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## First Trust Indxx Innovative Transaction and Process ETF • BLCK

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Interim Management Report of Fund Performance  
June 30, 2021

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# **INTERIM MANAGEMENT REPORT OF FUND PERFORMANCE**

## **June 30, 2021**

### **First Trust Indxx Innovative Transaction and Process ETF (the “First Trust ETF”)**

This interim management report of fund performance contains financial highlights, but does not contain the complete unaudited interim financial statements of the First Trust ETF. All references to dollars contained herein are to Canadian dollars.

Securityholders may also contact us to request a copy of the First Trust ETF’s proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosures relating to the First Trust ETF by calling 1-877-622-5552, by writing to us at FT Portfolios Canada Co., 40 King Street West, Suite 5102, Scotia Plaza, Box 312, Toronto, Ontario M5H 3Y2 or by visiting our website at [www.firsttrust.ca](http://www.firsttrust.ca) or SEDAR at [www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com).

### **Forward-looking Statements**

This document may contain forward-looking statements relating to anticipated future events, results, circumstances, performance or expectations that are not historical facts but instead represent beliefs regarding future events. By their nature, forward-looking statements are based on assumptions and are subject to inherent risks and uncertainties. There is significant risk that forward-looking statements will not prove to be accurate. Readers of this document should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements as a number of factors could cause actual future results, conditions, actions or events to differ materially from the expectations, estimates or intentions expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements. These factors include but are not limited to market and general economic conditions, interest rates, foreign currency exchange rates, the extent of industry sector exposure, the performance of the securities of the issuers held in the portfolio and regulatory developments and the risks detailed in the First Trust ETF’s prospectus. The Manager does not undertake and specifically disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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# First Trust Indxx Innovative Transaction and Process ETF

## Management Report of Fund Performance

### For the six-month period ended June 30, 2021

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#### **Investment Objective and Strategy**

The fundamental investment objective of **First Trust Indxx Innovative Transaction and Process ETF** (the “First Trust ETF”) is to replicate, to the extent possible, the performance of an innovative transaction and process index. Currently, the First Trust ETF seeks to replicate, to the extent possible, the performance of the Indxx Blockchain Index (the “Index”), provided by Indxx, LLC, net of expenses.

The investment strategy of the First Trust ETF is to obtain exposure to the Index by holding shares of a U.S.-listed index ETF, the First Trust Indxx Innovative Transaction & Process ETF (“Underlying Fund”), which replicates or substantially replicates the performance of the Index by directly holding the Constituent Securities of the Index. The First Trust ETF may also hold cash and cash equivalents or other money market instruments to fund current liabilities. The Index seeks to track the performance of exchange-listed common shares (or corresponding ADRs or GDRs) of companies in various industries with their primary listing in developed or emerging market countries that are actively using, investing in, developing or have products that are poised to benefit from blockchain technology and/or the potential for increased efficiency that it provides to various business processes. The Index seeks to include only companies that have devoted material resources to the use of blockchain technologies. However, the Index may contain securities of issuers whose primary business operations are not blockchain related or do not include blockchain related activities.

#### **Risk**

The risks associated with an investment in the First Trust ETF remain as discussed in the First Trust ETF’s most recent prospectus. There have been no significant changes during the reporting period that affected the overall level of risk associated with the First Trust ETF.

#### **Results of Operations**

##### ***General***

The First Trust ETF’s net asset value as of June 30, 2021 was \$2,783,899 or \$26.51 per unit. The First Trust ETF’s net asset value as of December 31, 2020 was \$2,054,184 or \$24.17 per unit.

For the six-month period ended June 30, 2021, the First Trust ETF paid total cash distributions of \$0.0500. In addition, the First Trust ETF declared cash distributions per unit of \$0.0500 for record date of June 30, 2021 with payment date of July 8, 2021.

##### ***Investment Performance***

For the six-month period ended June 30, 2021, the First Trust ETF returned 10.13% compared to the S&P 500 Index (the “benchmark”) total return of 12.02%. Unlike the benchmark, the First Trust ETF’s return is net of fees and expenses.

The First Trust ETF’s only holding, the Underlying Fund, held 100 equity securities as of June 30, 2021. The top ten equity holdings for the Underlying Fund accounted for 16.74% of the portfolio within the Underlying Fund.

