# Information Regarding Review and Approval of the Fund's **Advisory Agreement**

AB Multi-Manager Alternative Fund (the "Fund") is subject to Section 15 of the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended. Section 15 provides that any investment advisory agreement with a registered investment company such as the Fund may continue in effect for a period of more than two years from the date of its execution, only so long as such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by the board of trustees (or by vote of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the investment company). Pursuant to this requirement, the Fund's Board of Trustees, including the Trustees who are not interested persons of the Fund (the "Independent Trustees"), unanimously approved the continuation of the Advisory Agreement between the Fund and AllianceBernstein L.P. (the "Adviser")(the "Advisory Agreement") at a meeting held on October 29-30. 2019.

The following discussion describes the considerations in connection with the Board's review of the Advisory Agreement.

In connection with the annual review of the continuation of the Advisory Agreement between the Fund and the Adviser, counsel to the Independent Trustees sent a letter to the Adviser dated August 14, 2019, that contained a list of information requested by the Independent Trustees to conduct their annual review. The Board of Trustees, including the Independent Trustees, met in person and received and evaluated extensive materials relating to the continuation of the Advisory Agreement from the Adviser during meetings in September and October 2019. In addition, the Board received materials from the Senior Analyst and an independent fee consultant as described below. On September 26, 2019, the Board of Trustees held an in-person meeting to discuss its review of the Advisory Agreement and the materials the Trustees had been provided. At that meeting, the Independent Trustees met separately with their independent counsel and the Senior Analyst and the independent fee consultant in executive sessions. Following the September 26, 2019 meeting, the Independent Trustees, through counsel, requested certain additional information by means of a letter from their independent counsel dated October 2, 2019, and the Adviser provided certain additional information by means of a letter dated October 17, 2019. The Independent Trustees held a telephonic meeting on October 21, 2019 with their independent counsel and the Senior Analyst to discuss the contract renewal materials and supplemental materials provided in response to the Board's request. On October 29-30, 2019, the Board of Trustees held an in-person meeting to continue their review of the Advisory Agreement. During this meeting, the Adviser provided further information to the Board relating to contract renewal, and the Independent Trustees also met separately with counsel to the Independent Trustees as well as the Senior Analyst to review the contract renewal materials provided by the Adviser and the materials prepared by the Senior Analyst. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Board approved the continuation of the Advisory Agreement for an additional annual term as described below.

In approving the Advisory Agreement, the Board, including the Independent Trustees, considered all information it deemed reasonably necessary to evaluate the terms of the Advisory Agreement and considered whether the Agreement would be in the best interests of the Fund. In particular, the Board considered the information that was provided to them by the Adviser in response to their requests, as well as information prepared by the Senior Analyst and the independent fee consultant at the request of the Board. The Fund's Senior Analyst assists the Board (as well as the boards of other funds sponsored by the Adviser) in evaluating advisory agreements and certain other agreements pursuant to which the Adviser or its affiliates provide services to the Fund. The Board also considered other information provided to the Board in connection with the September 26, 2019 and October 29-30, 2019 meetings and throughout the past year.

The information considered by the Board included information with respect to the nature, extent and quality of services provided, investment performance, fees and expenses, profitability, economies of scale, and fall-out benefits and other revenue.

In the Board's consideration of the factors discussed below, no single factor was considered in isolation or to be determinative to the decision of the Board to approve the Advisory Agreement. Rather, the Board concluded, in light of a weighing and balancing of all factors considered and in the exercise of the Trustees' business judgment, that it was in the best interests of the Fund to approve the Advisory Agreement including the fees to be charged for services thereunder, as summarized below.

