

# **Ecofin** Global Water ESG Fund (EBLU)



Ecofin Global Water ESG Fund (EBLU) received a Five Star Overall Morningstar Rating™ among 104 Natural Resources funds (based on a weighted average of the fund's three-, five-and ten-year risk-adjusted return measure, if applicable) as of 3/31/2021.

## 10 2021 QUARTERLY COMMENTARY

Represents the aggregate ranking of the Fund's holdings as of 3/31/2021. Certain information ©2021 MSCI ESG Research LLC. Reproduced by ESG RATINGS permission; no further distribution.



The Ecofin Global Water ESG Fund uses a passive management approach and seeks to track the total return performance of the Ecofin Global Water ESG Index®.

The firm provides research-driven indices that can be used as a realistic basis for exchange-traded products and thought leadership in the universe of essential assets. Indices are intended to fill a void in the market and provide benchmarks and investable asset class universes for use by investment professionals, research analysts and industry executives to analyze relative performance as well as to provide a basis for passively managed exchange-traded products.

#### About the Ecofin brand

Ecofin unites ecology and finance and has roots back to the early 1990s. Our mission is to generate strong risk-adjusted returns and measurable impacts. We invest in essential assets and services that contribute to more sustainable human ecosystems and communities. We are socially-minded, ESG-attentive investors, successfully harnessing years of expertise investing in social impact, sustainable infrastructure, energy transition and clean water & environment. Our strategies are accessible through a variety of investment solutions and seek to achieve positive impacts that align with UN Sustainable Development Goals by addressing pressing global issues surrounding climate action, clean energy and water, education, healthcare and sustainable communities.

The Ecofin Global Water ESG Fund (EBLU) offers the purest exposure to the otherwise fragmented water industry. We believe that water is perhaps one of the most essential assets and is an area that requires continued investment in the years to come. This fund provides access to the water infrastructure, as well as equipment and service companies operating across all aspect of the water value chain, that appear poised to benefit from the expected and much needed investment in rebuilding existing infrastructure, constructing new infrastructure and better managing this vital, but finite resource.

### Water update

The water sector, as measured by the Ecofin Global Water ESG Index®, returned 5.44% for the quarter. The Ecofin Global Water ESG Fund seeks to track this index. The strong momentum following the U.S. Presidential election for the engineering and construction (E&C) sub-sector continued early in 2021 as they continued to be beneficiaries of the democratic agenda around green infrastructure, which was highlighted in President Biden's \$2.3 trillion American Jobs Plan announced in late March. In President Biden's proposal, investment in infrastructure was front and center with nearly \$1 trillion earmarked for water infrastructure, clean energy and transportation infrastructure. Specific to water, President Biden outlined \$111 billion in total investment to "rebuild clean drinking water infrastructure" with \$45 billion earmarked to replace 100% of lead pipes, \$56 billion to modernize water, wastewater and stormwater systems, as well as \$10 billion for polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) remediation. Several companies in the portfolio stand to benefit from the increased spend proposed by President Biden, in addition to the secular capital investment underway in the sector.

Positive momentum continued in the agriculture sub-sector with strong fundamentals persisting in early 2021. U.S. corn and soybean prices have reached multi-year highs as a result of lower production levels in 2020 coupled with higher demand coming primarily from increased exports to China. We expect the strong tailwinds to increase the demand for irrigation equipment the remainder of this year benefitting those companies in the portfolio with exposure to the sector.

In the broader equipment and services sector, we continued to see positive trends in number of end markets including industrial and residential housing in North America. Industrial activity continued to exhibit a strengthening recovery with Purchasing Managers Indices (PMIs) in the U.S. reaching the highest reading in nearly 40 years in March. Additionally, U.S. housing inventory remains near all-time lows supporting home prices and construction activity.

