

---

# Sector Rotation: Can the Approach Work in Different Countries?

---

**Daniel Ung, CFA, CAIA, FRM**

Head of Quantitative Research & Analysis, SPDR ETF  
Model Portfolio Solutions, State Street Global Advisors

**Shankar Abburu**

Quantitative Research & Analysis, SPDR ETF Model  
Portfolio Solutions, State Street Global Advisors

---

# SPDR — The Powerhouse of Sectors

---

## Experienced Management

A leader in sector ETFs with more than \$120 billion globally.<sup>1</sup> Track record of managing sector ETFs since 1998.

---

## Physical Replication

One of the only providers with a full suite of physically replicated World, US and Europe sector ETFs in Europe.

---

## Cost-Efficient\*

World and Europe UCITS Sector ETFs: **0.30%**  
US UCITS Sector ETFs: **0.15%**

---

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Bloomberg Finance L.P., State Street Global Advisors, as of 31 March 2020.

\* Frequent trading of ETFs could significantly increase commissions and other costs such that they may offset any savings from low fees or costs.

---

<b>5</b>	<b>Sector Rotation Across Regions</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Sector Selection Research Model Methodology</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Recent Sector Allocation</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Strategy Performance and Historical Allocation Outcomes</b>

---

---

# Executive Summary

---

Research on sector rotation, which is a popular tactical asset allocation technique, often centres on using price momentum as the sole criterion to identify outperforming sectors. The aim here is to give investors ideas on implementing a tactical sector rotation strategy systematically using sector ETF building blocks. In this paper, we examine the viability of implementing a sector rotation strategy using a blend of parameters. These include macroeconomic indicators and fundamental information, in addition to price momentum.

The selection approach was simulated across different geographies (namely the US, Europe and World developed markets) and rebalanced at the end of every month. We call this approach the Sector Selection Research Model.

Results show that the sector rotation strategy beat its respective benchmarks across all regions over the entire period, and with diminished volatility. The tactical nature of the allocation means that the portfolio turnover, which is a major driver of transaction costs, was remarkably high (~200%).<sup>2</sup> Even so, the outperformance of the simulated sector rotation strategies remained robust after including estimated transaction costs. This suggests there may be merit in combining multiple criteria to select the most attractive sectors.

---

<sup>2</sup> Source: State Street Global Advisors, as of 31 March 2020.

---

# Sector Rotation Across Regions

---

## Can Sector Rotation Work in Different Countries?

---

Most Existing Research  
is Based on Momentum  
Applied to the US

---

Sector allocation has been one of the main pillars in institutional equity portfolio management and is a key component of tactical asset allocation. The central principle of this investment technique relates to the ability of investors to back sections of the market that are experiencing favourable conditions while avoiding those in distress.

---

Much of the publicly available research concentrates on approaches to sector rotation in the US. However, its applicability to other regions attracts far less focus and is often overlooked. Commentators have offered various explanations for this observation. Some believe that regions outside of the US lack the sector diversity needed to implement a viable sector rotation strategy. In the past, these challenges were compounded by the limited availability of liquid and competitively priced sector building blocks needed to execute a rotation strategy successfully.

The rise of sector ETFs has eliminated that last hurdle. The ETF trend appears set to consolidate even further as a high dispersion of sector returns may give investors more profit-making opportunities. Indeed, the current spread between global sector returns continues to widen to its largest level since 2000.<sup>1</sup>

At the heart of sector rotation strategies is the tenet that return can be improved by timing or tilting to sectors on the strength of economic or other quantitative information. Of the different methods used to pick sectors, price momentum is by far the most studied. For instance, Moskowitz and Grinblat (1999)<sup>2</sup> reviewed the returns of single stocks and sectors between 1963 and 1995 and concluded that momentum strategies applied to sectors generated a higher return than those applied to individual stocks.

Other authors, such as Burch and Swaminathan (2001), found that institutional investors — most notably, insurance companies, banks, investment advisors and fund managers — often use momentum as a means of making their equity investment selections.

Besides momentum, another extensively employed technique is to consider macroeconomic data and the business cycle. The rationale behind this is that if the correct phase in the business cycle is identified, then it is possible to predict the performance of different sectors. Kouzmenko and Nagy (2014)<sup>3</sup> assessed the relationship between sector performance and business cycles between 1976 and 2009 using both inflation and the OCED Composite Leading Indicators. They found that the returns of cyclical sectors were higher in economic expansions than countercyclical ones.

---

In this paper, we seek to add to the current body of research in this area by examining the performance of a sector rotation technique that blends both macroeconomic, fundamental and quantitative data, including price momentum, in different regions. To test the feasibility across different geographies, the strategy — which is known as the Sector Selection Research Model — was created and tested in the US, Europe and World developed markets.

In our study, we also examined the impact of estimated trading costs on return. The initial selection universes used for the analysis include the 11 GICS sectors that make up the S&P 500, MSCI Europe and MSCI World Indices. These sectors are communication services, energy, materials, health care, industrials, consumer discretionary, consumer staples, financials, real estate, information technology and utilities. In addition to using publicly available sources for price and fundamental data, the analysis in this research also utilises proprietary information on investor positioning derived from anonymised custody data of institutional investors from State Street Global Markets.

# Sector Selection Research Model

## How Does the Model Work?

The Sector Selection Research Model deploys a rule-based, sector rotation approach that targets the most relatively attractive sectors using a blend of price, macroeconomic and fundamental factors. The importance of these selection factors is captured in the dynamic weighting scheme of the research model.

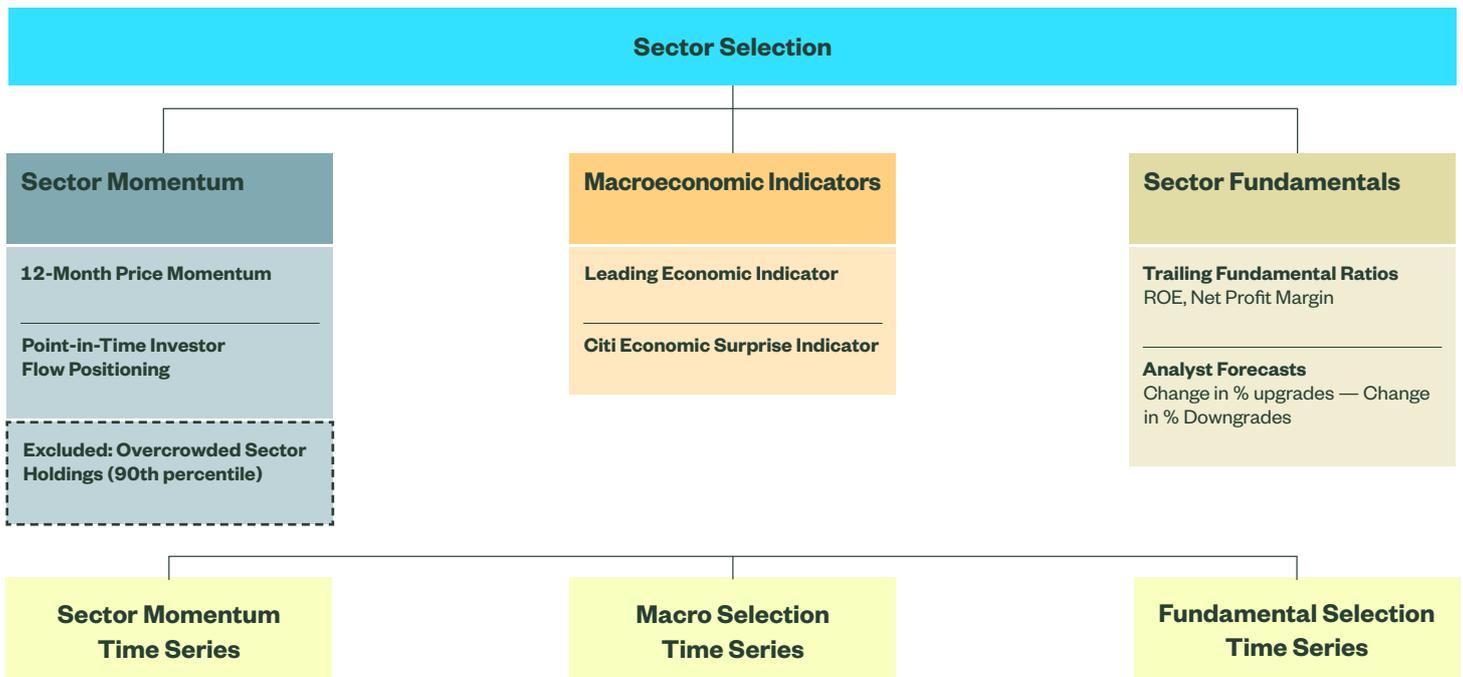
Furthermore, the model provides for a mechanism that ensures risk is controlled and opportunities arising from dispersion are seized. In all, the approach comprises two major steps: sector selection and sector weighting. This process is repeated on a monthly basis.