# Fees and Expenses

The Board, including the Independent Trustees, compared the fees and expense ratios of the Fund against fees and expense ratios of a peer group of funds with similar investment objectives ("peer group"). Both the peer group and the funds within the peer group, with respect to the fee and expense data, were available from Strategic Insight, an independent provider of investment company data. The Trustees noted that the Fund's advisory fee was below the median of the peer group and that the Fund's total expense ratio (excluding interest expense and underlying fund expenses) was below the peer group median in the Strategic Insight report. The Senior Analyst also performed analyses of the advisory fees and other Portfolio expenses, and compared such analyses to the Fund's peer group. In addition, the Board received and considered information from an independent fee consultant regarding the Fund's fees and expenses as well as its investment performance.

On the basis of its review and consideration of the fees as described above and the Board's consideration of the other factors described below, and in light of the Adviser's recent reduction of the Fund's advisory fee, the Board concluded that the contractual advisory fee as proposed was reasonable.

## Nature, Extent and Quality of Services Provided

The Board, including the Independent Trustees, considered the nature, quality and extent of services performed by the Adviser and its affiliates gained from their experience as directors or trustees of the Fund and certain other funds advised by the Adviser, their overall confidence in the Adviser's integrity and competence they have gained from that experience, and the Adviser's initiative in identifying and raising potential issues with the Trustees. The Board also considered the Adviser's responsiveness, frankness and attention to concerns raised by the Trustees from time to time, including the Adviser's willingness to consider and implement organizational changes designed to improve investment results and the services provided to the funds. The Board also considered the scope and quality of the Adviser's investment management capabilities, other resources dedicated to performing its services, the quality of its compliance, administrative and other services provided to the Fund and the background and experience of the Adviser's senior management. The Board reviewed the qualifications, backgrounds and responsibilities of the investment staff primarily responsible for day-to-day portfolio management services for the Fund and noted the Adviser's commitment to strong research and investment management capabilities throughout changing market environments.

In addition to the investment advisory services provided to the Fund, the Trustees considered that the Adviser and its affiliates also provide certain administrative services necessary for the operations of the Fund on an "at cost" basis pursuant to a separate Administrative Reimbursement Agreement. The Board reviewed the compliance and administrative services of the Adviser that support the investment advisory services provided to the Fund.

The Board also considered how the organizational capabilities and financial condition of the Adviser may affect the nature and quality of its services. In that regard, the Board considered the ongoing impacts of the relocation of substantial operations of the Adviser from the New York City area to Nashville, Tennessee. The Board further reviewed updated information about the ongoing divestiture of AXA, S.A. of its holdings of AXA Equitable Holdings, Inc. ("AXA Equitable"). AXA formerly owned all of the outstanding shares of common stock of AXA Equitable, which is an indirect parent of AllianceBernstein Corporation, the general partner of the Adviser, and AXA is in the process of divesting those shares. The Board considered the statements of the Adviser that it has continued to operate as an independent, publicly-traded US asset manager, that the ongoing divestiture has not materially changed the Adviser's current management

structure or strategy, and that the Adviser does not believe that the ongoing divestiture will have a material impact on the Adviser with respect to its operations, personnel, organizational structure, or capitalization, financial and other resources.

In considering the nature and quality of the services provided by the Adviser, the Board, including the Independent Trustees, received and considered information about the Fund's investment performance, as well as the performance of its peer group and the performance of an appropriate benchmark index. The Board was provided with performance data versus the Fund's benchmark index for the 1-year, 3-year, 5-year and since inception periods ended July 31, 2019, and versus the Fund's peer group, for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2019 and for each of the prior fiscal years since inception. The Board also received certain updated performance information as of August 31, 2019. In addition, the Trustees considered information showing performance compared to peer groups and benchmarks for rolling calendar year periods and the year to date. The Trustees also receive detailed comparative performance information for the Fund at each regular Board meeting during the year. The Board noted that in this case the benchmark index is an index of other funds which reflects the fees of such other funds.

