



## Our Mission

ADIA's mission is to sustain the long-term prosperity of Abu Dhabi by prudently growing capital through a disciplined investment process and committed people who reflect ADIA's cultural values.

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[www.adia.ae](http://www.adia.ae)



# ADIA at a Glance

*ADIA manages a global investment portfolio that is diversified across more than two dozen asset classes and sub-categories.*

## OUR THREE CULTURAL VALUES GUIDE THE WAY WE WORK

1

PRUDENT INNOVATION

2

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

3

DISCIPLINED EXECUTION

ADIA's cultural values guide the way we work and the way decisions are made. They provide direction for how we think and behave as individuals and as a unified institution.

These values play a fundamental role in driving our people and the organisation forward to achieve long-term growth and business success.

See 'Our Cultural Values' on pages 11-13.

## 1,700 EMPLOYEES REPRESENTING MORE THAN 65 NATIONALITIES



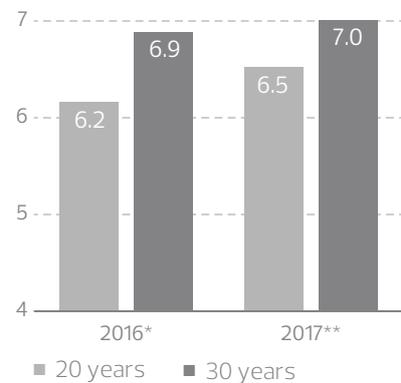
■ UAE	27%
■ Europe	30%
■ Asia-Pacific	21%
■ Americas	12%
■ Middle East/Africa	7%
■ Australasia	3%

ADIA's people are as diverse and international as our business, with more than 65 nationalities working together to create a collaborative environment that embodies our cultural values.

We strive to attract, develop and retain world-class talent, and to enable our people to realise their full potential.

See 'Our People' on pages 52-63.

## ANNUALISED RATES OF RETURN



\* As of 31 December 2016

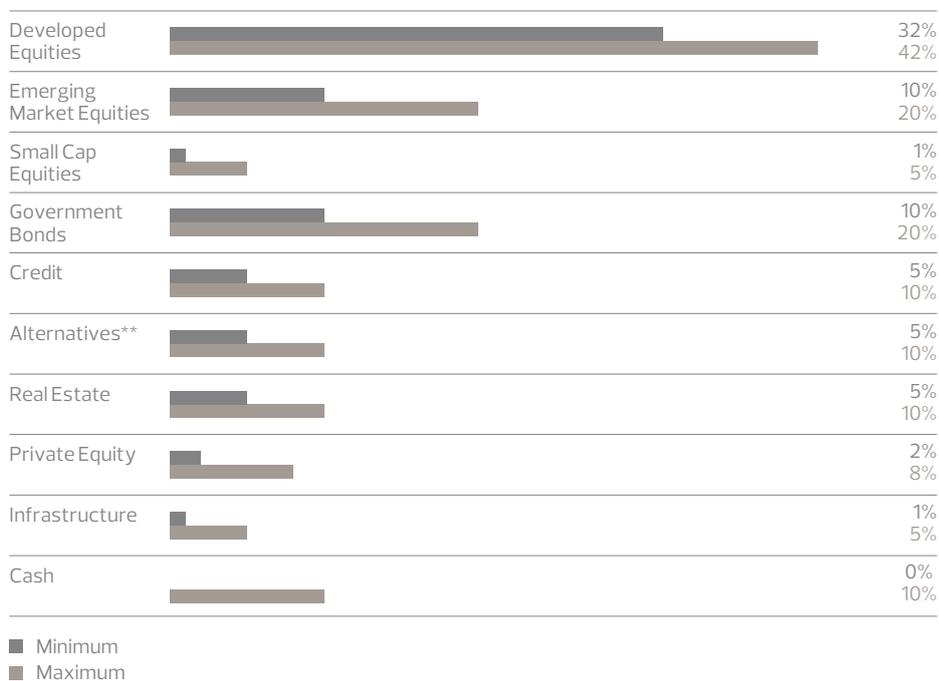
\*\* As of 31 December 2017

Note: Performance for 2017 remains provisional until final data for non-listed assets is included.