Lastly, performance for utilities were restrained during the quarter. The quick rise in U.S. interest rates and steepening yield curve weighed on the sector in 1Q. U.S. 10-year rates

increased 17% in January, 32% in February and another 24% in March putting downward pressure on North American investor owned utilities in the portfolio. However, we did see positive momentum for Suez and Veolia in the quarter as a resolution on the pending merger became more evident.

#### Market outlook

We continue to hold a favorable outlook for the water sector driven by both long-term secular tailwinds as well as near-term catalysts. Those near-term catalysts, discussed at length above, include finalization of the infrastructure package by President Biden, accelerating adoption of technology by end users of water, as well as increased scrutiny of water usage and growing efficiency measures by corporations. We expect investment on water and wastewater infrastructure and technology to remain healthy over the medium-term in both emerging and developed markets.

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Increased investment in the sector is expected to drive cash flow and earnings growth for many companies involved in water infrastructure development and water technology development and deployment. We expect our portfolio to grow earnings in the low-double digits over the next two years, with visibility to above market growth for years to come. In our view, finding water companies with growing or accelerating earnings growth will drive sector equity returns in the near-term as we do not anticipate multiple expansion at this time.

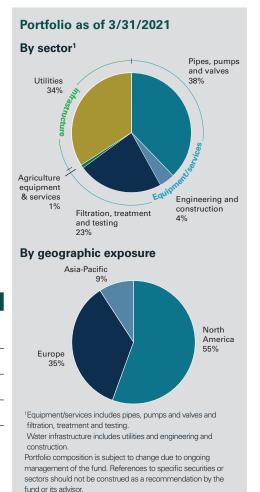
Lastly, we remain cautious around the near-term technical headwinds facing utilities in the portfolio. With growing COVID-19 vaccine penetration broadly across the world in the coming months we expect global economic activity and growth to accelerate. Strong global growth and inflationary pressures are expected to result in higher interest rates throughout the year pressuring regulated utilities relative to other investments in the portfolio. With that said, we do believe these headwinds are largely priced into current valuations and continue to hold several investor owned utilities due to favorable longer-term fundamentals.

## Key quarterly performance drivers

- All water sectors had positive performance and contribution to portfolio
- The pipes, pumps & valves sub-sector added the most to performance
- The fund's large allocation to water utilities also added to performance
- Agriculture equipment & services companies added to positive performance, but not as much as other segments.

| Top five contributors                              | Company type                  |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Geberit Group                                      | Filtration, treatment, & test |  |  |
| Ferguson Plc                                       | Pipes, pumps, & valves        |  |  |
| Veolia Environnement Sa                            | Water utility                 |  |  |
| Suez Environnement SA                              | Water utility                 |  |  |
| United Utilities Group PLC                         | Water utility                 |  |  |
| Bottom five contributors                           | Company type                  |  |  |
| Cia de Saneamento Basico do Estado<br>de Sao Paulo | Water utility                 |  |  |
| Essential Utilities Inc                            | Water utility                 |  |  |

| Bottom five contributors                           | Company type           |
|--|------------------------|
| Cia de Saneamento Basico do Estado<br>de Sao Paulo | Water utility          |
| Essential Utilities Inc                            | Water utility          |
| Miura Co Ltd                                       | Pipes, pumps, & valves |
| SJW Corp   | Water utility          |
| American Water Works Company, Inc.                 | Water utility          |



| Top 10 holdings (as of 3/31/2021)  |      |                             |      |  |  |
|------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|--|--|
| American Water Works Company, Inc. | 8.1% | 6. IDEX Corporation         | 4.9% |  |  |
| 2. Geberit AG                      | 7.3% | 7. Pentair plc              | 4.1% |  |  |
| 3. Ecolab Inc.                     | 7.3% | 8. Essential Utilities Inc. | 3.9% |  |  |
| 4. Ferguson plc                    | 7.2% | 9. Veolia Environnement     | 3.7% |  |  |
| 5. Xylem Inc.                      | 5.9% | 10. A. O. Smith Corporation | 3.6% |  |  |

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## **Performance (as of 3/31/2021)**

|                   | 1Q 2021 | 1 year | 3 year | Since inception* |
|-------------------|---------|--------|--------|------------------|
| EBLU market price | 4.37%   | 53.96% | 14.52% | 14.82%           |
| EBLU NAV          | 5.29%   | 52.78% | 14.39% | 14.73%           |
| Underlying index  | 5.44%   | 53.70% | 14.84% | 15.20%           |

<sup>\*</sup>The fund commenced operations on 2/14/2017.