## Sector Selection

Sectors are chosen based on three factors, hereafter known as ‘components.’ These components are: price momentum, macroeconomic environment and fundamental data (see Figure 1). Sector selections are conducted independently and are based solely on the criteria that make up the component and the best five sectors are selected in each component.

Once the selections are determined, a return time series is generated for that component. If all the sectors record a negative reading across most of the criteria in a given component, no sectors will be selected and the return for the month is assumed to be cash.

Figure 1 **How the Sector Selection Research Model Selects Sectors**



Source: State Street Global Advisors. For illustrative purposes only.

Sector Selections are Done Independently Using Momentum, Macroeconomics and Fundamentals

- **Sector Momentum Component** In this component, sectors are ranked based on the historical 12-month price momentum as well as the most recent investor flow positioning metric, which is a proprietary State Street indicator that shows how real money investors are positioned. Sectors that are heavily held by investors, the so-called ‘overcrowded sectors,’ are also removed at this stage.
- **Macroeconomic Indicators Component** The current macroeconomic regime is determined principally by leading economic indicators, supported by the Citi Economic Surprise Index. Once the current regime is ascertained, sectors are chosen on the strength of their past performance whilst being in the same macroeconomic regime in the past.
- **Sector Fundamentals Component** Sector fundamentals account for both trailing fundamental information as well as forward-looking analyst consensus forecasts. Trailing information includes return on equity and net profit margin (or, in the instance of the finance sector, net interest margin). On the other hand, forward-looking information includes the percentage change between analyst upgrades and downgrades for a given sector. Sectors are then classified by means of a blend of trailing and forward-looking measures.

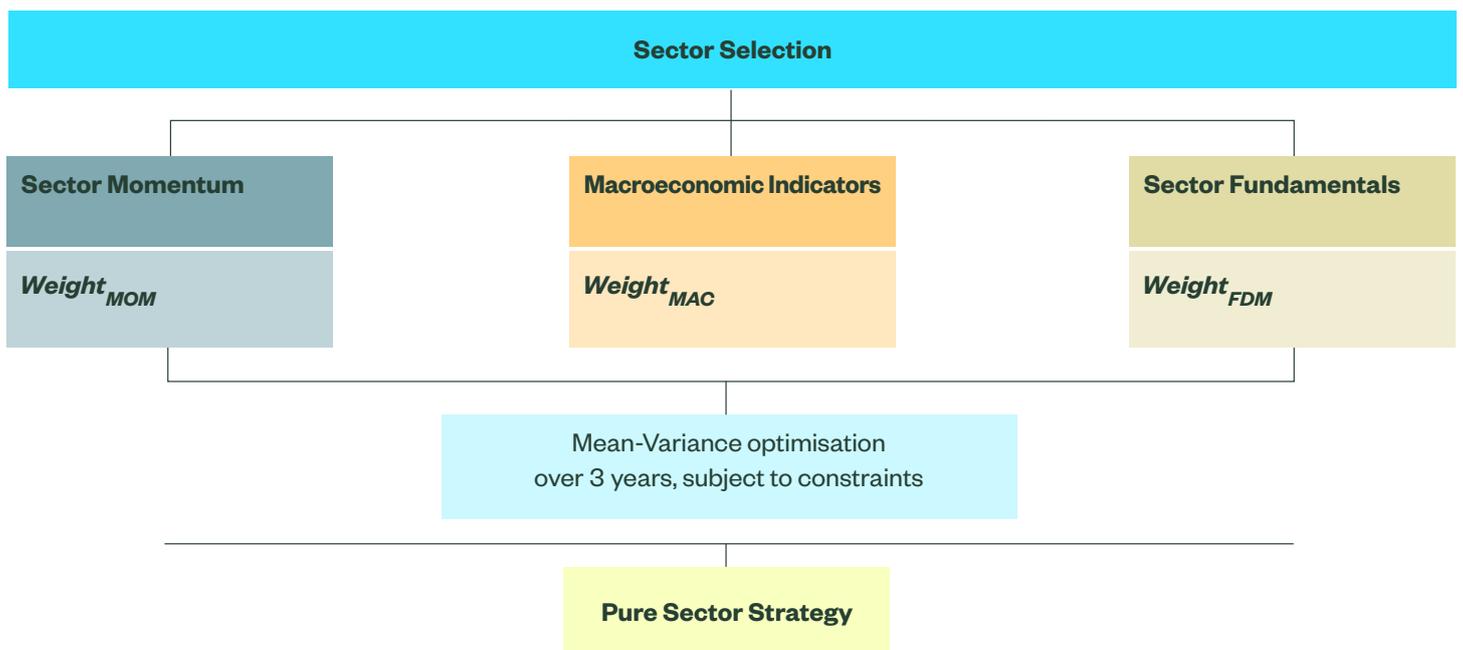
### Sector Weighting

Sector weighting is influenced both by the dynamic weighting of the components as well as the subsequent calibration of final weights. This approach is designed to limit risk and capitalise on opportunities stemming from sector dispersion.

Weighting is Based on the Relative Importance of Components, as well as Risk Control and Dispersion

Having selected the most relatively attractive sectors in the previous step, the research model applies a dynamic weighting scheme to reflect the relative importance of the components. This ultimately affects the weight of the sectors that the strategy chooses and is achieved through a mean-variance optimisation process, which uses the time series of the components computed previously, in such a way as to maximise the portfolio risk-adjusted return (see Figure 2). The outcome of this process is what produces the ‘pure sector strategy.’

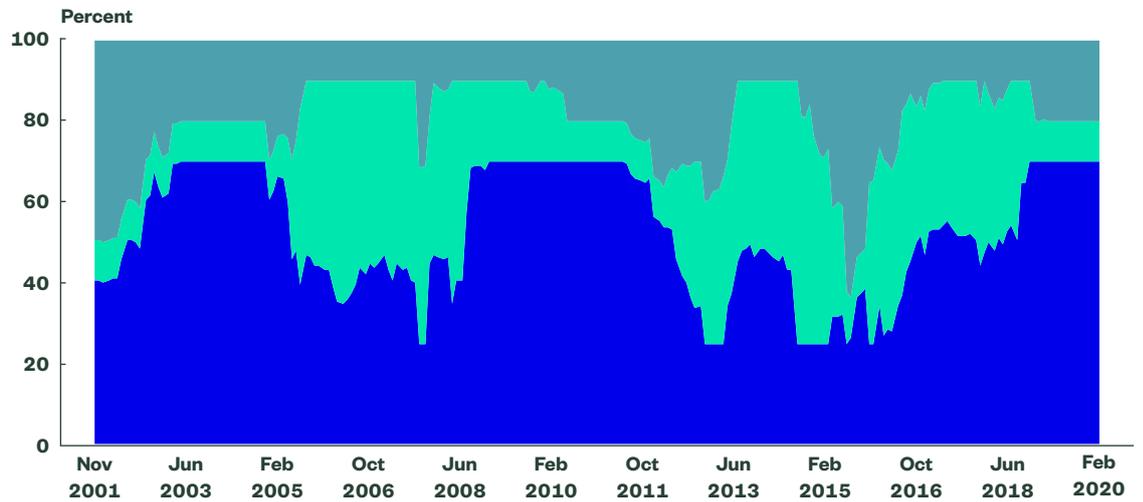
Figure 2 The Dynamic Weighting Scheme of the Components in the Research Model



Source: State Street Global Advisors. For illustrative purposes only.