In U.S. Dollar terms, the 20-year and 30-year annualised rates of return for the ADIA portfolio were 6.5% and 7.0% respectively, as of 31 December 2017.

Performance is measured based on underlying audited financial data and calculated on a time-weighted basis.

**PORTFOLIO BY ASSET CLASS**  
**LONG-TERM POLICY PORTFOLIO\***



\* The above denotes long-term policy portfolio ranges within which allocations can fluctuate; hence they do not total 100%.

\*\* Alternatives comprises hedge funds and managed futures.

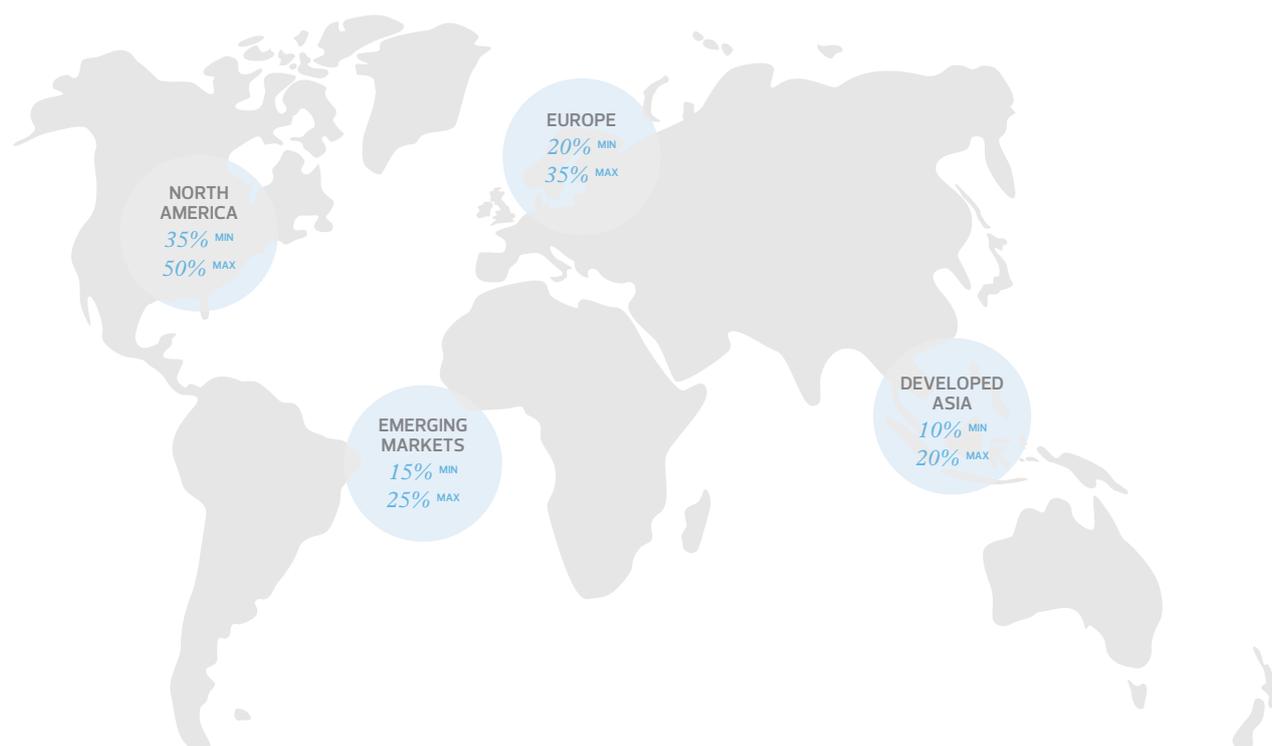
**55%**

of ADIA's assets are managed by external fund managers whose activities are subject to careful oversight by internal ADIA teams.

**50%**

of ADIA's assets are invested in index-replicating strategies.

**LONG-TERM POLICY PORTFOLIO BY REGION\***



\*ADIA, as a matter of practice, does not invest in the UAE.