Effective 6/15/2018, the fund's investment objective changed to track the net total return performance of the Ecofin Global Water ESG Index®. Prior to 6/15/2018, the fund's investment objective was to track the total return performance of the Tortoise Water Index®. Underlying index performance is blended using the Tortoise Water Index® from inception to 6/15/2018, the Ecofin Global Water ESG Index® after 6/15/2018.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance data quoted. Investment return and principal value will fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than original cost. Returns less than one year are not annualized. NAV prices are used to calculate market price performance prior to the date when the fund first traded. Market performance is determined using the bid/ask midpoint at 4:00pm Eastern time, when the NAV is typically calculated. Market performance does not represent the returns you would receive if you traded shares at other times. For the fund's most recent month end performance, please call (844) TR-INDEX or (844) 874-6339.

As stated in the Prospectus, the total annual operating expenses are 0.40%. The advisor has agreed to pay all expenses incurred by the fund except for the advisory fee, interest, taxes, brokerage expenses and other fees, charges, taxes, levies or expenses (such as stamp taxes) incurred in connection with the execution of portfolio transactions or in connection with creation and redemption transactions.

Index returns are for illustrative purposes only. Unlike the fund return, index return is pre-expenses and taxes. Index performance returns do not reflect any management fees, transaction costs or expenses.

#### **Disclosures**

TIS Advisors is the adviser to the Ecofin Global Water ESG Fund and is a registered investment adviser providing research-driven indices that can be used as a realistic basis for exchange-traded products and thought leadership in the universe of essential assets. Its indices are intended to fill a void in the market and provide benchmarks and investable asset class universes for use by investment professionals, research analysts and industry executives to analyze relative performance as well as to provide a basis for passively managed exchange-traded products. Vident Investment Advisory, LLC serves as sub-adviser to the Fund.

Impact investing and/or Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) managers may take into consideration factors beyond traditional financial information to select securities, which could result in relative investment performance deviating from other strategies or broad market benchmarks, depending on whether such sectors or investments are in or out of favor in the market. Further, ESG strategies may rely on certain values-based criteria to eliminate exposures found in similar strategies or broad market benchmarks, which could also result in relative investment performance deviating.

Cash flow: the net amount of cash and cash-equivalents being transferred into and out of a business.

PMI: The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an index of the prevailing direction of economic trends in the manufacturing and service sectors. It consists of a diffusion index that summarizes whether market conditions, as viewed by purchasing managers, are expanding, staying the same, or contracting. The purpose of the PMI is to provide information about current and future business conditions to company decision makers, analysts, and investors.

The fund's investment objective, risks, charges and expenses must be considered carefully before investing. The summary and statutory prospectus contains this and other important information about the fund and may be obtained by calling 844-TR-INDEX (844-874-6339) or visiting www.ecofininvest.com. Read it carefully before investing.

Shares of exchange-traded funds (ETFs) are not individually redeemable and owners of the shares may acquire those shares from the ETF and tender those shares for redemption to the ETF in Creation Units only, see the ETF prospectus for additional information regarding Creation Units. Investors may purchase or sell ETF shares throughout the day through any brokerage account, which will result in typical brokerage commissions.

