
Higher Returns	Asia ex-Japan Equity Euro area Equity US Equity	More Resilient	EM bonds Cash Gold	Asia ex-Japan Equity Euro area Equity US Equity	Gold DM IG Govt Cash
Medium Returns	EM bonds DM IG Corp	Medium Impact	DM HY Corp DM IG Corp US Equity	Alternatives Gold Cash	Alternatives DM HY Corp
Lower Returns	Alternatives Global bonds* Gold	Higher Drawdowns	Alternatives Asia ex-Japan Equity Global Equity	Global bonds DM IG Govt	US Equity Global HDY Global Equity

Source: Standard Chartered. *Global bonds – Barclays Global Aggregate bond index, which is a mix of DM government and DM IG bonds. For references to allocations and Contingent Convertibles (CoCos) in this publication, please refer to explanatory notes on page 15.

Asset allocation summary



Allocation figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding. *FX-hedged

Tailoring a multi-asset allocation to suit an individual's return expectations and appetite for risk

- We have come up with several asset class “sleeves” across major asset classes driven by our investment views
- Our modular allocations can be used as building blocks to put together a complete multi-asset allocation
- These multi-asset allocations can be tailored to fit an individual's unique return expectations and risk appetite
- We illustrate allocation examples for both Global and Asia-focused investors, across risk profiles

Bonds Allocation (Asia-focused)	Higher Income Bonds Allocation	Equity Allocation (Asia-focused)	Non-core Income	Alternatives Strategies Allocation
For investors who want a diversified allocation across major fixed income sectors and regions Asia-focused allocation	For investors who prefer a higher income component to capital returns from their fixed income exposure Includes exposures to Senior Floating Rate bonds	For investors who want a diversified allocation across major equity regions Asia-focused allocation	For investors who want to diversify exposure from traditional fixed income and equity into “hybrid” assets Hybrid assets have characteristics of both fixed income and equity Examples include Covered Calls, REITs, and sub-financials	For investors who want to increase diversification within their allocation Includes both “substitute” and “diversifying” strategies

Asset allocation summary

Summary	View	ASIA FOCUSED				GLOBAL FOCUSED			
		Conservative	Moderate	Moderately Aggressive	Aggressive	Conservative	Moderate	Moderately Aggressive	Aggressive
Cash	▲	27	15	8	0	27	15	8	0
Fixed Income	◆	59	43	34	10	59	43	34	10
Equity	◆	14	28	44	80	14	28	44	80
Alternative Strategies	◆	0	14	15	10	0	14	15	10
Asset class									
USD Cash	▲	27	15	8	0	27	15	8	0
DM Government Bonds*	◆	8	5	4	1	11	8	6	2
DM IG Corporate Bonds*	◆	9	6	5	1	12	9	7	2
DM HY Corporate Bonds	▼	5	4	3	1	7	5	4	1
EM USD Government Bonds	▲	17	12	10	3	13	9	7	2
EM Local Ccy Government Bonds	◆	10	7	6	2	8	6	5	1
Asia USD Bonds	◆	10	7	6	2	8	6	5	1
North America	▲	6	13	20	36	9	18	28	51
Europe ex-UK	▼	1	2	3	5	0	1	1	2
UK	◆	0	1	2	3	0	1	1	3
Japan	◆	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	3
Asia ex-Japan	◆	4	9	14	25	2	5	8	14
Non-Asia EM	◆	1	3	4	7	1	2	3	6
Alternatives	◆	0	14	15	10	0	14	15	10

All figures in %. Source: Standard Chartered.

