

Allianz

China A-Shares

Monthly commentary

- The Fund aims at long-term capital growth by investing in the China A-Shares markets of the People's Republic of China ("PRC") in accordance with environmental and social characteristics. The Fund aims to achieve an outperformance (i.e. achieve a higher Environment, Social and Governance ("ESG") score) of the Fund's weighted average ESG score compared to weighted average ESG score of Fund's benchmark index by the adoption of the ESG Score Strategy. The Fund does not constitute as an ESG fund pursuant to the SFC's circular issued on 29 June 2021.
- The Fund is exposed to significant risks of investment/general market, country and region, emerging market, company-specific and currency (in particular RMB), and the adverse impact on RMB share class due to currency depreciation.
- The Fund may invest in the China A-Shares market directly via the Stock Connect or other foreign access regimes and/or other permitted means and/or indirectly through all eligible instruments and thus is subject to the associated risks (including quota limitation, change in rule and regulations, repatriation of the Fund's monies, trade restrictions, China market volatility and uncertainty, potential clearing and/or settlement difficulties, change in economic, social and political policy in PRC and Mainland China tax risks).
- The Fund is exposed to risks relating to ESG Score Strategy investment (such as foregoing opportunities to buy certain securities when it might otherwise be advantageous to do so, selling securities when it might be disadvantageous to do so, and/or reducing risk diversifications compared to broadly based funds) which may result in the Fund being more volatile and have adverse impact on the performance of the Fund and consequently adversely affect an investor's investment in the Fund.
- The Fund may invest in financial derivative instruments ("FDI") which may expose to higher leverage, counterparty, liquidity, valuation, volatility, market and over the counter transaction risks. The Fund's net derivative exposure may be up to 50% of the Fund's net asset value.
- Investment involves risks that could result in loss of part or entire amount of investors' investment.
- In making investment decisions, investors should not rely solely on this material.

Note: Dividend payments may, at the sole discretion of the Investment Manager, be made out of the Fund's capital or effectively out of the Fund's capital which represents a return or withdrawal of part of the amount investors originally invested and/or capital gains attributable to the original investment. This may result in an immediate decrease in the NAV per share and the capital of the Fund available for investment in the future and capital growth may be reduced, in particular for hedged share classes for which the distribution amount and NAV of any hedged share classes (HSC) may be adversely affected by differences in the interests rates of the reference currency of the HSC and the base currency of the Fund.

What Happened in October

The Fund lagged the benchmark in October. Stock selection in the consumer discretionary sector, with some profit taking in the smart appliance and humanoid robotics space, was the key detractor.

At a stock level, a detractor last month was Montage Technology*, a leading fabless semiconductor company that provides high-performance integrated circuit (IC) based solutions for cloud computing and AI markets. We view the recent share price pullback as some profit taking after strong gains year to date. Montage remains one of our preferred ways to play the China AI opportunity given its very strong R&D capabilities and ability to launch new products ahead of its peers.

Conversely a key contributor was a company which provides electrical power equipment such as high voltage switchgear, transformers and relay protection and automation systems. The company's recent quarterly earnings were ahead of expectations. Longer term we expect a robust power grid capex cycle in China, with upside from AI-driven datacenter

demand as well as the integration of renewable energy supply. This should support demand for the company's products and engineering services.

Outlook and Strategy

October was a period of consolidation for China equities, not a surprise after the rapid pace of the rally in recent months. It was also a rotational market with profit taking in technology and AI-related areas, and previous laggard sectors such as energy and financials being more resilient. In this environment China A shares outperformed offshore equities during the month. Year to date both China A and China H shares have returned more than 25% in USD terms.

The main talking points during the month were geopolitics and China's latest five-year plan.

In terms of US-China relations, the cycle of tension, escalation and truce appears to be a new normal. Whether this latest truce lasts a full year, as announced, is questionable. Nonetheless, for the time being the most recent agreement should at least provide a degree of relief. Similar to "Liberation Day", cooler heads have prevailed, which was to be expected given that both the US and China had a lot to lose from some of the more extreme measures being threatened.

Overall, both sides look to be buying time while making efforts to reduce their dependence on one another. From a US perspective, the focus has been finding alternative sources of rare earth supply. In our view this is likely to be challenging. China's grip is strongest on the most important and scarcest metals, 'heavy' rare earths, which are needed to produce permanent magnets essential for much high-tech equipment. China and Myanmar together account for 98% of global heavy rare earth supply, and essentially all processing of these ores currently occurs in China.

To give some sense of scale, China has an estimated 120,000 people working in the rare earths industry, the result of making it a high strategic priority over a sustained period. Any path to breaking Chinese dominance would appear to be many years away and, as such, China's geopolitical advantage in this area is likely to be long lasting.

From China's perspective, a key vulnerability is its reliance on Western high spec technology, especially in the semiconductor supply chain. Although it has significantly ramped up self-sufficiency in recent years, important industries such as more advanced electric vehicles still rely primarily on imported semiconductors.

This explains the context of China's latest five-year plan, which underscored the determination to build a more self-reliant technology ecosystem. As well as a focus on achieving broader technological self-sufficiency, there were also references to emerging high-tech industries over the next decade that are potentially at risk from reliance on Western supply chains. These include areas such as quantum technology, biological manufacturing, hydrogen energy and nuclear fusion energy, and 6G mobile telecommunications.

Perhaps the biggest surprise out of the plenum which approved the five-year plan policy framework was a statement that this year's annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth target must be accomplished, and a call for more economic policy support. This was unexpected as the plenum is typically dedicated to more strategic issues. It likely reflects concern about slowing economic momentum and reinforces our expectations for incremental policy stimulus in Q4 2025.

This ongoing more supportive policy backdrop, combined with the technology narrative and strong domestic liquidity, leads us to remain optimistic on the China equity outlook.

In this environment, we maintain a preference for innovative companies with proven R&D capabilities and a clear ability to capture and expand market share. While previously this led us to invest in a number of tech/AI-related companies, we are also finding opportunities in other areas. For example, a recent initiation has been one of China's most advanced valve producers which is a key player in global energy infrastructure. The company has numerous patents in valve technology, enabling the development of advanced solutions in areas such as deepwater valves.

The portfolio continues to have relatively close-to-benchmark sector allocations, so that stock selection remains the key relative performance driver. At month end, the largest sector overweight is consumer discretionary, while the largest underweight is materials.

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All data sourced from Bloomberg, Allianz Global Investors, as of 31 October 2025 unless otherwise stated.

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