Figure 3  
**The Allocation  
in Each of the  
Components in the  
US Sector Selection  
Research Model**

■ Momentum  
■ Macroeconomic  
■ Fundamental



Source: State Street Global Advisors. Monthly weights as of March 2020.

The final step in determining the sector weights involves restricting the amount of risk the pure sector strategy incurs, as well as encouraging it to run more risk where opportunities from dispersion emerge. To avoid running excessive risk, the Sector Selection Research Model targets a tracking error of 10% p.a. and any excess tracking error is curbed through increasing the allocation in the benchmark.

In addition, the research model also evaluates whether there is a sizeable opportunity in making sector bets by examining the average sector dispersion. A high sector dispersion signifies that there is a material difference between the best and worst performing sector and that, if the sector bet is correct, there is potentially a substantial gain from it. For this reason, the research model has embedded a mechanism whereby if there is material sector dispersion, it will reduce the allocation in the benchmark and boost the allocation in the pure sector strategy and vice versa.

# Recent Sector Allocation

## Overview of Allocations Across Regions

US Sector Allocation  
So far in 2020: IT has been in Vogue

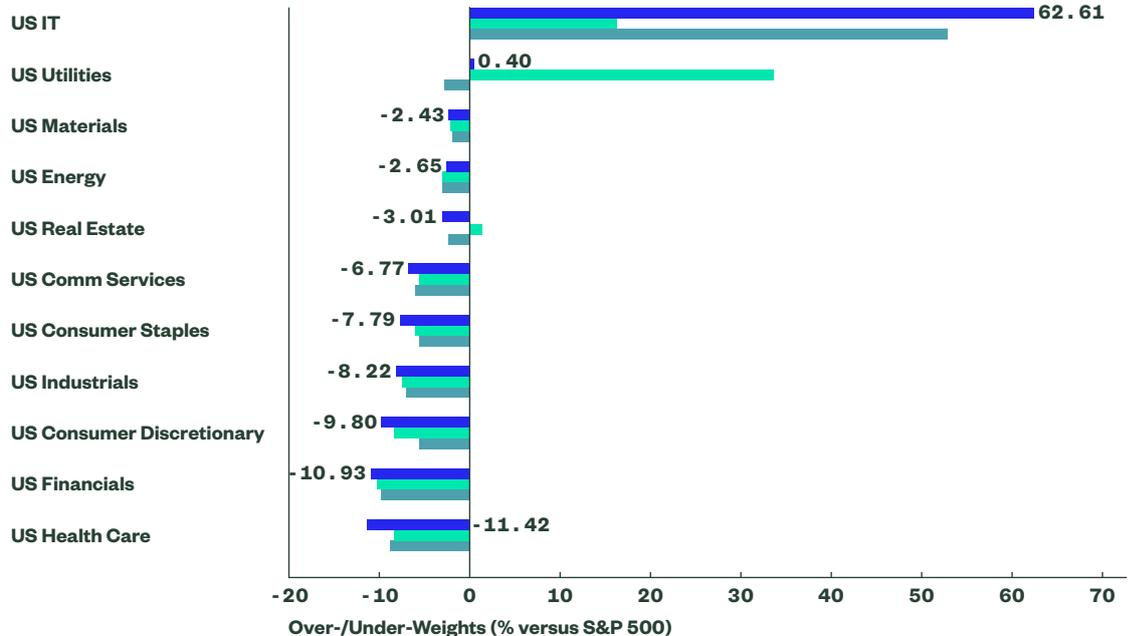
Next, we review how the sector allocations have changed so far in 2020 when the equity markets faced unprecedented volatility, principally as a result of COVID-19.

Over the first three months of 2020, the US Sector Selection Research Model generated a paper loss of 17.16%, which is an outperformance of 3.60% compared with the S&P 500 benchmark.<sup>4</sup> Before the coronavirus hit international equity markets, the strategy was highly overweight in the IT sector because the sector enjoyed not only strong price momentum, but also investor flows and solid fundamentals. However, as the crisis worsened, utilities and, to a lesser extent, real estate rode on strong price momentum.

Market sentiment turned decidedly defensive and, as a result, the overweight in IT was substantially cut (see Figure 4). More recently, the US equity market has become less agitated as market participants expect that the challenges brought on by the pandemic are likely to last for a while. Against this backdrop, the research model returned to a strong overweight in IT, which continues to benefit from strong momentum and fundamentals.

Figure 4  
**Sector Allocations made by the US Research Model in 2020**

■ Mar-20  
■ Feb-20  
■ Jan-20



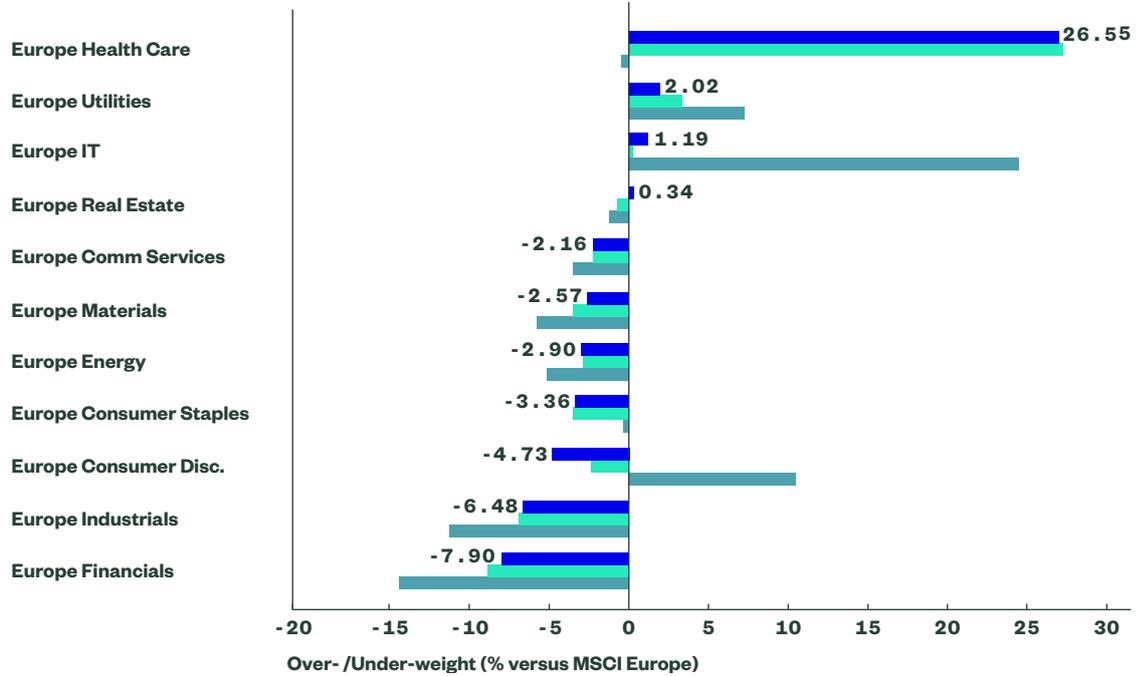
Source: State Street Global Advisors, as of March 2020. Allocations are as of date indicated and shouldn't be relied thereafter.

Europe Sector Allocation: Health Care went from an Underweight to a Strong Overweight

Like the US market, the European equity market also went into freefall earlier this year. MSCI Europe went down by 32% while the Sector Selection Research Model fell by 21%. Like the US, the IT sector was in vogue at the start of the year by virtue of strong momentum and fundamentals. As the coronavirus crisis developed, European health care companies skyrocketed amid hope that a vaccine against coronavirus would be invented eventually. That said, fundamentals for the health care sector were unremarkable throughout the period, especially in comparison with sectors such as IT and utilities (see Figure 5).

