

South Korean investor in talks to acquire stake in Manulife US REIT's manager - REITSWEEK

South Korean firm Mirae Asset Global Investments has emerged as a potential stakeholder in US office landlord, Manulife US REIT (MUST).

The Singapore Exchange (SGX)-listed REIT confirmed on 15 March that it is in talks with the firm as part of the REIT's ongoing strategic review.

As REITsWeek has been reporting since November 2022, MUST is presently in the process of reviewing its investment mandate and partnerships as part of a wider introspection of its business.

This review has been taken amid difficult operating conditions in the US office market, which has led to a fall in the REIT's portfolio valuation.

As part of the talks with Mirae, MUST is exploring a potential transaction that may involve the acquisition of shares in the REIT's manager, and the subscription of new units in the REIT itself.

In its statement on the talks, MUST described Mirae Asset Global Investments as the asset management arm of the Mirae Asset Financial Group and "one of Asia's leading independent financial services companies".

"The company currently invests over USD198 billion on behalf of its clients and operates worldwide across 13 different markets including USA, Canada, UK, Korea Japan, China, Hong Kong, Australia, Brazil, etc", said the REIT in its statement.

"It provides its clients with asset management and investment management services in fully diversified asset classes such as equity, bonds, exchange traded funds, real estate, infrastructure and private equity", it added effusively.

MUST emphasised that while the talks are ongoing, there is no certainty or assurance that any definitive agreements will be entered into, or that any transaction will materialise from the current discussions.

The REIT will make further announcements on this when there is material development.

“In the meantime, unitholders of Manulife US REIT and investors should exercise caution when dealing in the units of Manulife US REIT and its subsidiaries”, it added.

MUST was last done on the SGX at USD0.265, which presently implies a distribution yield of 17.92% according to data on the [Singapore REITs](#) table.