# Letter from Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

*Managing Director*

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ADIA continued to evolve and refine its organisational structure and processes in 2017, in line with one of its long held beliefs: that even during periods of relative calm, the underlying factors driving global markets are always changing, and often significantly, beneath the surface.

Among the defining themes for the year within ADIA was an intensified focus on strategy and planning. The wide-ranging initiatives we implemented in 2017 and our ongoing efforts in these areas will ensure that all parts of the organisation remain aligned with our

long-term objectives and vision. They will also enhance ADIA's ability to adapt swiftly to opportunities in this era of unprecedented technological change.

Since 1976, ADIA has invested through the ups and downs of multiple market cycles.

However, the mission with which we were entrusted 40 years ago, and which remains in place today, requires us to always look beyond short-term market conditions and guard against complacency – even in relatively benign market conditions such as those witnessed in 2017.

It is clear that the pace of change is accelerating, bringing with it substantial opportunities that impose upon us a responsibility to remain open minded and alert at all times. In doing so, we must remain cognisant that long-term success is achieved not through radical changes of direction, but through the thoughtful and measured pursuit of innovation and change that delivers sustainable benefits without undue risk. Our experience over the years has shown that being first is less important than being confident that the choices we make are built on sound analysis and will deliver benefits for years to come. While few things are certain in

financial markets, this approach ensures that we, as an organisation and as individuals, have the confidence to move forward swiftly and in a coordinated way to fulfil our shared objectives.

During 2017, ADIA was as focused on self-development as it was on external factors. This included the creation of the Strategy and Planning Department (SPD), tasked with implementing an ADIA-wide planning process to ensure our activities continue to align with ADIA's mission and long-term objectives.

SPD brings together and is responsible for further developing a number of existing functions, from investment strategy, asset allocation, risk management and research, to project management, organisational development and communications.

Among its responsibilities, SPD seeks to foster ongoing internal debate around ADIA's fundamental assumptions and strategic priorities, taking into account changes in the investment environment. It aims to streamline ADIA's structure and processes to reduce complexity and ensure our people have the resources and direction they need to execute effectively on our mission.

In 2017, SPD was involved in further advancing ADIA's Risk-Return project, to create a comprehensive framework that guides ADIA's allocation of risk to investment departments.

This project began in 2016 with the formalisation of our Reference Portfolio, a hypothetical blend of publicly traded securities with fixed weightings. Last year, we went further by consolidating a large number of investment pools, or portfolios, within our departments into single pools; sharpening our focus on the overall performance of each asset class and its consistency with ADIA's return objectives. The move has given our departments greater discretion in how they deploy the capital and risk they have been allocated, to best achieve their performance targets.

There were also a number of adjustments within our departments during 2017. For several years, our Private Equities Department has been

increasing its emphasis on principal private equity investments alongside our partners. In 2017, the Department reorganised itself to better support this strategy, moving from product-focused to regional teams with an emphasis on building sector expertise in five key sectors: Financial Services, Healthcare, Industrials, Technology and Consumer.

Also building on the work of previous years, the Fixed Income & Treasury Department took further steps to diversify its portfolio and combine active risks across market segments. This involved expanding its diversified approach across a larger asset base within its operating model, providing investment teams with a larger pool of actively managed assets, while reducing operational overheads.

*“The wide-ranging initiatives we implemented in 2017 and our ongoing efforts in these areas will ensure that all parts of the organisation remain aligned with our long-term objectives and vision.”*

In keeping with ADIA's focus on innovations with long-term potential, the Internal Equities Department conducted a study and peer review process into how big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence are changing the investment landscape. The findings of this analysis resulted in the adoption of several initiatives relating to data capture and storage, stock analysis and factor exposures, which have made us more efficient and improved our ability to identify opportunities.

In investment support, the Operations Department completed a valuable benchmarking exercise involving 35 of its global peers that identified several opportunities to improve organisational efficiency and its ability to improve performance within its securities lending activities.