Legend: ▲ Most preferred | ▼ Least preferred | ◆ Core holding

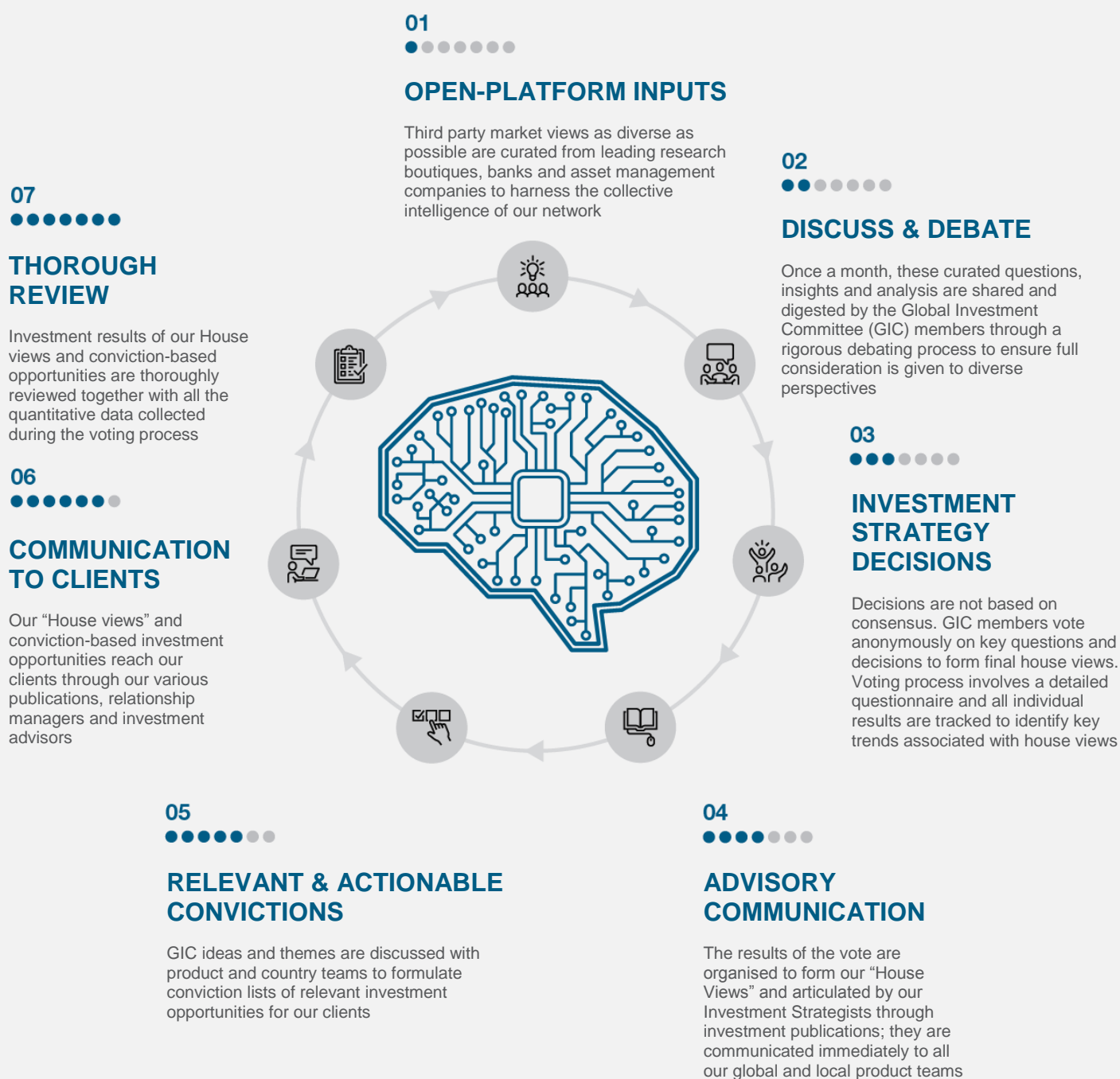
Note: (i) For small allocations we recommend investors to allocate through broader global equity/global bond solutions; (ii) Allocation figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