Figure 5  
Sector Allocations made by the Europe Research Model in 2020

■ Mar-20  
■ Feb-20  
■ Jan-20



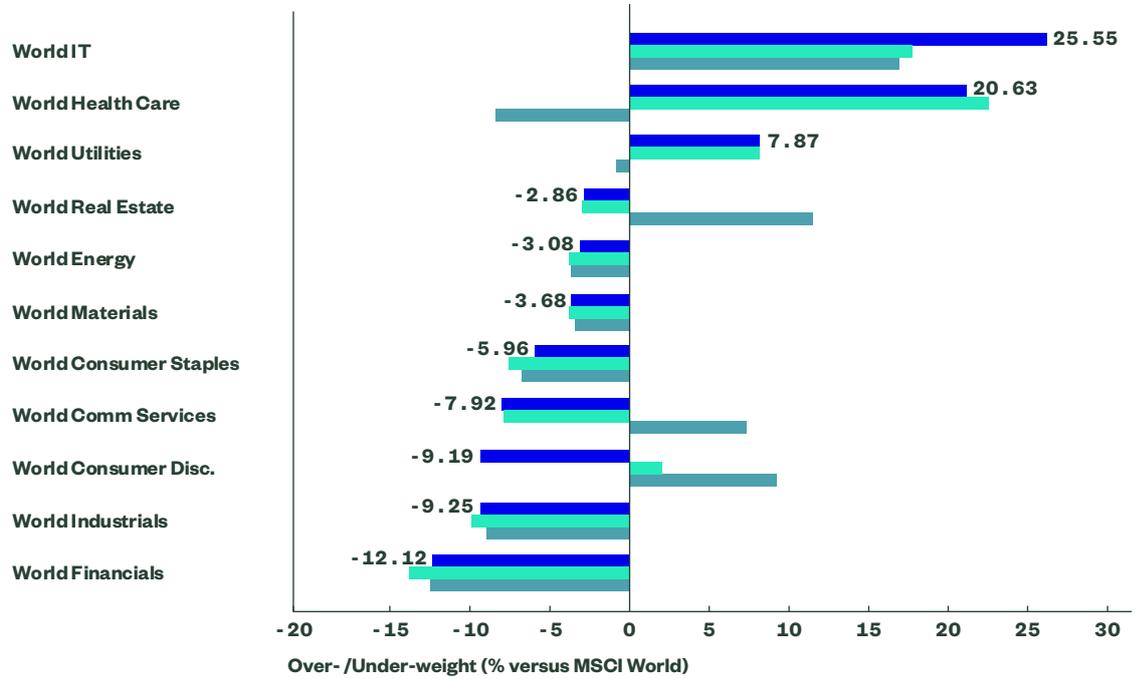
Source: State Street Global Advisors, as of March 2020. Allocations are as of date indicated and shouldn't be relied thereafter.

World Sector Allocation: IT and Health Care have been Favoured in World Developed Markets

In regards to world developed markets, the Sector Selection Research Model fell by 16%, which compares favourably the MSCI World drop of 22% during the same period. Similar to both the US and Europe, the research model started off by placing a substantial overweight in IT as well as real estate, and an underweight in financials. As the impact of the coronavirus was felt more acutely by the equity markets, the research model also backed health care, alongside the IT sector. The bearish sentiment also benefitted utilities, albeit to a lesser extent (see Figure 6).

Figure 6  
Sector Allocations made by the World Research Model in 2020

■ Mar-20  
■ Feb-20  
■ Jan-20



Source: State Street Global Advisors, as of March 2020. Allocations are as of date indicated and shouldn't be relied thereafter.

---

# Strategy Performance and Historical Allocation Outcomes

---

---

## Overview

Here we examine the allocation sector decisions of the Sector Selection Research Model in each region. We also analyse how the strategies performed against their reference benchmarks over the entire study period, as well as during specific historical periods.

---

## US Sector Selection

In the US, the model exceeded the S&P 500 benchmark over the entire study period and in the majority of the calendar years (see Figure 8). On an absolute basis, the model outperformed the S&P 500 benchmark by 3% p.a. with a correspondingly lower volatility and, together, this produced a strong risk-adjusted return of 0.7, which is nearly twice that of the benchmark (see Figure 7). This level of performance was achieved by virtue of the strategy's dynamic monthly rebalancing mechanism. Indeed, the strategy's portfolio turnover was about 180% p.a., which is typical of a tactical asset allocation strategy of this category.<sup>5</sup>

Another notable observation was the seemingly defensive nature of the sector strategy, which is evidenced by having a lower market beta of around 0.7 and a substantially lower maximum drawdown than its benchmark (-30% versus -51%). We can potentially attribute this observation to the strategy's capacity to allocate into cash during bear markets.

---

Industrials were Favoured in the First Half of the Study Period and IT the Second Half

---

That said, the strategy allocated only a modest weight to cash (16%) over the entire study period and tilted towards cyclical sectors (46%), especially industrials and IT. A closer examination of the strategy's sector allocation reveals significant differences between the first half of the study period (between December 1998 and July 2009) and the second half (August 2009 to February 2020).

During the first half of the analysis period, the highest average weight was found in the industrials sector. Sporadic bouts of significant overweighting in the sector were witnessed during much of 2003 and 2004; this period coincided with the Iraq war when the US government budgeted \$50 billion<sup>6</sup> for the conflict.

By contrast, the IT sector was often in vogue in the second half of the analysis period, by virtue of the sector's strong momentum and stellar fundamentals. Another remarkable observation is that the strategy allocated an average weight of 10% in the energy sector in the first half of the study period and only a meagre 1% in the second half. This is broadly in line with the oil price, which had peaked at just under \$150 in June 2008 and then struggled in the latter period.

Turning to 2019, the sector selection strategy outperformed the S&P 500 benchmark on a risk-adjusted basis but underperformed on an absolute basis. The year was defined by spells of extreme turbulence, notably in the first half. Equity market volatility more than doubled between the first half and the second half of the year. For this reason, the allocation to cash decreased from 43% in the first half of the year to 16%.

As most of the weight was initially allocated to cash, there was little active positioning in sectors. This changed in the second half of the year as the equity markets largely stabilised and there was a cautious tactical shift to certain sectors, such as consumer discretionary and information technology. The weight in consumer discretionary went up from an average of 4% to 20% and the weight in IT rose from 7% to 19%, a result of strong momentum in these sectors.

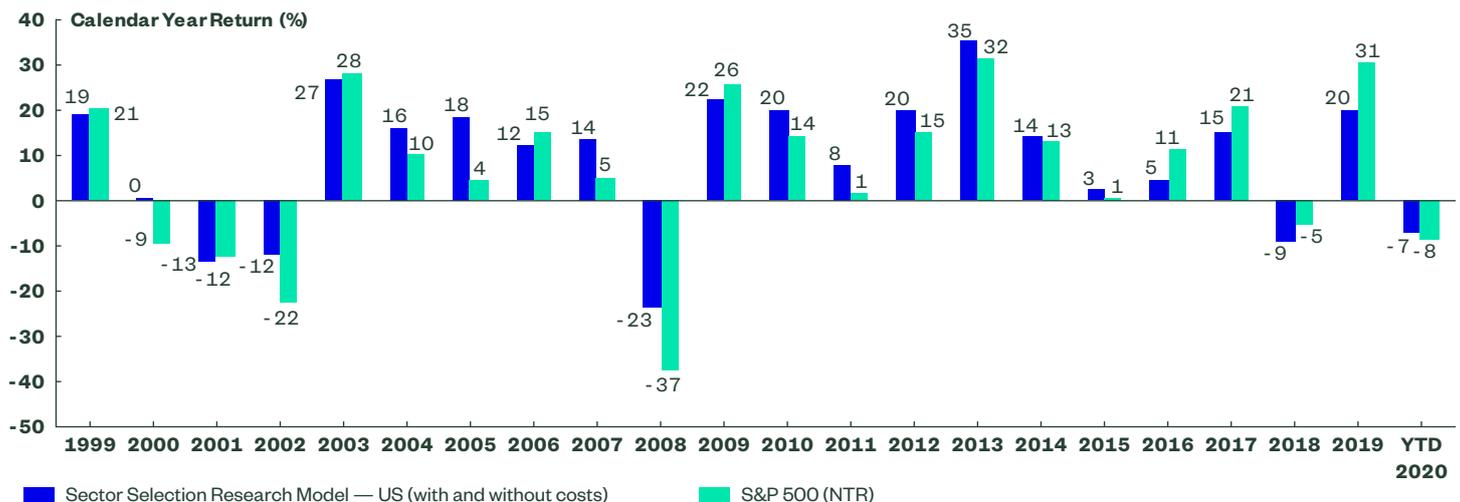
Overall, because the strategy was overweight towards real estate by about 10% and consumer discretionary by 4%, the strategy lagged the benchmark given these sectors registered sub-par performance. Indeed, during 2019, among the best performing sectors were IT and consumer discretionary, which beat the S&P 500 benchmark by 20% and 2%, respectively.

