

Morgan Stanley Investment Funds

Global Bond Fund

BROAD MARKETS FIXED INCOME TEAM

Performance Review

In the one month period ending 31 August 2023, the Fund's I shares returned -1.69% (net of fees)¹, while the benchmark returned -1.37%.

The portfolio's positioning in developed market rates (Japanese yen, New Zealand dollar) was negative.

The contribution from emerging markets local rates was negative overall, with the main driver being the exposure to Mexico.

Exposure to emerging markets external rates contributed negatively on wider spreads.

The allocation to investment grade — i.e., preference for euro over U.S. dollar (USD) credit, bias to financials with a focus on significantly important institutions — and high yield corporates (predominantly industrials) both detracted, as spreads widened overall.

Within securitized assets, the allocation to non-agency residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBS) was positive.

Within currencies, the long position in emerging market currencies expressed versus USD detracted, with most of the losses seen in Brazilian real.

Market Review

August saw government yields broadly higher across the globe. Yields in both the developed and emerging markets rose. The developed markets saw curves steepening, with the long end rising more than the front end as the possibility of rate cuts was pushed further into the future and the idea of rates staying higher for longer gained credibility. We believe we are still close to the end of the rate-hiking cycle, but rates may remain range-bound until the data proves otherwise. Emerging market yields also sold off as the inflation picture has not reversed course as dramatically as previously expected.

The investment grade credit market lost steam following the rally during the first few months of summer. With weaker-than-expected data coming out of Europe and China and central banks reemphasizing their data dependency, credit spreads in the asset class widened over the month. High yield was a different story, with lower-rated securities outperforming their higher-rated counterparts. This was mainly due to the strength of the U.S. economy and the historically low levels of defaults remaining largely subdued.

The U.S. securitized credit market had a decent month relative to corporate credit as fundamentals in the asset class, particularly in the residential mortgage market, remained strong. Similar to what was seen in the high yield markets, with relatively low historic delinquency levels remaining subdued, the asset class grinded tighter over the month. The European market marginally widened as the economic picture in the region continued to deteriorate.

Portfolio Activity

Overall, the duration of the portfolio was decreased by 0.08 years, closing at +0.25 years relative to the benchmark.

Within developed market rates, we increased the short position in Japanese government bonds and started an underweight position to the U.K. given persistent price and wage pressures.

Within emerging markets local rates, we scaled back duration exposure in Mexico on recent weakness, to reduce risk.

Within credit, we maintain a long position in investment grade, predominantly through financials and a preference for euro credit relative to USD credit, with an overall focus on the intermediate part of the curve versus the short end. August activity was muted, reflecting reduced secondary liquidity in the summer. New issues late in the month offered opportunities to switch out of secondary positions that screened expensive.

Within securitized assets, there were no major changes. We added slightly to agency RMBS given attractive valuations versus investment grade credit. Overall, we maintain a positive view to securitized credit given attractive valuations, low supply and strong underwriting.

Regarding currency positioning, we reduced our short position in USD and scaled back previous long positions in Norwegian krone and New Zealand dollar.

¹ Source: Morgan Stanley Investment Management Limited. Data as of 31 August 2023.

Strategy and Outlook

A very benign July turned a bit negative in August. Risk assets underperformed, across credit, emerging markets and equities, while developed market government bond market yields went sideways or up. While it is too early to tell if a new trend has begun or if this simply reflects the usual seasonal pattern of struggling markets in the August-October period, some additional clarity has emerged. On one hand, the global economy has become very desynchronized. The U.S. economy is powering ahead, with gross domestic product (GDP) growth accelerating quarter-by-quarter such that current expectations for third quarter growth now hover around 3%, substantially higher than 2022. This isn't just resiliency; this is strength!

On the other hand, Europe and China significantly underperformed. Indeed, deflation has returned to China under the weight of a deteriorating property sector and faltering exports. Europe is flirting with recession as survey data suggests very weak manufacturing output and slowing services. Unfortunately, unlike in China, European inflation remains quite elevated. Uniquely, the U.S. has become the fastest-growing country and has managed to maintain relatively low inflation. Quite an achievement, and one that may not last.