*FX-hedged

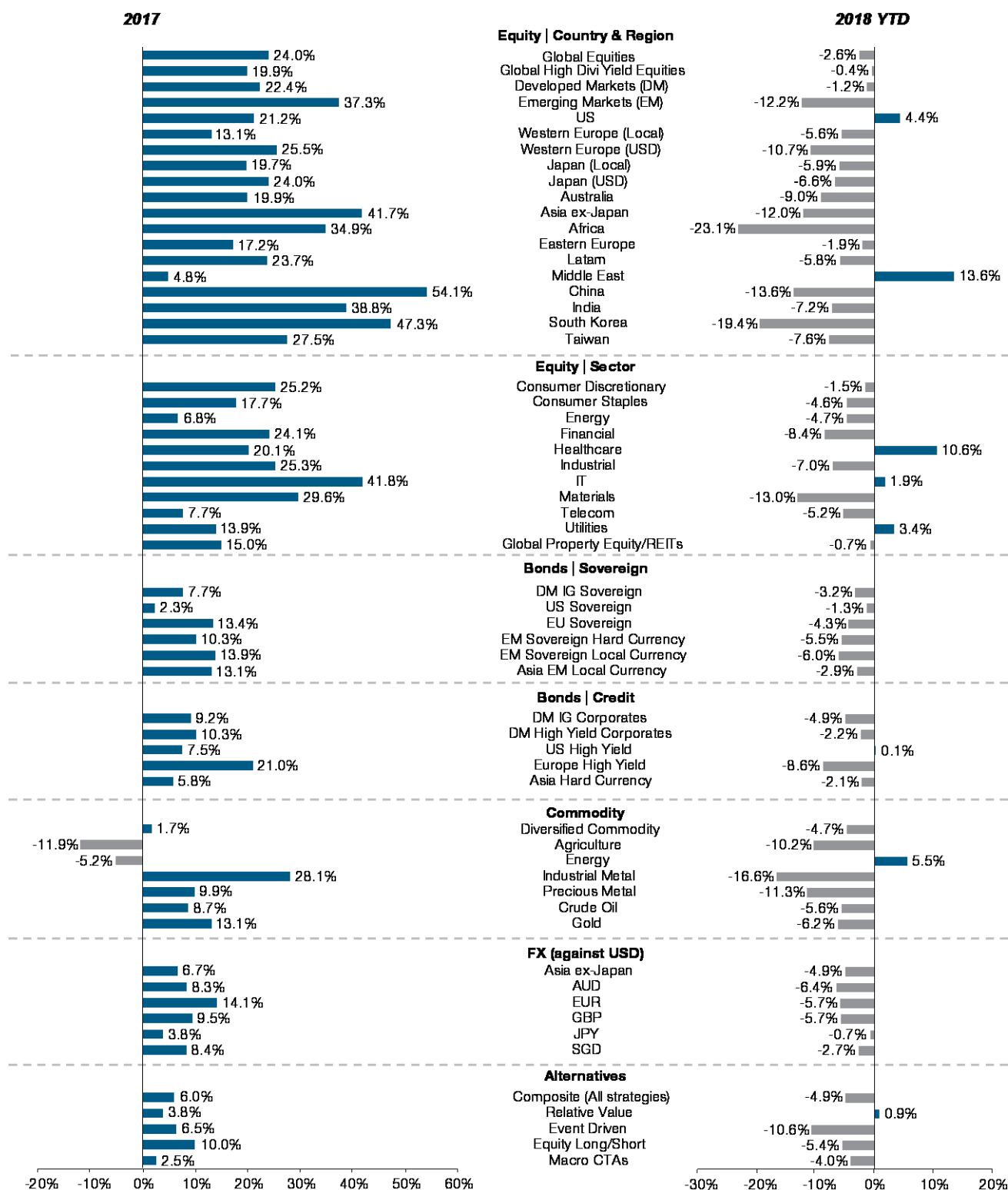
How we generate investment views

Our adaptive process

We have a robust advisory process ensuring we deliver high-quality insights and solutions to our clients.



2018 markets summary



Source: MSCI, J.P. Morgan, Barclays, Citigroup, Dow Jones, HFRX, FTSE, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

*All performance shown in USD terms, unless otherwise stated.

The column '2018 Year to date' indicates performance from 31 December 2017 to 30 November 2018.

The column '2017' indicates performance from 31 December 2016 to 31 December 2017.

2019 key events

january

- 23 BoJ policy decision
- 24 ECB policy decision
- 31 FOMC policy decision

february

- X India budget statement
- 05 RBA policy decision
- 07 BoE policy decision
- 16 Nigeria general election due
- X Thailand to hold general elections

march

- X China National People's Congress
- 05 RBA policy decision
- 07 ECB policy decision
- 15 BoJ policy decision
- 21 BoE policy decision
- 21 FOMC policy decision
- 29 UK to leave the EU

april

- X China Politburo meeting on economic policy
- 02 RBA policy decision
- 10 ECB policy decision
- 17 Indonesia general election due
- 25 BoJ policy decision

may

- X Australia federal election
- 02 BoE policy decision
- 02 FOMC policy decision
- 07 RBA policy decision
- 23-26 European Parliament election
- X India general election due

june

- 04 RBA policy decision
- 06 ECB policy decision
- 20 BoE policy decision
- 20 FOMC policy decision
- 20 BoJ policy decision
- 28-29 G20 Leaders' summit

july

- X China Politburo meeting on economic policy
- 01 Japan Upper House election
- 02 RBA policy decision
- 25 ECB policy decision
- 30 BoJ policy decision

august

- 01 FOMC policy decision
- 01 BoE policy decision
- 06 RBA policy decision

september

- 03 RBA policy decision
- 12 ECB policy decision
- 19 FOMC policy decision
- 19 BoJ policy decision
- 19 BoE policy decision

october

- X China Politburo meeting on economic policy
- 01 RBA policy decision
- 24 ECB policy decision
- 31 Last day of ECB President Mario Draghi's 8-year term
- 31 FOMC policy decision
- 31 BoJ policy decision