Figure 7  
**Risk-Return  
Characteristics of  
US Sector Selection  
Research Model  
Over the Entire Period**

	<b>Sector Selection Research Model (with and without costs)*</b>	<b>S&amp;P 500 Net Total Return</b>
Annual Return (%)	8.07	4.95
Annual Volatility (%)	11.47	14.75
Return per unit Volatility	0.70	0.34
Maximum Drawdown (%)	-29.63	-51.44

Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., State Street Global Advisors. Monthly data from January 1999 to March 2020. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Index returns are unmanaged and do not reflect the deduction of any fees or expenses. This information should not be considered a recommendation to invest in a particular sector or to buy or sell any security shown. It is not known whether the sectors or securities shown will be profitable in the future. The results shown represent current results generated by our Sector Selection Research Model. The results do not reflect actual trading and do not reflect the impact that material economic and market factors may have had on SSGA's decision-making. The results shown were achieved by means of a mathematical formula, and are not indicative of actual performance which could differ substantially. The performance reflects management fees, transaction costs, and other fees expenses a client would have to pay.  
\*Transaction costs, which include taxes, commissions and trading costs, are assumed to be minimal, such that there is little to no impact on the categories above.

Figure 8 **Calendar  
Year Return of Sector  
Selection Research  
Model Compared to  
its Benchmark**



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., State Street Global Advisors. Monthly data from January 1999 to March 2020. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Index returns are unmanaged and do not reflect the deduction of any fees or expenses. The results shown represent current results generated by our Sector Selection Research Model. The results do not reflect actual trading and do not reflect the impact that material economic and market factors may have had on SSGA's decision-making. The results shown were achieved by means of a mathematical formula, and are not indicative of actual performance which could differ substantially. The performance reflects management fees, transaction costs, and other fees expenses a client would have to pay.

---

Finally, we look at how the sector rotation strategy fared during the dot-com bubble. In the six months preceding the crisis,<sup>7</sup> the strategy had an average weight of 25% in the IT sector, and this weight culminated in January 2000. Correspondingly, there was a growing belief in the market that the prices in the IT sector shot up to unsustainably high levels and stock prices in the sector began to falter.

---

### The Strategy Increased Cash Allocation During Dot-Com Bubble

As the crisis intensified, allocation to the IT sector tumbled and this underweight was maintained for much of the crisis. Indeed, not only did the strategy allot more to cash but it also maintained a higher weight to defensive sectors, including consumer staples (9%) and health care (8%) owing to periodically strong fundamentals and positive momentum.

There were also extended periods in which no sector had positive momentum, which explains why there was on average a high cash allocation in the strategy. In all, the strategy was overweight the real estate sector by 4% and the consumer staples sector by 3%, both of which outpaced the benchmark convincingly. There was also an overall tilt away from IT, which unsurprisingly was the worst performer during the period.

---

### European Sector Selection

The sector selection strategy in Europe surpassed its MSCI Europe benchmark on an absolute basis over the study period, which spans from February 2001 to February 2020 (see Figure 9). Risk-adjusted performance of the sector selection research model was equally robust at more than double that of the benchmark. The more anticyclical nature of the strategy also means that its maximum drawdown over the entire study period was much shallower. As seen in the US model, the European counterpart was dynamic and racked up a portfolio turnover of 200% p.a., owing to its embedded monthly rebalancing feature.

Judged over the entire period, the strategy only assigned a modest weight to cash and did not have any material sector biases. A careful examination of the strategy's allocation decisions shows that it was overweight consumer staples, especially in the second half of the period when we saw heightened turbulence in the equity markets.

---

### The European Strategy Saw a Rise in Allocation to Materials and Defensive Sectors During European Debt Crisis

Last year, the strategy underperformed its benchmark marginally on an absolute basis but saw outperformance on a risk-adjusted basis. Whereas the performance of the strategy trailed that of the benchmark at the beginning, it rebounded strongly in the second half of the year to produce an overall positive excess return for the year. However, there was strong resemblance between the allocations in the first half and the second half of the year as the strategy banked on the consumer staples, IT and health care sectors, with each sector receiving an allocation of around 15%. The cash allocation was also modest. In terms of sector bets, the strategy was overweight in health care, utilities and consumer staples by about 5–6%, and these sectors delivered only a modest outperformance versus the benchmark.

Next we look at how the sector strategy behaved during the European debt crisis that occurred between May 2010 and September 2011. Six months prior to the start of the crisis, the strategy favoured cyclical sectors over defensive sectors and allocated three times more weight to the former. This is particularly true of the industrials and consumer discretionary sectors, which had an average weight of 18% and 10%, respectively, during the first half of the analysis period.

As the debt crisis unfolded, the strategy predictably retrenched into more defensive sectors, with a rise in the allocation to consumer staples and health care. However, during this period, the more significant bet that the strategy made was in the materials sector, whose constituent companies are not usually known for their anticyclical properties.

Over the whole crisis period, the strategy tilted towards materials and communication services by 8% and 5%, respectively, and this can mainly be attributed to the strong price momentum and fundamentals in these two sectors. The overweight in materials proved to be unsuccessful as the performance of the sector was poor and ranked as one of the worst among its peers. On the other hand, the overweight in communication services provided a boost as the sector returned over 14% more than the benchmark.

Figure 9  
**Risk-Return Characteristics of European Sector Selection Research Model Over the Entire Period**

	<b>Sector Selection Research Model (without costs)*</b>	<b>Sector Selection Research Model (with costs)*</b>	<b>MSCI Europe Net Total Return</b>
Annual Return (%)	5.59	4.59	2.92
Annual Volatility (%)	13.25	13.25	15.86
Return per unit Volatility	0.42	0.35	0.18
Maximum Drawdown (%)	-43.29	-44.71	-53.72

Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., State Street Global Advisors, data from February 1999 to March 2020. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Index returns are unmanaged and do not reflect the deduction of any fees or expenses. This information should not be considered a recommendation to invest in a particular sector or to buy or sell any security shown. It is not known whether the sectors or securities shown will be profitable in the future. The results shown represent current results generated by our Sector Selection Research Model. The results do not reflect actual trading and do not reflect the impact that material economic and market factors may have had on SSGA's decision-making. The results shown were achieved by means of a mathematical formula, and are not indicative of actual performance which could differ substantially. The performance reflects management fees, transaction costs, and other fees expenses a client would have to pay.

\*Transaction costs, which include taxes, commissions and trading costs, are assumed to be 8bps per month and are included in the calculations above.

**World Sector Selection**

Similar to both the US and Europe, the World Sector Selection Research Model outperformed the MSCI World benchmark on both an absolute and relative basis (see Figure 10). This can partly be attributed to the monthly rebalancing mechanism, which has allowed it to react to prevailing market conditions. As a result, the strategy incurred an average portfolio turnover of about 185% p.a., which is a typical feature of highly tactical allocation strategies.

When viewed over the whole period, sector allocations were anodyne as they were largely evenly spread, and no single sector stood out among the rest. During this period, the sectors with the largest allocations were the industrials, consumer discretionary and IT sectors, which had around a 10% weight apiece. However, once the entire period is parsed into two 10-year periods, the differences in the selections that the strategy made become more obvious.

In fact, during the first half of the time period, which was marked by several major crises, the strategy held roughly 3.5 times more cash than it did in the second half, although allocation in cash was low in both periods. In the second half of the period, which covered mainly the bull market over the last decade, allocations were most notable in cyclical sectors (namely the IT and consumer discretionary sectors) as well as in the health care sector, which is somewhat unexpected.

