

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 April

The Fund lagged the benchmark in April as Trump's tariffs prompted significant intra-market volatility. Stock selection in the Industrials and Consumer Discretionary sectors was the main detractor.

At a single stock level, a detractor last month was a leading smartphone and consumer electronic component provider and a key supplier to a US smartphone, computer and communications equipment producer. The share price saw a pullback after the higher-than-expected US tariffs prompted concerns about a slowdown in smartphone demand. We reduced the position size given near-term risks. In longer term, the company continues to gain market share in the US producer's supply chain by enhancing its ongoing vertical integration and supplying a broader range of capabilities.

Conversely, a key contributor was a major pet food business. The company reported strong results with upbeat management guidance as China's pet economy continues to boom. Pet food penetration in China is still at relatively low

levels compared to more developed markets, and the company's premium brands are likely to gain further share with tariffs imposed on imported competitor products.

Outlook and Strategy

In line with other global markets, China equities – especially offshore markets – initially gapped lower after the tariff announcements on “Liberation Day” before subsequently recovering a good part of the losses through the rest of the month. China A-shares were notably less volatile, with government support limiting the downside.

In the near term, the tariff outlook remains uncertain. China's negotiating position has hardened notably. This is partly because of the belief they can sustain the economic attrition for longer than the US. Operating under US export controls for the last five years has resulted in a meaningfully enhanced degree of self-sufficiency in critical industries.

Having said that, the current situation will result in significant economic damage for both China and the US. There is little historical precedent for this scale of tariff increase, but sell-side estimates suggest this could, in isolation, have a close to 2% gross domestic product (GDP) impact on China. As such, it is in the interests of both sides to de-escalate the situation. Recent days suggest some early signs of a move towards negotiations.

Looking ahead, a key question is to what extent China will lean against the tariff headwinds and the looming economic slowdown with renewed efforts to stimulate domestic demand. Just a few weeks ago, China set an official GDP target for 2025 of “around 5%”. Given the importance attached to achieving the annual growth target – it has been met or exceeded in each of the last 15 years with the exception of COVID in 2022 – both monetary and fiscal policy should be dialled up in coming months.

On paper, there is significant untapped potential including more than USD 20 trillion of household savings. But the consumption power and confidence of China consumers have been significantly hampered by the severe housing market downturn and labour market pressures in the post-COVID era. We think it is increasingly likely that there will be decisive and forceful policy changes, including the government stepping up support for asset prices, not just in equities but in the crucial housing market as well.

Indeed, the most evident policy move so far has been the “national team” boosting support for equity markets. Domestic exchange-traded funds (ETFs) have seen significant inflows, more than 240 China A-share companies have announced share buybacks in April, and insurance companies have been guided to increase their exposure to equities. The “Beijing put” has been in action several times over the last year, with the 3,000 level on the Shanghai Composite Index appearing to be the line in the sand. The current level of around 3,280 should therefore provide some indication of the expected downside risk.

In this environment, portfolio activity in April included adding to companies which are expected to benefit from ongoing import substitution, particularly in technology-related industries. These include the development of processor chips for artificial intelligence (AI) applications as well as other parts of the semiconductor supply chain.

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 Industrials.

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All data sourced from Bloomberg, Allianz Global Investors, as of 30 April 2025 unless otherwise stated.

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