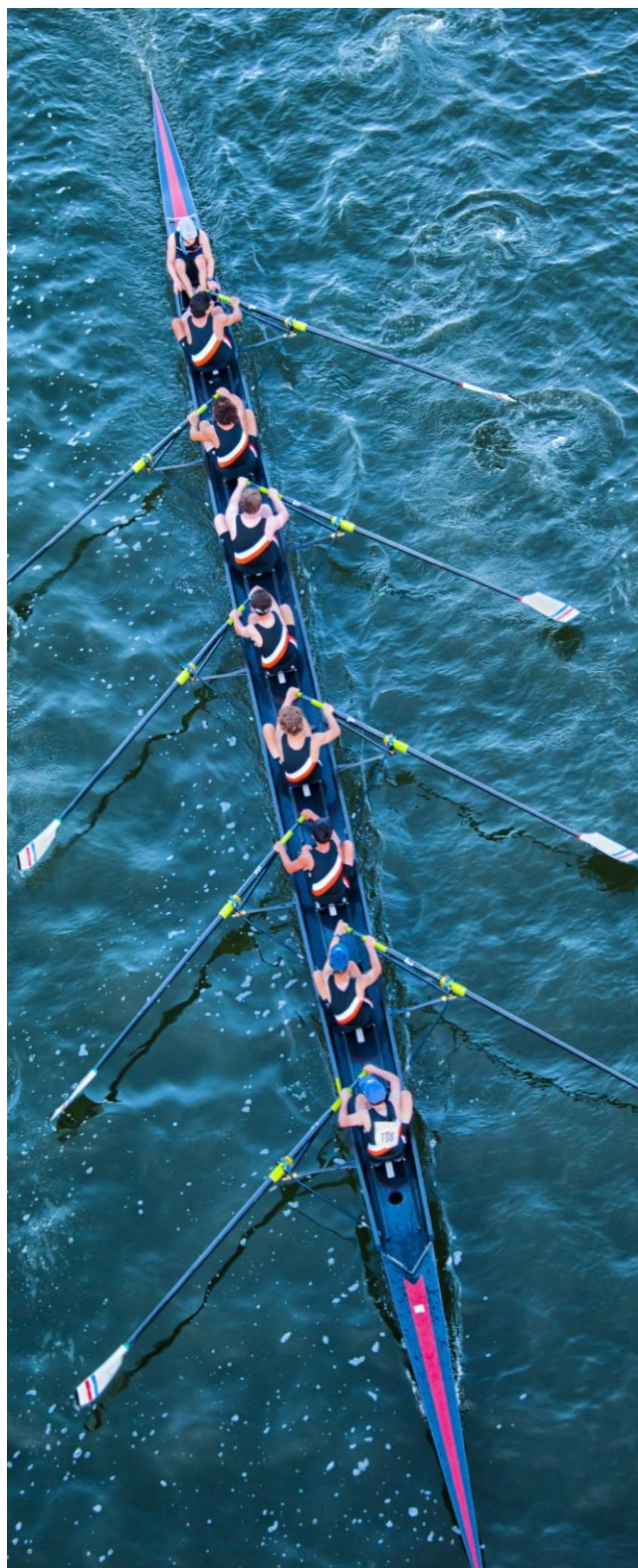
november

- X Japan's Constitutional referendum
- X APEC summit
- 05 RBA policy decision
- 07 BoE policy decision

december

- X China Central Economic Conference
- X China Politburo meeting on economic policy
- 03 RBA policy decision
- 12 FOMC policy decision
- 12 ECB policy decision
- 19 BoJ policy decision
- 19 BoE policy decision

Meet the team



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Chair of the Global Investment
Committee

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Chief Investment Strategist

Christian Abuide

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Discretionary Portfolio
Management

Clive McDonnell

Head
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Creative: James Lyon

Explanatory notes

1. Asset allocation diagrams (page 9-10) and any other allocations are only examples, provided for general information only and they do not constitute investment advice, an offer, recommendation or solicitation. They do not take into account the specific investment objectives, needs or risk tolerances of a particular person or class of persons and they have not been prepared for any particular person or class of persons.

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3. Multi-Asset Income allocations used as published in Annual or Mid-Year Outlooks and Global Market Outlooks from end 2013 to end 2018. Allocations are rebalanced monthly for performance calculation. Balanced allocations used are 50/50 global equities/global bonds as published from December 2017 till June 2018. The performance of such a 50/50 calculation was also calculated for the 2014-2016 period for illustrative purposes. Since June 2018, the balanced allocation used reflects performance of the Moderate Asia-focused Tactical Asset Allocation as published in Global Market Outlooks from June 2018 onwards. For indices used, please refer to note at end of the section.

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