The Underlying Fund underperformed the benchmark S&P 500 Index during the period due to stock selection. Poor selection within Financials drove most of the underperformance, particularly due to overweight positions in several international companies such as London Stock Exchange Group PLC, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, and Credit Suisse Group AG. Offsetting poor selection within Financials was an overweight to the Financials sector as a whole which was the second-best performing sector in the benchmark during the period. Additionally, sector allocation mitigated portfolio underperformance due to underweight allocations to Consumer Discretionary, Consumer Staples, and Health Care which all underperformed in the benchmark during the period.

The Underlying Fund’s top five stocks by contribution to return were NVIDIA Corporation, Nordea Bank Abp, A.P. Moller – Maersk A/S Class B, Wipro Limited Sponsored ADR, and Fujitsu Limited. The bottom five stocks by contribution to return were Cognizant Technology Solutions Corporation, Haier Smart Home Co., Ltd. Class D, London Stock Exchange Group plc, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, and JD.com, Inc Sponsored ADR Class A.

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# First Trust Indxx Innovative Transaction and Process ETF

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#### **Recent Developments**

Since, early 2018, the First Trust ETF has given investors exposure to companies involved in the blockchain ecosystem, primarily in the Financials and Information Technology sectors. While enterprise solutions appear to have cooled, retail trading of cryptocurrencies has debatably had its most eventful semiannual period ever. The price of Bitcoin continues to swing wildly as the first half of the year experienced six major drawdowns averaging over 24%; the standard deviation of price changes was over 76% annualized. Bitcoin prices peaked above \$63,000 in April but fell back to where they started the year near \$30,000. Other tokens gained popularity during the retail trading frenzy of the first quarter, including a new type of collectible digital asset called an “NFT” (non-fungible token). Over \$2B of NFTs were bought and sold in the first quarter, a 21x increase from the quarter just a year prior.

A major trend that has continued in 2021 is the growth of decentralized financial systems. Decentralized finance or “DeFi” is the concept of a company maintaining a cryptocurrency ledger and performing services such as lending, borrowing, and storage in the same manner as a traditional bank. Assets deposited as collateral on DeFi platforms have grown to over \$100B or approximately 6% of the total cryptocurrency market. While the use and acceptance of cryptocurrency has continued to expand, including the successful launch of the Chinese digital yuan, cybersecurity has failed to keep up. Protection of digital assets from hackers will be a long-term theme in the blockchain discussion, especially considering the Colonial Pipeline Co. hack and subsequent recovery of ransomed cryptocurrencies by the FBI.

Despite the recent popularity in non-permissioned cryptocurrency trading, much of the expected real-world benefits of blockchain technology are expected to occur behind the scenes in the permissioned ledgers that companies around the world utilize for their private networks. Financial companies are the market leaders in adopting ledger technology but opportunities abound in health care, manufacturing, and e-commerce as well. As COVID-19 vaccines have become ubiquitous in developed markets, efforts to promote global health IDs and vaccine tracking increased adoption of blockchain technology within government organizations. Large technology companies such as Amazon, IBM, and Microsoft that have already leveraged blockchain internally will likely roll out blockchain-as-a-service as part of their cloud offerings. As 2021 looks to the back half of the year, digital currency is retaining its spot atop the use cases for blockchain technology followed by enterprise data sharing/reconciliation and then identity protection.

#### **Related Party Transactions**

FT Portfolios Canada Co. is the Manager of the First Trust ETF and is a Canadian affiliate of First Trust Advisors L.P., the investment advisor (the “Advisor”) of the First Trust ETF.

Pursuant to terms of the declaration of trust of the First Trust ETF, the Manager provides or arranges for all management, administrative and other services required by the First Trust ETF. The Manager receives a management fee from the First Trust ETF. For further details, please see “Management Fees”.

The Manager has retained the Advisor to provide certain services to the First Trust ETF pursuant to an investment advisory agreement. The Advisor receives advisory fees from the Manager out of the management fee.

# First Trust Indxx Innovative Transaction and Process ETF

## Management Report of Fund Performance

### For the six-month period ended June 30, 2021

#### Financial Highlights

The following tables show selected key financial information about the First Trust ETF and are intended to help you understand the First Trust ETF's financial performance for the past three years. This information is derived from the First Trust ETF's current unaudited interim and audited annual financial statements.