Investing involves risk. Principal loss is possible. Investment in the water infrastructure and management industry may significantly affect the value of the shares of the fund. Companies in the water industry are subject to environmental considerations, taxes, government regulation, price and supply fluctuations, competition and water conservation influences. Investments in non-U.S. companies (including Canadian issuers) involve risk not ordinarily associated with investments in securities and instruments of U.S. issuers, including risks related to political, social and economic developments abroad, differences between U.S. and foreign regulatory and accounting requirements, tax risk and market practices, as well as fluctuations in foreign currencies. The fund invests in small and mid-cap companies, which involve additional risks such as limited liquidity and greater volatility than larger companies. The fund is not actively managed, and therefore the fund generally will not sell a security due to current or projected underperformance of a security, industry or sector, unless that security is removed from the index or the selling of the security is otherwise required upon a rebalancing of the index. There is no guarantee that the fund will achieve a high degree of correlation to the index and therefore achieve its investment objective. The fund has elected to be, and intends to qualify each year for treatment as, a regulated investment company (RIC). To maintain the fund's qualification for federal income tax treatment as a RIC, the fund must meet certain source-of-income, asset diversification and annual distribution requirements. If for any taxable year the fund fails to qualify for the special federal income tax treatment afforded to RICs, all of the fund's taxable income available for distribution will be reduced.



Derivatives involve risks different from, and in certain cases, greater than the risks presented by more traditional investments. The fund is non-diversified, meaning it may concentrate its assets in fewer individual holdings than a diversified fund. Therefore, the fund is more exposed to individual stock volatility than a diversified fund.

The Tortoise Water Index® is a float-adjusted, modified market capitalization-weighted index comprised of companies that are materially engaged in the water infrastructure or water management industries. The Ecofin Global Water ESG Index® is a proprietary, rules-based, modified capitalization-weighted, float-adjusted index comprised of companies that are materially engaged in the water infrastructure or water management industries. Ecofin Global Water ESG Index® and Tortoise Water Index® (the "Indices") are the exclusive property of TIS Advisors, which has contracted with S&P Opco, LLC (a subsidiary of S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC) to calculate and maintain the Indices. The Indices are not sponsored by S&P Dow Jones Indices or its affiliates or its third party licensors (collectively, "S&P Dow Jones Indices"). S&P Dow Jones Indices will not be liable for any errors or omission in calculating the Indices. "Calculated by S&P Dow Jones Indices" and its related stylized mark(s) are service marks of S&P Dow Jones Indices and have been licensed for use by TIS Advisors and its affiliates. S&P® is a registered trademark of Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC ("SPFS"), and Dow Jones® is a registered trademark of Dow Jones Trademark Holdings LLC ("Dow Jones"). The MSCI World Index, a broad global equity index that represents large and mid-cap equity performance across 23 developed markets countries. It covers approximately 85% of the free float-adjusted market capitalization in each country and does not offer exposure to emerging markets. The S&P Global Infrastructure Index is designed to track 75 companies from around the world chosen to represent the listed infrastructure industry while maintaining liquidity and tradability. No portion of this publication may be reproduced in any format or by any means including electronically or mechanically, by photocopying, or by any other form or manner whatsoever, without the prior written consent of TIS Advisors. It is not possible to invest directly in an index.

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The Morningstar Rating™ for funds, or "star rating," is calculated for managed products (including mutual funds, variable annuity and variable life subaccounts, exchange-traded funds, closed-end funds and separate accounts) with at least a three-year history without adjustment for sales load. Exchange-traded funds and open-ended mutual funds are considered a single population for comparative purposes. It is calculated based on a Morningstar Risk-Adjusted Return measure that accounts for variation in a managed product's monthly excess performance, placing more emphasis on downward variations and rewarding consistent performance. The top 10% of products in each product category receive five stars, the next 22.5% receive four stars, the next 35% receive three stars, the next 22.5% receive two stars, and the bottom 10% receive one star. The Overall Morningstar Rating™ for a managed product is derived from a weighted average of the performance figures associated with its three-, five- and 10-year (if applicable) Morningstar Rating™ metrics. The weights are: 100% three-year rating for 36 - 59 months of total returns, 60% five-year rating/40% three-year rating for 60 - 119 months of total returns, and 50%10-year rating/30% five-year rating/20% three-year rating for 120 or more months of total returns. While the 10-year overall star rating formula seems to give the most weight to the 10-year period, the most recent three-year period actually has the greatest impact because it is included in all three rating periods. As of 3/31/2020, EBLU was rated against 104 Natural Resources Funds over the three-year period. EBLU received five stars for this period. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Nothing contained on this communication constitutes tax, legal or investment advice. Investors must consult their tax advisor or legal counsel for advice and information concerning their particular situation.