Figure 10  
**Risk-Return Characteristics of World Sector Selection Research Model Over the Entire Period**

	<b>Sector Selection Research Model (without costs)*</b>	<b>Sector Selection Research Model (with costs)*</b>	<b>MSCI World Net Total Return</b>
Annual Return (%)	6.69	6.25	4.58
Annual Volatility (%)	12.25	12.25	15.21
Return per unit Volatility	0.55	0.51	0.30
Maximum Drawdown (%)	-36.79	-37.14	-54.03

Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., State Street Global Advisors, data from March 2001 to March 2020. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Index returns are unmanaged and do not reflect the deduction of any fees or expenses. This information should not be considered a recommendation to invest in a particular sector or to buy or sell any security shown. It is not known whether the sectors or securities shown will be profitable in the future. The results shown represent current results generated by our Sector Selection Research Model. The results do not reflect actual trading and do not reflect the impact that material economic and market factors may have had on SSGA's decision-making. The results shown were achieved by means of a mathematical formula, and are not indicative of actual performance which could differ substantially. The performance reflects management fees, transaction costs, and other fees expenses a client would have to pay.

\*Transaction costs, which include taxes, commissions and trading costs, are assumed to be 4bps per month and are included in the calculations above.

---

As for last year, the strategy trailed the MSCI World Index on both an absolute and relative basis. The strategy mainly tilted towards the communication services, utilities and consumer discretionary sectors. The IT sector, which returned 47.6% over the year and far exceeded all its other peers, only received a meagre overweight in the strategy. Additionally, the significant bets placed on utilities and consumer discretionary did not pay off. These two factors contributed to the lacklustre performance of the strategy during the period.

---

---

The World Strategy did not Make any Significant Bets Immediately After GFC

Finally, we review the performance of the sector strategy against the benchmark during the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). Over the period, the strategy outperformed the benchmark. Before the crisis started, the strategy allocated mainly to cyclical sectors, especially the energy sector (15%), which coincided with the period when oil prices reached new highs. Interestingly, the strategy did not select the financials sector from May 2007 until March 2009.

As the financial crisis deepened, the strategy also assigned an increasingly high weight to defensive sectors, such as consumer staples, utilities and health care. Cash allocations also rose substantially and averaged 30% during this period. Immediately following the crisis, the Federal Reserve announced quantitative easing and the market regained confidence. The equity markets rallied but the strategy did not make any significant bets during the period.

In all, the strategy was overweight in real estate and utilities by 13% and 6%, respectively, and was underweight in financials by 16%. The underweight in financials, as well as the overweight in utilities, added to performance during the crisis.

---

## Conclusion

In summary, the results show that the sector rotation strategy beat its respective benchmarks across all regions over the entire period, and with diminished volatility. The tactical nature of the allocation model means that the portfolio turnover, which is a major driver of transaction costs, was remarkably high (~200%).

Even so, the outperformance of the simulated sector rotation strategies remained robust after including estimated transaction costs. This suggests there may be merit in combining multiple criteria to construct a sector rotation strategy.

---

## Endnotes

- 1 *Paying attention to your sector selection pays*, State Street Global Markets, April 2020.
- 2 Moskowitz T. and Grinblatt M., "Do Industries Explain Momentum?" *Journal of Finance*, 1999.
- 3 Kouzmenko R. and Nagy Z., "Sector Performance Across Business Cycles," MSCI, 2009.
- 4 Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., State Street Global Advisors, as of 31 March 2020.
- 5 Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., State Street Global Advisors, as of 31 March 2020.
- 6 *The Cost of the Iraq War*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2006. <https://cfr.org/backgrounder/cost-iraq-war>.
- 7 Between March 2000 and October 2002.

# SPDR — The Powerhouse of Sectors

## Experienced Management

A leader in sector ETFs with over \$120bn globally.<sup>1</sup> Track record of managing sector ETFs since 1998

## Physical Replication

One of the only providers with a full suite of physically replicated World, US and Europe sector ETFs in Europe

## Cost-Efficient®

World and Europe UCITS Sector ETFs: **0.30%**  
US UCITS Sector ETFs: **0.15%**

SPDR ETF Information	ISIN	TER (%)	Euro-next	LSE	Xetra	Borsa Italiana	SIX	Mexico BMV	March Net SPDR Flows (\$MN)	Q1 Net SPDR Flows (\$MN)	SPDR AUM (\$MN)
<b>World Sector Funds</b>											
SPDR MSCI World Communication Services UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRRG40	0.30	WTEL	WTEL	–	–	WTEL	WTELN	-42	-39	17
SPDR MSCI World Consumer Discretionary UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRR640	0.30	WCOD	WCOD	–	–	WCOD	CDISN	0	-5	16
SPDR MSCI World Consumer Staples UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRR756	0.30	WCOS	WCOS	–	–	WCOS	–	2	2	38
SPDR MSCI World Energy UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRR863	0.30	WNRG	WNRG	–	–	WNRG	WNRGN	24	14	163
SPDR MSCI World Financials UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRR970	0.30	WFIN	WFIN	–	–	WFIN	WFINN	-2	-8	80
SPDR MSCI World Health Care UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRRB94	0.30	WHEA	WHEA	–	–	WHEA	–	-103	-105	192
SPDR MSCI World Industrials UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRRC02	0.30	WIND	WIND	–	–	WIND	–	-8	-8	26
SPDR MSCI World Materials UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRRF33	0.30	WMAT	WMAT	–	–	WMAT	WMATN	0	0	12
SPDR Dow Jones Global Real Estate UCITS ETF	IE00B8GF1M35	0.40	–	GLRE	SPYJ	GLRE	GBRE	–	79	158	787
SPDR MSCI World Technology UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRRD19	0.30	WTCH	WTEC	–	–	WTEC	WTECN	24	48	206
SPDR MSCI World Utilities UCITS ETF	IE00BYTRRH56	0.30	WUTI	WUTI	–	–	WUTI	–	0	-6	12
<b>US Sector Funds</b>											
SPDR S&P U.S. Communication Services Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BFWFPX50	0.15	–	SXLC	ZPKD	SXLC	SXLC	SXLCN	-4	-15	163
SPDR S&P U.S. Consumer Discretionary Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BWBXM278	0.15	–	SXLY	ZPDD	SXLY	SXLY	SXLYN	-36	-38	56
SPDR S&P U.S. Consumer Staples Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BWBXM385	0.15	–	SXLP	ZPDS	SXLP	SXLP	SXLPN	47	83	222
SPDR S&P U.S. Energy Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BWBXM492	0.15	–	SXLE	ZPDE	SXLE	SXLE	SXLEN	-62	25	58
SPDR S&P U.S. Financials Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BWBXM500	0.15	–	SXLF	ZPDF	SXLF	SXLF	SXLFN	-312	-310	124
SPDR S&P U.S. Health Care Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BWBXM617	0.15	–	SXLV	ZPDH	SXLV	SXLV	SXLVN	-12	15	160
SPDR S&P U.S. Industrials Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BWBXM724	0.15	–	SXLI	ZPDI	SXLI	SXLI	SXLIN	-7	-2	51
SPDR S&P U.S. Materials Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BWBXM831	0.15	–	SXLB	ZPDM	SXLB	SXLB	SXLBN	-6	-2	7
SPDR S&P U.S. Technology Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BWBXM948	0.15	–	SXLK	ZPDT	SXLK	SXLK	SXLKN	2	28	225
SPDR S&P U.S. Utilities Select Sector UCITS ETF	IE00BWBXMB69	0.15	–	SXLU	ZPDU	SXLU	SXLU	SXLUN	0	9	31
<b>Europe Sector Funds</b>											
SPDR MSCI Europe Communication Services UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00N82	0.30	STT	TELE	SPYT	STTX	STTX	TELEN	1	6	11
SPDR MSCI Europe Consumer Discretionary UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00C77	0.30	STR	CDIS	SPYR	STRX	STRX	–	-87	-113	23
SPDR MSCI Europe Consumer Staples UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00D84	0.30	STS	CSTP	SPYC	STXS	STXS	CSTPN	94	117	561
SPDR MSCI Europe Energy UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00F09	0.30	STN	ENGY	SPYN	STNX	STNX	ENGYN	3	-238	81
SPDR MSCI Europe Financials UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00G16	0.30	STZ	FNCL	SPYZ	STZX	STZX	FNCLN	74	138	600
SPDR MSCI Europe Health Care UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00H23	0.30	STW	HLTH	SPYH	STWX	STWX	HLTHN	-16	-21	328
SPDR MSCI Europe Industrials UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00J47	0.30	STO	NDUS	SPYQ	STQX	STQX	NDUSN	-16	-19	213
SPDR MSCI Europe Materials UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00L68	0.30	STP	MTRL	SPYP	STPX	STPX	MTRLN	1	4	16
SPDR FTSE EPRA Europe ex UK Real Estate UCITS ETF	IE00BSJCQV56	0.30	0.00	EURE	ZPRP	EURE	EURE	–	-4	4	66
SPDR MSCI Europe Technology UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00K51	0.30	STK	ITEC	SPYK	STKX	STKX	ITECN	3	6	29
SPDR MSCI Europe Utilities UCITS ETF	IE00BKW00P07	0.30	STU	UTIL	SPYU	STUX	STUX	UTILN	-2	51	68

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Bloomberg Finance L.P., State Street Global Advisors, as of 31 March 2020.