#### Net Asset Value per Unit

BLCK	June 30, 2021	Dec. 31, 2020	Dec. 31, 2019	Dec. 31, 2018 <sup>(a)</sup>
Net asset value, beginning of period/year <sup>(1)</sup>	\$24.17	\$20.91	\$17.70	\$20.00 <sup>(b)</sup>
Increase (Decrease) from operations:				
Total revenue	0.21	0.24	0.38	0.26
Total expenses	(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Realized gains (losses) for the period/year	0.01	0.24	0.22	-
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period/year	2.23	2.53	3.41	(3.07)
Total increase (decrease) from operations <sup>(2)</sup>	\$2.43	\$2.94	\$3.92	\$(2.87)
Distributions:				
From income (excluding dividends)	(0.10)	(0.01)	(0.52)	(0.15)
From dividends	-	-	-	-
From capital gains	-	-	-	-
Return of capital	-	(0.05)	-	-
Total annual distributions <sup>(3)</sup>	\$(0.10)	\$(0.06)	\$(0.52)	\$(0.15)
Net asset value, end of period/year <sup>(4)</sup>	\$26.51	\$24.17	\$20.91	\$17.70

(a) December 31, 2018 does not relate to the full year as the First Trust ETF commenced operations on March 23, 2018.

(b) Seed capital

(1) This information is provided as at June 30, 2021 and December 31 of the period/years shown and is prepared under IFRS.

(2) Net asset value and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase/decrease from operations is based on the weighted average number of units outstanding over the period/year.

(3) Distributions were paid in cash or reinvested in additional units of the First Trust ETF, or both. Non-cash distributions are reinvested in additional units of the First Trust ETF and subsequently consolidated. Neither the number of units held by the unitholder, nor the net asset per unit of the First Trust ETF change as a result of any non-cash distributions.

(4) This table is not intended to be a reconciliation of beginning to ending net asset value per unit.

#### Ratios and Supplemental Data

BLCK	June 30, 2021	Dec. 31, 2020	Dec. 31, 2019	Dec. 31, 2018
Net asset value (000's)	\$2,784	\$2,054	\$2,091	\$4,425
Number of units outstanding	105,000	85,000	100,000	250,000
Management expense ratio <sup>(1)</sup>	0.81%	0.81%	0.81%	0.81%
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorption	0.83%	0.84%	0.83%	0.83%
Trading expense ratio <sup>(2)</sup>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>(3)</sup>	0.17%	0.62%	0.42%	0.25%
Net asset value per unit	\$26.51	\$24.17	\$20.91	\$17.70

(1) Management expense ratio is based on total expenses (excluding commissions and other portfolio transaction costs) for the stated period/year, including the First Trust ETF's proportionate share of the MER of any underlying fund in which the First Trust ETF has invested, and is expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the period/year.

(2) The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the period/year. This includes the First Trust ETF's proportionate share of the commissions of any underlying fund in which the First Trust ETF has invested.

(3) The First Trust ETF's portfolio turnover rate indicates how actively the First Trust ETF's portfolio advisor manages its portfolio investments. A portfolio turnover rate of 100% is equivalent to the First Trust ETF buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the period/year. The higher a First Trust ETF's portfolio turnover rate in a period/year, the greater the trading cost payable by the First Trust ETF in the period/year, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains in the period/year. There is not necessarily a relationship between high turnover rate and the performance of a First Trust ETF.

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#### Management Fees

The First Trust ETF will pay the Manager a management fee of 0.15% based on the average daily NAV of the First Trust ETF. The management fee, plus applicable taxes including HST, will be accrued daily and paid monthly in arrears. The Manager may, from time to time in its discretion, waive all or a portion of the management fee charged at any given time.