On the investment front, ADIA continued to take advantage of cyclically high prices in some areas to selectively sell assets, while seeking out opportunities in overlooked fields with greater potential.

As in previous years, emerging markets remained a key focus, particularly India and China, as we sought to build further on our knowledge and deepen our relationships in these markets.

In India, ADIA was proud to work closely with and become the first investor in the Indian government-backed National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).

Having spent a number of years building its internal capabilities, 2017 was a year of consolidation for ADIA on the recruitment front, as we sought to fine tune our skillset to meet specific needs. The Internal Equities Department, for example, made new appointments to its Europe and Japan teams and to the Department's support functions, while Private Equities appointed a new Head of Asia-Pacific and Head of Industrials as part of its organisational redesign.

Consistent with our focus on the themes and issues shaping financial markets over the long term, ADIA's 2017 Global Investment Forum (GIF) examined climate change and its potential investment impact. The GIF involved the creation of eight internal asset class-specific task forces who considered in detail the potential ramifications for ADIA in the following key areas: Climate Data and Economic Impact, Technology and Energy, Markets and Consumers, and Climate Change Policies.

In all, 2017 will be remembered at ADIA as both an eventful and rewarding year during which the organisation demonstrated its discipline in remaining focused on its mission and its pursuit of continuous improvement. I am proud of the significant progress that ADIA has made, not just in pursuing excellence, but in doing so in a thoughtful and responsible way that positions us well for the future.

## KEY

## HIGHLIGHTS

Strategy and Planning Department created, to ensure ongoing alignment of activities with ADIA's mission and long-term objectives.

Important progress made on the Risk-Return project, a comprehensive framework that guides ADIA's allocation of risk to investment departments.

Successful reorganisation of the Private Equities Department to support its increased emphasis on principal investments.



## REVIEW OF 2017

Investors were cheered by another strong performance by financial markets in 2017, while a number of underlying, long-term trends continued to gain in prominence and stimulate debate, including demographic shifts, the impact of technology and climate change.

In investment terms, 2017 provided a reminder of the ability of capital markets to surprise – in this case, in a positive way. Global equity markets appreciated close to 25% in U.S. Dollar terms. Even with lacklustre results from global bonds, balanced portfolio returns reached high double digits.

“Rising geopolitical risk” was a common refrain last year, but few of these risks materialised into actual events that impacted economies, allowing most

major markets to respond by recording their best performance of the post-financial crisis expansion.

Good returns were widespread across equity markets and credit-sensitive bond markets, with 22% returns in U.S. equities, 25% in other developed markets, and over 37% in emerging markets. U.S. Treasuries returned only about 2% for the year; a solid outcome given global growth rates. But both U.S. high yield debt and global investment grade bonds returned 7.5% as credit performed well and the U.S. Dollar depreciated significantly.

In early 2018, conditions in the global economy appeared relatively robust. Growth was well balanced across regions and was benefitting workers in many economies, while the most

common causes of recessions – above-target inflation and monetary restraint – remained absent. Central banks and other policy makers have begun to rein in the expansionary policies of the past several years but have done so to date in a cautious and measured way. Nonetheless, equity markets suffered bouts of volatility in early 2018, perhaps anticipating a more challenging environment in the year ahead. Given low volatility in 2017, some normalisation would not be surprising.

Of course, markets have cycles, and risk factors can always be identified: high levels of debt as well as inequality of income and wealth are often cited. But these are more secular concerns rather than factors that typically put a brake on good cyclical performance.



## OUTLOOK

The experience of 2017 could lead to the view that market forecasting is of little value, and may even be dangerous if it results in unnecessary caution that dampens returns. That would be the wrong conclusion to draw. Economies and markets do have cycles. While it is clear that asset prices were locked in an especially benign up-cycle throughout 2017, we know that while such periods may continue for some time, they will eventually turn. Trying to time markets is extremely difficult, and dangerous, for large and diversified global investors. A more practical approach is to view cycles as opportunities, and to prepare strategies that limit drawdowns and provide sufficient available capital to take advantage of lower asset prices when markets turn lower. Experience has shown us that this approach is most likely to result in long-term and sustainable wealth accumulation.