\* Frequent trading of ETFs could significantly increase commissions and other costs such that they may offset any savings from low fees or costs.

## About State Street Global Advisors

Our clients are the world's governments, institutions and financial advisors. To help them achieve their financial goals we live our guiding principles each and every day:

- Start with rigor
- Build from breadth
- Invest as stewards
- Invent the future

For four decades, these principles have helped us be the quiet power in a tumultuous investing world. Helping millions of people secure their financial futures. This takes each of our employees in 27 offices around the world, and a firm-wide conviction that we can always do it better. As a result, we are the world's third-largest asset manager with US \$2.69 trillion\* under our care.

\* AUM reflects approximately \$50.01 billion USD (as of March 31, 2020), with respect to which State Street Global Advisors Funds Distributors, LLC (SSGA FD) serves as marketing agent; SSGA FD and State Street Global Advisors are affiliated.

### ssga.com/etfs

#### Marketing communication. For professional clients only.

**For Investors in Austria:** The offering of SPDR ETFs by the Company has been notified to the Financial Markets Authority (FMA) in accordance with section 139 of the Austrian Investment Funds Act. Prospective investors may obtain the current sales Prospectus, the articles of incorporation, the KIID as well as the latest annual and semi-annual report free of charge from State Street Global Advisors GmbH, Brienner Strasse 59, D-80333 Munich. T: +49 (0)89-55878-400. F: +49 (0)89-55878-440.

**For Investors in Finland:** The offering of funds by the Companies has been notified to the Financial Supervision Authority in accordance with Section 127 of the Act on Common Funds (29.1.1999/48) and by virtue of confirmation from the Financial Supervision Authority the Companies may publicly distribute its Shares in Finland. Certain information and documents that the Companies must publish in Ireland pursuant to applicable Irish law are translated into Finnish and are available for Finnish investors by contacting State Street Custodial Services (Ireland) Limited, 78 Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2, Ireland.

**For Investors in France:** This document does not constitute an offer or request to purchase shares in the Companies. Any subscription for shares shall be made in accordance with the terms and conditions specified in the complete Prospectuses, the KIID, the addenda as well as the Companies' Supplements. These documents are available from the Company centralising correspondent: State Street Banque S.A., 23-25 rue Delarivière-Lefoullon, 92064 Paris La Defense Cedex or on the French part of the site spdrs.com. The Companies are undertaking for collective investment in transferable securities (UCITS) governed by Irish law and accredited by the Central Bank of Ireland as a UCITS in accordance with European Regulations. European Directive no. 2014/91/EU

dated 23 July 2014 on UCITS, as amended, established common rules pursuant to the cross-border marketing of UCITS with which they duly comply. This common base does not exclude differentiated implementation. This is why a European UCITS can be sold in France even though its activity does not comply with rules identical to those governing the approval of this type of product in France. The offering of these compartments has been notified to the Autorité des Marchés Financiers (AMF) in accordance with article L214-2-2 of the French Monetary and Financial Code.

**Hong Kong:** State Street Global Advisors Asia Limited, 68/F, Two International Finance Centre, 8 Finance Street, Central, Hong Kong. T: +852 2103-0288. F: +852 2103-0200. The Funds mentioned are not registered in Hong Kong and may not be sold, issued or offered in Hong Kong in circumstances which amount to an offer to the public. This document is issued for informational purposes only. It has not been reviewed or approved by the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission. SSGA accepts no liability whatsoever for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from or in connection with any use of, or reliance on, this document which does not have any regard to the particular needs of any person. SSGA takes no responsibility whatsoever for any use, reliance or reference by persons other than the intended recipient of this document.

**For Investors in Germany:** The offering of SPDR ETFs by the Companies has been notified to the Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht (BaFin) in accordance with section 312 of the German Investment Act. Prospective investors may obtain the current sales Prospectuses, the articles of incorporation, the KIIDs as well as the latest annual and semiannual report free of charge from State Street Global Advisors GmbH, Brienner Strasse 59, D-80333 Munich. T: +49 (0)89-55878-400.

**Ireland Entity:** State Street Global Advisors Ireland Limited is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Registered office address 78 Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2. Registered

number 145221. T: +353 (0)1 776 3000. F: +353 (0)1 776 3300.

**Israel:** No action has been taken or will be taken in Israel that would permit a public offering of the Securities or distribution of this sales brochure to the public in Israel. This sales brochure has not been approved by the Israel Securities Authority (the 'ISA'). Accordingly, the Securities shall only be sold in Israel to an investor of the type listed in the First Schedule to the Israeli Securities Law, 1978, which has confirmed in writing that it falls within one of the categories listed therein (accompanied by external confirmation where this is required under ISA guidelines), that it is aware of the implications of being considered such an investor and consents thereto, and further that the Securities are being purchased for its own account and not for the purpose of re-sale or distribution. This sales brochure may not be reproduced or used for any other purpose, nor be furnished to any other person other than those to whom copies have been sent.

Nothing in this sales brochure should be considered investment advice or investment marketing as defined in the Regulation of Investment Advice, Investment Marketing and Portfolio Management Law, 1995 ("the Investment Advice Law"). Investors are encouraged to seek competent investment advice from a locally licensed investment advisor prior to making any investment. State Street is not licensed under the Investment Advice Law, nor does it carry the insurance as required of a licensee thereunder.

This sales brochure does not constitute an offer to sell or solicitation of an offer to buy any securities other than the Securities offered hereby, nor does it constitute an offer to sell to or solicitation of an offer to buy from any person or persons in any state or other jurisdiction in which such offer or solicitation would be unlawful, or in which the person making such offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so, or to a person or persons to whom it is unlawful to make such offer or solicitation.

**Italy Entity:** State Street Global Advisors Ireland Limited, Milan Branch (Sede Secondaria di Milano) is a branch of State Street Global Advisors Ireland Limited, registered in Ireland with company number 145221, authorised and regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland, and whose registered office is at 78 Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2. State Street Global Advisors Ireland Limited, Milan Branch (Sede Secondaria di Milano), is registered in Italy with company number 10495250960 - R.E.A. 2535585 and VAT number 10495250960 and whose office is at Via dei Bossi, 4 - 20121 Milano, Italy. T: +39 02 32066 100. F: +39 02 32066 155. ssga.com.

**For Investors in Luxembourg:** The Companies have been notified to the Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier in Luxembourg in order to market their shares for sale to the public in Luxembourg and the Companies are notified Undertakings in Collective Investment for Transferable Securities (UCITS).

**For Investors in the Netherlands:** This communication is directed at qualified investors within the meaning of Section 2:72 of the Dutch Financial Markets Supervision Act (Wet op het financieel toezicht) as amended. The products and services to which this communication relates are only available to such persons and persons of any other description should not rely on this communication. Distribution of this document does not trigger a licence requirement for the Companies or SSGA in the Netherlands and consequently no prudential and conduct of business supervision will be exercised over the Companies or SSGA by the Dutch Central Bank (De Nederlandsche Bank N.V.) and the Dutch Authority for the Financial Markets (Stichting Autoriteit Financiële Markten). The Companies have completed their notification to the Authority Financial Markets in the Netherlands in order to market their shares for sale to the public in the Netherlands and the Companies are, accordingly, investment institutions (beleggingsinstellingen) according to Section 2:72 Dutch Financial Markets Supervision Act of Investment Institutions.