*The First Trust ETF will bear the Underlying Fund's management fee of 0.65% per annum on average daily net assets on the First Trust ETF's portfolio assets invested in the Underlying Fund. Accordingly, the management fee cost to unitholders of their investment will be 0.80% per annum of NAV of the First Trust ETF plus applicable taxes.*

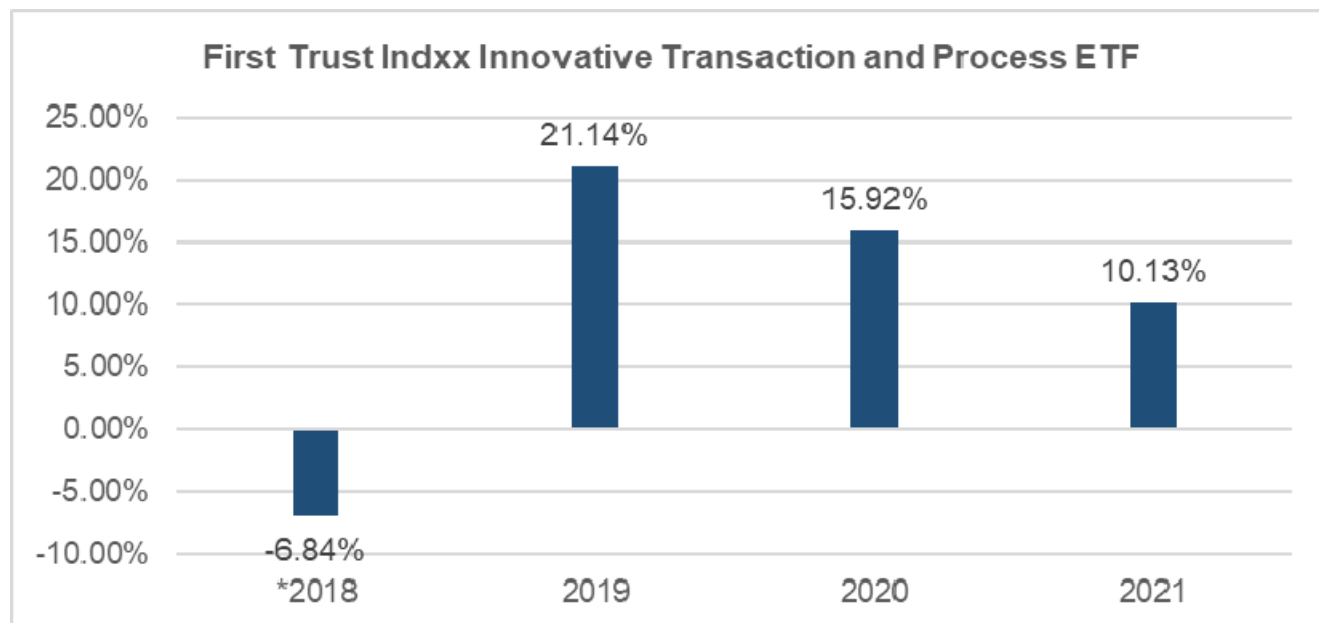
#### Past Performance

##### General

The past performance information shown assumes that all distributions made by the First Trust ETF in the period shown were reinvested in additional securities of the First Trust ETF. The performance information does not take into account sales, redemption, distribution or other optional charges that would have reduced returns or performance. How the First Trust ETF has performed in the past does not necessarily indicate how it will perform in the future.

##### Year by Year Returns

The bar chart below shows the First Trust ETF's performance for the six-month period ended June 30, 2021, for the years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019, and for the period from commencement of operations to December 31, 2018 and illustrates how the investment fund's performance has changed from year to year. The chart also shows, in percentage terms, how much an investment made on the first day of each financial year would have grown or decreased by the last day of each financial year.



\*First Trust ETF Commencement: March 23, 2018

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## First Trust Indxx Innovative Transaction and Process ETF Management Report of Fund Performance For the six-month period ended June 30, 2021

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### Summary of Investment Portfolio

The table below sets out the percentage (based on total net asset value) of the First Trust ETF's holdings as at June 30, 2021. This summary of portfolio holdings may change due to ongoing portfolio transactions of the First Trust ETF. Daily and quarterly updates are available at [www.firsttrust.ca](http://www.firsttrust.ca).

Holdings	% of ETF Total Net Asset Value
First Trust Indxx Innovative Transaction & Process ETF	99.51%
Cash and Cash Equivalents	0.68%
Other Assets, Less Liabilities	-0.19%
Total	100.00%

### Portfolio Breakdown

The table below sets out the percentage (based on total net asset value) of the First Trust ETF's portfolio as at June 30, 2021.

Sector Weightings	% of ETF Total Net Asset Value
Exchange-Traded Fund	99.51%
Cash and Cash Equivalents	0.68%
Other Assets, Less Liabilities	-0.19%
Total	100.00%



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