MSCI ESG Research LLC's ("MSCI ESG") Fund Metrics and Ratings (the "Information") provide environmental, social and governance data with respect to underlying securities within more than 31,000 multi-asset class Mutual Funds and ETFs globally. MSCI ESG is a Registered Investment Adviser under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940. MSCI ESG materials have not been submitted to, nor received approval from, the US SEC or any other regulatory body. None of the Information constitutes an offer to buy or sell, or a promotion or recommendation of, any security, financial instrument or product or trading strategy, nor should it be taken as an indication or guarantee of any future performance, analysis, forecast or prediction. None of the Information can be used to determine which securities to buy or sell or when to buy or sell them. The Information is provided "as is" and the user of the Information assumes the entire risk of any use it may make or permit to be made of the Information.

The MSCI ESG Fund Ratings is designed to assess the resilience of a fund's aggregate holdings to long term ESG risks. Highly rated funds consist of issuers with leading or improving management of key ESG risks.

- AAA, AA: Leader-The companies that the fund invests in tend to show strong and/or improving management of financially relevant environmental, social and governance issues. These companies may be more resilient to disruptions arising from ESG events.
- A, BB, BB: Average- The fund invests in companies that tend to show average management of ESG issues, or in a mix of companies with both above-average and below-average ESG risk management.
- B, CCC: Laggard-The fund is exposed to companies that do not demonstrate adequate management of the ESG risks that they face or show worsening management of these issues. These companies may be more vulnerable to disruptions arising from ESG events.

The Fund ESG Rating is calculated as a direct mapping of "Fund ESG Quality Score" to letter rating categories.

• 8.6- 10: AAA

• 2.9-4.3: BB

• 7.1-8.6: AA

• 1.4- 2.9: B

• 5.7- 7.1: A

• 0.0- 1.4: CCC

• 4.3-5.7: BBB

The "Fund ESG Quality Score" assesses the resilience of a fund's aggregate holdings to long term ESG risks. Highly rated funds consist of issuers with leading or improving management of key ESG risks, based on a granular breakdown of each issuer's business: its core product or business segments, the locations of its assets or revenues, and other relevant measures such as outsourced production. The "Fund ESG Quality Score" is provided on a 0-10 score, with 0 and 10 being the respective lowest and highest possible fund scores.

The "Fund ESG Quality Score" is assessed using the underlying holding's "Overall ESG Scores", "Overall ESG Ratings", and "Overall ESG Rating Trends". It is calculated in a series of 3 steps.

Step 1: Calculate the "Fund Weighted Average ESG Score" of the underlying holding's "Overall ESG Scores". The Overall ESG Scores represent either the ESG Ratings Final Industry-Adjusted Score or Government Adjusted ESG Score of the issuer. Methodology for the issuer level scores are available in the MSCI ESG Ratings Methodology document.

Step 2: Calculate adjustment % based on fund exposure to "Fund ESG Laggards ()", "Fund ESG Trend Negative ()", and "Fund ESG Trend Positive (%)".

Step 3: Multiply the "Fund Weighted Average ESG Score" by (1 + Adjustment %).

For more information please visit https://www.msci.com/esg-fund-ratings

## Earnings growth is not a measure of the Fund's future performance.

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