More importantly, there are always trends hidden beneath cycles. Identifying those trends, and positioning to profit from them across cycles, is more likely to result in consistent, long-term returns than attempting to time the market.

Ageing populations will have a gradual yet significant impact on most Western societies, notably by imposing declining work forces and rising pressures on their government spending.

Emerging markets continue to expand their share of the global economy. More importantly, their governance and engagement with the world continue to improve. The introduction of GST in India and continued reforms of financial regulation in China are only two recent examples of this trend.

The world's energy industry is in the early stages of a fundamental shift from fossil fuels to a more sustainable reliance on a range of renewable technologies. At ADIA, we went through a thorough review last year of the important reality of climate change and of its potential impact, in order to assess how markets and governments could respond to this impending transition.

The exact paths of this process remain to be seen, but we are excited by the opportunities that are coming into view, and others that are sure to arise, to deploy capital in support of new fields of investment.

Technology is also driving powerful changes in economies and markets. One need only look at the performance of technology across global equity markets last year to recognise that something is stirring. This technology boom is based on real improvements in computing power to process and analyse exponentially growing volumes of data. It underpins real businesses that are growing revenues, market share, and earnings. The societal changes range from retailing to automobiles, from medicine to legal services. Also, importantly, our own business of investing is absorbing new tools and approaches that can improve abilities to identify opportunities and manage risk.

Finally there are the geopolitical risks that always feed into investment commentary. A long view of investment history shows that there are always geopolitical risks. Only by looking objectively into the past does it become clear that current risks are not unusually important, or more prevalent, than in other periods. History also has shown that humanity is resilient. While economic and political breakdowns do happen, the global system survives and a well-diversified portfolio can perform in the way that it was designed and meet its objectives even in difficult periods.

This is not a call to complacency, as changes now underway have the potential to impact the investing climate for many years to come.

However, we remain confident that these "risks" all contain elements of opportunity, which provides long-term investors with cause for optimism even as the current economic cycle approaches maturity.

The Louvre Abu Dhabi opened to the public in 2017, displaying an extensive collection of art and artefacts dating from ancient times to the present day. Designed by Pritzker-prize winner Jean Nouvel, the museum links 55 individual buildings, including 26 galleries, under a domed roof inspired by traditional Arabic architecture. Images of this new cultural landmark are featured throughout the 2017 ADIA Review.



# Our Cultural Values

*ADIA's cultural values guide the way we work and the way decisions are made, and they are central to sustaining our investment success. They provide direction for how we think and behave as individuals and as a unified institution.*

It has been more than a decade since our cultural values of prudent innovation, effective collaboration and disciplined execution were formulated and embedded throughout the organisation. During that time, we have seen steady improvements in how they are applied within ADIA as indicated

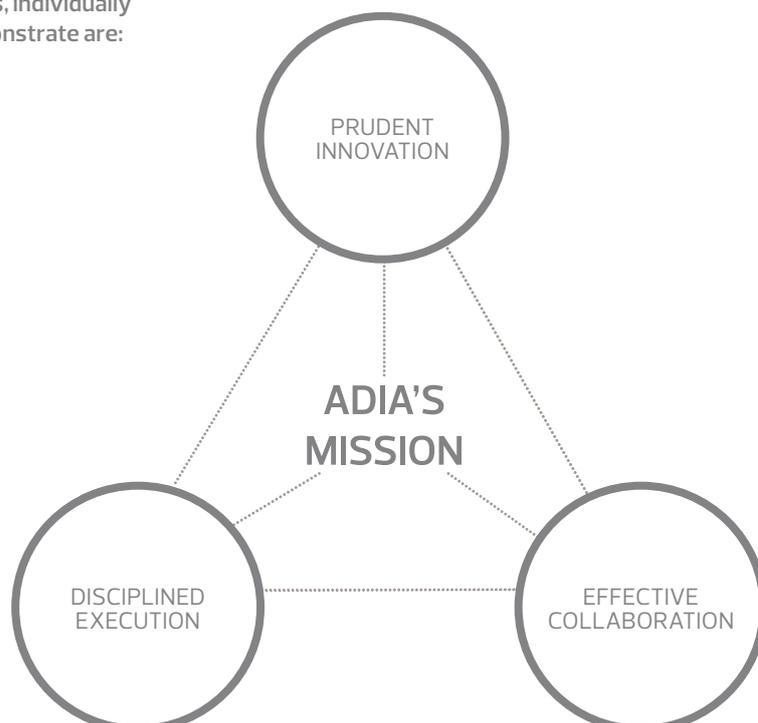
by our annual Employee Opinion Survey and by numerous examples of our people incorporating them into their day-to-day work.

