

ASK Private Wealth launches Private Credit Fund; seeks to raise up to Rs. 1,000 cr.

- *Appoints Shantanu Sahai, former Managing Director & Head of Debt at Nomura, as Senior Managing Partner to lead the Fund*

August 08, 2023 | Mumbai: ASK Private Wealth, the independent wealth advisory and family office arm of ASK Group, announces the launch of its Private Credit Fund aiming to raise up to Rs. 1,000 crores inclusive of a greenshoe option. The new fund has received regulatory approval from SEBI under the Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) category II and is strategically positioned within the Performing Credit space. The firm has hired Shantanu Sahai as Senior Managing Partner and Head of the Fund, who in his previous assignment was the Managing Director & Head of Debt at Nomura India.

The primary objective of the ASK Private Credit Fund (PCF) is to generate higher risk adjusted returns by capturing bespoke opportunities that arise from regulation induced dislocations in credit markets for borrowers seeking capital for non-traditional purposes. The fund generally expects to be sector-agnostic and shall seek out opportunities within sectors that see activity from private equity players – healthcare, consumer, financial services, IT& ITES, manufacturing, specialty chemicals, and renewables. The fund will invest across both operating companies as well as promoter / holding companies and shall avoid distressed, real estate, Utilities, State Owned or venture funding situations. The fund shall specifically seek out credit opportunities within credible corporate houses or portfolio companies of pedigreed private equity funds to alleviate corporate governance concerns thereby distinguishing it from conventional credit risk-focused strategies. The fund's preference for engaging with profitable mid-market companies with reliance on operating cash flows provides a better risk-reward balance than private equity and traditional debt investments.

The core investing principle of the fund is capital preservation through a focus on corporate governance and high standards of due diligence. The ASK Private credit fund is designed as a closed-ended fund, with a tenure of five years from the first close and will be managed by an investment team with 75+ years of cumulative credit investing experience. ASK Private Wealth enjoys the sponsorship of the ASK Group with 30 years of vintage in managing wealth for HNIs and family offices in India. ASK Group is a portfolio company of Blackstone – the world's largest alternative asset manager and benefits from the guidance and stewardship of Blackstone's global experience and reach.

Rajesh Saluja, CEO & Managing Director, ASK Private Wealth said, "The rise of private credit is fuelled by domestic M&A consolidation and the impaired primary equity markets, creating a demand-supply gap. Traditional providers of capital like non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and credit mutual funds are pivoting away from wholesale structured lending, causing profitable mid-size businesses in need of structured bespoke funding solutions to look elsewhere. Industry estimates incremental demand for such credit solutions at Rs. 30,000 crores annually. That's where ASK Private Wealth's new PCF comes in. India is in the initial phase of a new credit cycle fuelled by private sector investment on the back of corporate deleveraging that has taken place over the past 5 years within India Inc. This is further supported by robust economic activity across all major sectors driven by strong economic growth, government infrastructure spending and policy support, and a favourable demographic outlook. India's status as a major manufacturing hub, driven by the China Plus One strategy, further fuels the demand for private credit. Our fund aims to bridge this gap, catering to rising demand and capitalizing on the growing private credit space in India."

"We extend a warm welcome to Shantanu Sahai as our Senior Managing Partner, who will play a pivotal role in nurturing and propelling this vertical forward. His 2 decades of expertise in establishing and growing businesses of this nature with pedigreed global credit institutions in the past will undeniably enhance ASK

Private Wealth's capabilities and drive performance, delivering on our growth ambitions. Shantanu, along with a world class team of investment professionals cherry picked from global tier-1 credit institutions to manage this fund, bring unique market access and an unwavering commitment to corporate governance," he added.

Shantanu Sahai, Senior Managing Partner, ASK Private Wealth said, "I am thrilled to be a part of ASK Private Wealth at this important juncture. ASK's unwavering focus on a client-centric approach and consistent ability in maximising returns for a client within the bounds of their preferred risk appetite has been amply demonstrated over the past many years. Every robust investment portfolio requires a strategic blend of equity and debt/fixed income investments. Our Private Credit Fund offers clients and investors an attractive alternative to traditional fixed income investment options like market linked debentures (MLDs), debt mutual funds, real estate investment trusts (REIT), or infrastructure investment trusts (InvIT). With the fund's performance being largely uncorrelated to equity, it provides true diversification to portfolios of our clients. We perceive a unique opportunity in the Indian market where a clear white space has emerged for funds like ours due to the paradigm shifts in business strategies of other traditional providers of capital. Banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), and Mutual Funds are often unable to provide tailor-made financing solutions to profitable, mid-sized businesses led by reliable promoters due to their individual policy or regulatory constraints. With the team's rich experience in the private credit space, we aim to fill this gap and cater to these underserved businesses."

ASK's PCF is suitable for private investors including Accredited Investors, high net worth individuals (UHNIs & HNIs), government institutions, corporates, public sector undertakings, private banks, insurance companies, global development financial institutions, multilateral organizations, foreign investors, and other permissible investors under applicable laws. Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI), as well as institutional investors, are also eligible to invest in the ASK Private Credit Fund.

ENDS

About ASK Private Wealth: ASK Private Wealth (ASK Wealth Advisors Pvt Ltd) provides wealth advisory and distribution services to the HNI and UHNI segment in India focusing on advisory led investment solutions as opposed to product specific solutions and on long term wealth creation through disciplined investment techniques rather than short term gain. They seek to partner with clients to help them meet their long-term financial goals around wealth creation, preservation, and transfer to the next generation by investing their surplus wealth into quality financial products that have the ability to generate long-term compounding returns over many years. The firm is a SEBI Registered Investment Advisor and currently represents over 3,200 HNI families as on 31st March 2023. They are recipients of several reputed national and international awards.

About ASK Group: ASK is a leading player in the asset & wealth management business and primarily caters to the HNI and UHNI market with over three decades of presence. ASK has been a true believer in the Indian growth story and over the years has grown hand-in-hand with its clients across the globe. ASK is represented in India through its three key businesses: Portfolio Management Services & Alternative Investment Funds – ASK Investment Managers; Real Estate Private Equity – ASK Property Fund; and Wealth Advisory and Multi-Family Office Service – ASK Private Wealth. It has over 30 offices and branches across India, Dubai, and Singapore through which it services the needs of clients. It caters to multiple asset classes and investors (such as HNI, institutional, family office, pension funds, funds of funds and sovereign wealth funds) across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. ASK group manages assets over Rs. 81,900 cr / US\$ 9.98 bn. as on 30th June 2023. For more information, please visit www.askfinancials.com

For further details, please contact:

<p>ASK Group Nazneen Hussain nhussain@askgroup.in +919321227447</p>	<p>Concept PR Premal Mandavia premal@conceptpr.com +91 9819996228</p>
--	--