The Trustees noted that the Fund's performance for the year ended March 31, 2019 was below the median of the performance group of comparable funds selected by Strategic Insight. The Trustees took note that certain changes to the Fund's investment policies took effect on July 31, 2018 and were implemented in the succeeding months and that more recent performance as of August 31, 2019 had shown improvement. The Trustees considered the Adviser's explanations for performance and measures the Adviser had taken or proposed to take to improve performance. The Trustees noted generally the Adviser's continued efforts to enhance the services provided to the Fund. The Trustees also noted that they would continue to monitor investment performance closely.

The Board concluded that the Adviser had the experience and resources necessary to provide services of appropriate nature, quality and scope with respect to the Fund.

# **Profitability**

The Board, including the Independent Trustees, considered the level of the Adviser's profits in respect of its management of the Fund. The materials provided to the Independent Trustees included information indicating the profitability of the Fund to the Adviser for calendar years 2017 and 2018. which had been reviewed by an independent consultant. The Trustees reviewed the assumptions and methods of allocation used by the Adviser in preparing fund-specific profitability data and noted that there are many potentially acceptable allocation methodologies for information of this type.

The Trustees noted that they received information regarding all revenues and expenses of the Adviser's relationship with the Fund and that they had focused on profitability before taxes and distribution expenses. The Trustees noted that an affiliate of the Adviser provided distribution services to the Fund at no cost. The amounts recently reimbursed to the Adviser by the Fund were also noted, along with how the reimbursement was accounted for in determining profitability. The Trustees also considered the recent reduction of the management fee from 1.50% to 1.00% and then discussed the services and costs associated with the Fund's Administrative Reimbursement Agreement with the Adviser.

The Trustees had also received a presentation at the July 24, 2019 Board meeting from the independent consultant who reviewed the Adviser's method of calculating profitability. The Trustees reviewed comparative information regarding profitability for other publicly-traded advisers, recognizing that it is difficult to make comparisons of profitability among fund advisory contracts because only limited comparative information is publicly available and the comparisons are affected by numerous factors including different cost accounting methodologies.

After reviewing all relevant factors, the Trustees, including the Independent Trustees, concluded that the levels of the Adviser's profits in respect of its management of the Fund were not excessive.

#### **Economies of Scale**

The Board, including the Independent Trustees, considered whether there have been economies of scale in respect of the management of the Fund, whether the Fund has appropriately benefited from any economies of scale, and whether there is potential for realization of any further economies of scale. The Trustees discussed possible ways in which any such economies of scale may be shared with the Fund, including by investment in enhanced services.

The Trustees also considered the Senior Analyst materials which they received in connection with the review of the Advisory Agreement, which included information reflecting changes in asset levels of the Fund and in the profitability of the Adviser over various periods.

After reviewing the profitability and economies of scale information provided by the Adviser, the Board concluded that the benefits of any economies of scale were appropriately being shared with Fund investors by way of, among other things and as applicable, recent fee reductions for the Fund and the Adviser's continued reinvestment in the business, including by researching and implementing new product enhancements. although the Adviser decreased its operating expenses and staff in recent years. The Trustees also noted that they would continue to monitor the Fund's growth.

#### Fall-Out Benefits and Other Revenue

The Board, including the Independent Trustees, also took into account so-called "fall-out benefits" to the Adviser. They also considered other benefits potentially derived from an increase in the Adviser's business as a result of its relationship with the Fund. The Trustees recognized that the Adviser's profitability could be lower without these benefits. The Trustees concluded that these fall-out benefits to the Adviser were acceptable.

## **Advisory Fee Rate Schedule**

On the basis of the information considered, the Board determined to approve the Advisory Agreement for an additional annual term, without change to the Fund's contractual fee schedule at an annual rate of 1.00% of the Fund's net assets.

## Subsequent Event

As a result of the divestiture by AXA of a substantial portion of its holdings in AXA Equitable, the Investment Management Agreement has automatically terminated as of November 13, 2019, and a new Investment Management Agreement (approved by the Board and the shareholders of the Fund in 2018) has come into effect. The new Investment Management Agreement is identical to the prior Investment Management Agreement other than as to its date.