

# How do you like your fund data served?

The rapidly-evolving fund data market is putting factsheets in the shade but as big providers spread their wings, selectors need to consider if these changes are meeting all their needs



**MARGARYTA KIRAKOSIAN**  
News Editor

Dealing with factsheets is unlikely to be the high point of a fund selectors' daily routine.

Love it or hate it, it's a necessary task, but as technology advances, so are fund buyers' methods of accessing this information.

If you happen to talk to a Swiss selector for example, then fund information platform fundinfo will inevitably crop up in the conversation.

This service hit the Swiss market in 2005 and has beaten all the competition there. In 2017 UBS Fondcenter commissioned fundinfo to procure and source its fund data from fund providers and asset managers, partly to satisfy demand for up-to-date MiFID II and PRIIPs data.

Credit Suisse's investment product platform InvestLab, which at the time of writing is being sold to Allfunds, has also struck a deal with fundinfo to collect and source centralised data from asset managers.

Independent players have also taken a liking to the new fund data leader. Martin Bürki, founder of martInvestments, isn't concerned by fundinfo's rapid expansion as he says it delivers a really good product that is very helpful in his daily job.

'As a fund selector I ask all fund companies not to send me factsheets anymore via email because if I need them I go to fundinfo. I am also less likely to choose an asset management company if they don't list their factsheets on this platform.'

With all the positivity surrounding the project there is still one aspect that hasn't been fully addressed. The service doesn't charge fund buyers, but asset managers have to pay to be listed.

A spokesperson for fundinfo said there is no limitation regarding fund listings, other than that the fund must be registered for distribution in its respective country.

Publication costs start from CHF 1,000 for listing up to five funds in one country.

However, these costs can weigh heavily on smaller fund providers and could therefore limit options for fund buyers.

Fundinfo now has a presence in 17 countries, and you cannot help but wonder if the Swiss scenario will be repeated in other jurisdictions, especially with the firm striking a recent deal with UK financial data provider FE.

## TAKING ON MONOPOLIES

Fundinfo's dominance raises an important question – they may all be in one place, but are factsheets delivering what fund buyers need?

The varying quality of material, can fall short. One way round this may be to change the way investors engage with the data.

As noted last year, Lobnek Wealth Management has taken a leap into the future with its efforts to improve the experience. The Geneva-based group has pioneered a virtual reality (VR) headset that can give investors an 'walk through' their investment landscape.

Not all companies may want to take the tech route, but one way to improve the delivery and quality of factsheets could be through enhanced internal tools. One giant investment firm, which has asked not to be named due to the early stages of its project, has taken the task into its own hands.

This group has developed a customised platform which requires firms to file their material in a specific way meeting clearly-defined, consistent criteria from the outset. Through the use of non-disclosure agreements and closer interaction with fund houses, the company has worked to improve its information gathering.



**Martin Bürki,**  
martInvestments

While this may be more labour-intensive – as it requires many discussions with providers and the ability to harness internal tech resources – the longer-term benefits are apparent, as selectors will get the exact information they have asked for.



**Caron Bastianpillai,**  
Notz Stucki

Another benefit is timeliness. The delay often associated with reporting has been a major bugbear with fund selectors, as highlighted by the likes of Notz Stucki's Caron Bastianpillai early last year. Bastianpillai decried waiting for around three months for filings to come through.

To counter such problems, a customised system can ensure all announcements are uploaded to a secure site and accessed as close to publication as possible.

Be it innovative data platforms or development of custom-made systems, selectors are not planning to let factsheets take up any more time than is necessary. But as the industry seems to be moving the goalposts every year – both asset managers and selectors will have to find a way to adjust quickly.