**For Investors in Norway:** The offering of SPDR ETFs by the Companies has been notified to the Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway (Finanstilsynet) in accordance with applicable Norwegian Securities Funds legislation. By virtue of a confirmation letter from the Financial Supervisory Authority dated 28 March 2013 (16 October 2013 for umbrella II) the Companies may market and sell their shares in Norway.

**For use in Singapore:** The offer or invitation of the Funds mentioned, which is the subject of this document, does not relate to a collective investment scheme which is authorised under section 286 of the Securities and Futures Act, Chapter 289 of Singapore (SFA) or recognised under section 287 of the SFA. The Funds mentioned are not authorised or recognised by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and the Funds mentioned are not allowed to be offered to the retail public. Each of this document and any other document or material issued in connection with the offer or sale is not a prospectus as defined in the SFA.

Accordingly, statutory liability under the SFA in relation to the content of prospectuses would not apply. A potential investor should consider carefully whether the investment is suitable for it.

The MAS assumes no responsibility for the contents of this document. This document has not been registered as a prospectus with the MAS. Accordingly, this document and any other document or material in connection with the offer or sale, or invitation for subscription or purchase, of the Funds mentioned may not be circulated or distributed, offered or sold, or be made the subject of an invitation for subscription or purchase, whether directly or indirectly, to persons in Singapore other than to an institutional investor under Section 304 of the SFA or otherwise pursuant to, and in accordance with the conditions of, any other applicable provision of the SFA. Any subsequent sale of [Units] acquired pursuant to an offer made in reliance on an exemption under section 305 of the SFA may only be made pursuant to the requirements of sections 304A.

**For Investors in Spain:** State Street Global Advisors SPDR ETFs Europe I and II plc have been authorised for public distribution in Spain and are registered with the Spanish Securities Market Commission (Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores) under no.1244 and no.1242. Before investing, investors may obtain a copy of the Prospectus and Key Investor Information Documents, the Marketing Memoranda, the fund rules or instruments of incorporation as well as the annual and semi-annual reports of State Street Global Advisors SPDR ETFs Europe I and II plc from Cecabank, S.A. Alcalá 27, 28014 Madrid (Spain) who is the Spanish Representative, Paying Agent and distributor in Spain or at [spdrs.com](http://spdrs.com). The authorised Spanish distributor of State Street Global Advisors SPDR

ETFs is available on the website of the Securities Market Commission (Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores).

**For Investors in Switzerland:** The collective investment schemes referred to herein are collective investment schemes under Irish law. Prospective investors may obtain the current sales prospectus, the articles of incorporation, the KIID as well as the latest annual and semiannual reports free of charge from the Swiss Representative and Paying Agent, State Street Bank International GmbH, Munich, Zurich Branch, Beethovenstrasse 19, 8027 Zurich as well as from the main distributor in Switzerland, State Street Global Advisors AG, Beethovenstrasse 19, 8027 Zurich. Before investing please read the prospectus and the KIID, copies of which can be obtained from the Swiss representative, or at [spdrs.com](http://spdrs.com).

**For Investors in the UK:** The Companies are recognised schemes under Section 264 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 ("the Act") and are directed at 'professional clients' in the UK (within the meaning of the rules of the Act) who are deemed both knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to investments. The products and services to which this communication relates are only available to such persons and persons of any other description should not rely on this communication. Many of the protections provided by the UK regulatory system do not apply to the operation of the Companies, and compensation will not be available under the UK Financial Services Compensation Scheme. **Investing involves risk including the risk of loss of principal.**

The whole or any part of this work may not be reproduced, copied or transmitted or any of its contents disclosed to third parties without SSGA's express written consent. The trademarks and service marks referenced herein are the property of their respective owners. Third party data providers make no warranties or representations of any kind relating to the accuracy, completeness or timeliness of the data and have no liability for damages of any kind relating to the use of such data.

This document has been issued by State Street Global Advisors Ireland ("SSGA"), regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Registered office address 78 Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2. Registered number 145221. T: +353 (0)1 776 3000. Fax: +353 (0)1 776 3300. [ssga.com](http://ssga.com). SPDR ETFs is the exchange traded funds ("ETF") platform of State Street Global Advisors and is comprised of funds that have been authorised by Central Bank of Ireland as open-ended UCITS investment companies. State Street Global Advisors SPDR ETFs Europe I & SPDR ETFs Europe II plc issue SPDR ETFs, and is an open-ended investment company with variable capital having segregated liability between its sub-funds. The Company is

organised as an Undertaking for Collective Investments in Transferable Securities (UCITS) under the laws of Ireland and authorised as a UCITS by the Central Bank of Ireland.

**The information provided does not constitute investment advice as such term is defined under the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (2014/65/EU) or applicable Swiss regulation and it should not be relied on as such. It should not be considered a solicitation to buy or an offer to sell any investment. It does not take into account any investor's or potential investor's particular investment objectives, strategies, tax status, risk appetite or investment horizon. If you require investment advice you should consult your tax and financial or other professional advisor. All information is from SSGA unless otherwise noted and has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, but its accuracy is not guaranteed. There is no representation or warranty as to the current accuracy, reliability or completeness of, nor liability for, decisions based on such information and it should not be relied on as such.**

All the index performance results referred to are provided exclusively for comparison purposes only. It should not be assumed that they represent the performance of any particular investment.

ETFs trade like stocks, are subject to investment risk and will fluctuate in market value. The investment return and principal value of an investment will fluctuate in value, so that when shares are sold or redeemed, they may be worth more or less than when they were purchased. Although shares may be bought or sold on an exchange through any brokerage account, shares are not individually redeemable from the fund. Investors may acquire shares and tender them for redemption through the fund in large aggregations known as "creation units." Please see the fund's prospectus for more details.

Concentrated investments in a particular sector or industry tend to be more volatile than the overall market and increases risk that events negatively affecting such sectors or industries could reduce returns, potentially causing the value of the Fund's shares to decrease. Select Sector SPDR Funds bear a higher level of risk than more broadly diversified funds. All ETFs are subject to risk, including the possible loss of principal. Sector ETFs products are also subject to sector risk and nondiversification risk, which generally results in greater price fluctuations than the overall market. Equity securities may fluctuate in value in response to the activities of individual companies and general market and economic conditions.

Investing in foreign domiciled securities may involve risk of capital loss from unfavourable

fluctuation in currency values, withholding taxes, from differences in generally accepted accounting principles or from economic or political instability in other nations.

The views expressed in this material are the views of the SPDR Model Portfolio Solutions Team through the period ended 14 May 2020 and are subject to change based on market and other conditions. This document contains certain statements that may be deemed forward-looking statements. Please note that any such statements are not guarantees of any future performance and actual results or developments may differ materially from those projected.

This information should not be considered a recommendation to invest in a particular sector or to buy or sell any security shown. It is not known whether the sectors or securities shown will be profitable in the future.

Standard & Poor's, S&P and SPDR are registered trademarks of Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC (S&P); Dow Jones is a registered trademark of Dow Jones Trademark Holdings LLC (Dow Jones); and these trademarks have been licensed for use by S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC (SPDJI) and sublicensed for certain purposes by State Street Corporation. State Street Corporation's financial products are not sponsored, endorsed, sold or promoted by SPDJI, Dow Jones, S&P, their respective affiliates and third party licensors and none of such parties make any representation regarding the advisability of investing in such product(s) nor do they have any liability in relation thereto, including for any errors, omissions, or interruptions of any index.

**The information contained in this communication is not a research recommendation or 'investment research' and is classified as a 'Marketing Communication' in accordance with the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (2014/65/EU) or applicable Swiss regulation. This means that this marketing communication (a) has not been prepared in accordance with legal requirements designed to promote the independence of investment research (b) is not subject to any prohibition on dealing ahead of the dissemination of investment research. You should obtain and read the SPDR prospectus and relevant Key Investor Information Document (KIID) prior to investing, which may be obtained from [spdrs.com](http://spdrs.com). These include further details relating to the SPDR funds, including information relating to costs, risks and where the funds are authorised for sale.**

© 2020 State Street Corporation.  
All Rights Reserved.  
ID211377-3088604.1.GBLINST 0520  
Exp. Date: 31/05/2021