

DELIVERING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS ACROSS THE REGION

Asia Asset Management



Kenanga Investors, one of Malaysia's leading asset managers, continues to showcase its excellence in *Asia Asset Management's* Best of the Best Awards, by winning nine prestigious awards this year.

These awards include country awards for Best Equity Manager; Best Alternatives Manager; Best ESG Engagement Initiative; Fund Launch of the Year; Best Impact Investing Manager; Best Retail Asset Management Company; CEO of the Year; and CIO of the Year. It is also won a regional award for Best Impact Investing Manager in ASEAN.

This year's awards carry a special meaning for Ismitz Matthew De Alwis, who this year celebrates his tenth anniversary as chief executive officer of the firm. "It has indeed been an incredible journey leading Kenanga Investors Group over the past decade. From a boutique asset manager to a multi-segment investment house, we have come so far and yet I feel there is still plenty more to do," he says.

De Alwis says he aims to establish Kenanga Investors as Malaysia's leading investment and wealth management firm, known for its holistic, all-encompassing financial services. "Our vision encompasses a future where we are the preferred hub for all wealth management needs, evidenced by the inclusion of a variety of products such as insurance, and wills and trust," he says.

Retail innovation

Winning the Best Retail Asset Management Company in Malaysia award is also a testament for Kenanga Investors' ability to deliver innovative and accessible investment solutions for retail investors.

Last year, it achieved a new milestone with the launch of Kenanga Trustees, designed to address the rising demand for more sophisticated financial solutions. It also rebranded its exchange-traded fund arm i-VCAP Management into Eq8 Capital and saw the launch of the world's first Waqf-featured ETF.

"The key to our success is our inherent belief in offering solutions to investors from a financial planning perspective. We aim to prioritise an individual's full financial picture rather than just individual products, which we believe is essential when it comes to addressing diverse risk appetites and long-term goals," De Alwis explains.

"We are also guided by principles that put people first, foster long-term relationships and deliver exceptional customer service, while offering solutions that truly meet our clients' needs. These values shape the way we do business every day, helping us grow with our clients and stay resilient in a fast-changing financial landscape," he adds.

Around 2017, De Alwis notes that Kenanga Investors anticipated the growing risk aversion in the equity markets and made the key decision to diversify its offerings by introducing alternative investment products with fixed returns and reduced risk profiles.

"This proactive approach proved invaluable during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. As market volatility surged, investors turned to our alternative products for stability, while issuers sought our expertise to create tailored solutions for the private wealth segment," he adds.

The move allowed Kenanga Investors to position itself as one of the leaders in alternative products. In 2024, it launched a new fund series – the Kenanga Alternative Series – which aims to cater to investors' tactical needs while seizing emerging opportunities within dynamic market segments.

Solid investment philosophy



These innovative investment products are also complemented by Kenanga Investors' strong investment philosophy, which places a strong emphasis on companies with strong fundamentals. The firm's investment team is led by chief investment officer Lee Sook Yee, *AAM's* 2025 CIO of the Year.

Lee, who joined Kenanga Investors in 2013, describes her journey in the company as "incredible". She says that the investment landscape has changed dramatically over the years.

"We've seen everything from prolonged low-interest rate environments to heightened geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions. And of course, each market cycle comes with its own set of challenges," she says.

She adds that the company likes to focus on stock selection and high-quality exposure, particularly in sectors that it believes offer long-term growth potential.

"In recent years, we've made strategic allocations to domestic markets, properties, utilities, and supply chain beneficiaries. These thematic investments have played a big role in our outperformance, particularly in 2024," she says.

"One thing I'm particularly proud of is the composition of our asset base. While some of our peers may rely heavily on money market funds to drive their assets under administration, our portfolio is largely anchored in equities. This not only reflects our confidence in the

long-term prospects of the markets we operate in but also speaks to the trust our clients place in our ability to manage growth-focused investments," she says.

"Of course, none of this would be possible without a strong team. I work with a group of over 30 incredibly talented portfolio managers and analysts where many have over 16 years of experience in both domestic and regional markets."

Disclaimer: *This material is solely for general information purposes. The material has not been reviewed by the Securities Commission Malaysia ("SC"). The information contained herein does not constitute any investment advice. Past performance is not indicative of future performance. Kenanga Investors Berhad 199501024358 (353563-P).*

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Source:

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Kenanga Investors

Delivering innovative solutions across the region

By Goh Thean Eu



Ismitz Matthew De Alwis **Lee Sook Yee**

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