These values play a fundamental role in driving ourselves and the organisation forward to achieve long-term growth and business success. ADIA's leaders

aspire to reflect and encourage these values in themselves and in others. In addition, we have sought to embed and reinforce the desired culture through ADIA's selection, development, promotion, measurement, planning, information sharing and incentive processes.

## ADIA'S CULTURAL VALUES

The three ADIA cultural values that we encourage all employees, individually and collectively, to demonstrate are:



## PRUDENT INNOVATION

At ADIA, we encourage our people to improve investment performance and overall organisational effectiveness through a continued commitment to prudent innovation. Through the culture of prudent innovation, we generate new ideas, continually enhance our individual and departmental performance, support ADIA-wide improvement initiatives and advance our investment strategy processes. This involves appropriately challenging the status quo and leveraging improvement opportunities wherever they may be found. However, as a risk-sensitive business, we emphasise that change is approached in a thoughtful manner so that all innovations are fully analysed, considered and reviewed to balance opportunities with their associated risks.

We are careful to consider both anticipated as well as unanticipated consequences for all innovations. Professional judgement, therefore, ensures a full awareness of the balance between opportunities and the risks involved in pursuing them.

With that intent, we recognise the importance of personal and professional development and encourage employees to continually develop their own knowledge and skills while also supporting the same growth in others. In addition to individual growth, ADIA is focused on accelerating organisational improvement and ensuring the business anticipates change as a result of identifying and leveraging market opportunities.





## EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

ADIA places strong emphasis on collaboration and supports individuals to build relationships and informational networks – both internally and externally – that deliver results. We encourage individuals and teams to gather input from those with different knowledge and opinions, across departments and at all levels within the business. We acknowledge that identifying, importing, prioritising, interpreting, sharing and utilising information from all sources contributes to our present and future success. ADIA values those who take responsibility for working together towards ADIA's mission and are supportive of team objectives and decisions.

At ADIA, we encourage employees to communicate openly with each other as a means of building solid professional relationships and improving performance. Those who share opinions while also listening to the views of others, both within and across departments, create greater value for ADIA and its mission. This means getting involved in challenging yet positive debates where ideas and suggestions can be discussed in a constructive and productive manner. We have found that when employees collaborate across departments, they are more likely to continually improve and execute their personal responsibilities. We also encourage people to effectively share the most relevant information and ideas that contribute most to investment and business results.

## DISCIPLINED EXECUTION

ADIA has a long and successful history of disciplined execution. Individuals are encouraged to set standards and achieve high goals that are aligned with ADIA's mission and long-term objectives. Holding ourselves accountable for accomplishing goals that are aligned with department and ADIA-wide objectives inevitably leads to greater performance. Thus, a central enabling feature of ADIA's mission is prudently growing capital through a disciplined investment process.

ADIA's investment process has been carefully refined over the years. Employees are given responsibility for contributing to ADIA's investment success by putting in place realistic, clear and practical plans to ensure that expected results are achieved.

We recognise that all support and governing functions should design and implement initiatives that ultimately focus on improving ADIA's investment performance. Both investment and non-investment departments do so by holding themselves and their teams accountable for contributing to sustainable investment results.

Effective delegation and the ability to drive projects to completion are essential for meeting objectives. We seek to jointly encourage each other to demonstrate the energy, drive and commitment to deliver results and maintain focus and integrity, and to overcome any inevitable difficulties or challenges.