What this means is that upward pressure on U.S. yields remains. U.S. recession risk keeps getting pushed further and further into the future. Two of our key views are 1) that while recession risk remains, it is much more of a late-2024 risk than anything to worry about for the next six months, and 2) that recession risk depends on U.S. growth remaining resilient and inflation stubborn. If this combination persists into 2024, the Federal Reserve (Fed) may have to either raise rates further (not our current view) or maintain them at current levels for all of 2024, which markets are not discounting. This could lead to a harder landing, which we define as a mild recession with the unemployment rate rising to the mid 4% area and GDP growth falling below 1%. If this scenario did materialize, it would likely lead to higher yields and underperformance of credit and emerging markets as rates stay high or even move higher.

U.S. economic resilience has helped push 10-year U.S. Treasury yields to a new post-2007 high, before pulling back on a benign July inflation report. But the bond market is not out of the woods. While September's August inflation report will also likely be benign, we are not convinced inflation will quickly or easily return to target within the Fed's time frame. Wage pressures remain and labor markets in general remain tight. While job growth has decelerated meaningfully over 2023, gains are still above that compatible with a stable unemployment rate. And, despite all the headlines of layoffs, jobless claims have fallen for four consecutive weeks. Moreover, wage settlements continue to suggest a 5% or higher risk to wages, which looks incompatible with the Fed's 2%-2.5% inflation comfort zone.

As the probability of a "soft landing" grows, the likelihood that the Fed raises its estimate of the long-run or terminal fed funds rate increases. Currently, the Fed has stated it believes the terminal rate is 2.5%. When the Fed meets later this month it will release its forecasts for this and other economic variables. We think there is a meaningful risk the Fed raises this terminal rate forecast higher, which could put upward pressure on yields even if inflation forecasts are unchanged.

The European bond outlook looks better given weaker economic performance and growing concerns at the European Central Bank, even among the so-called hawks, about not overdoing it on monetary policy. At the margin we prefer non-USD interest rate risk to that in the U.S., particularly U.K. rates, along with New Zealand and Australian yields, as they appear to have better value.

In credit, we have not altered our views. Markets continue to embrace the soft-landing scenario, notwithstanding the modest spread widening in August. Year-to-date, spreads have tightened and continued to hover near their lows. In the investment grade space, we view non-financials and A-rated bonds as expensive or rich relative to their fundamentals and prefer large-cap financials and BBB-rated corporate hybrids given their extra yield and likely ability to weather financial volatility. That said, we do not see a reason to be overly bearish. Fundamentals remain solid both at a macro and sector level, and rates volatility is likely to diminish over the rest of the year. The other challenge for investment grade corporates is wide spreads on U.S. agency mortgages. These spreads are quite competitive to higher quality investment grade, and we could substitute these for many alternatives in the investment grade universe.

The high yield market is more erratic. Spreads are in the bottom quartile, but yields are in the top quartile historically. Yield buyers find them attractive; spread buyers see them as risky. Our view: be selective. Avoiding defaults and blow-ups will eventually be key as higher rates and refinancing risks feed into corporate performance and outlooks. We are modestly positive.

We continue to favor shorter-maturity securitized credit — RMBS, asset-backed securities (ABS), selected commercial mortgage-backed securities (CMBS) — as offering the best opportunities in fixed income. That said, the outlook has modestly deteriorated as household balance sheets come under more pressure and excess savings are run down. We are trying to take advantage of higher yields on higher quality issuers to achieve our target returns, rather than venture down the risk/rating spectrum. Our favorite category of securitized credit remains non-agency residential mortgages, despite challenging home affordability. Somewhat surprisingly, U.S. housing looks like it may have bottomed out, with prices rising once again.

Recent good news on the U.S. economy has helped the dollar strengthen. While the U.S. dollar looks vulnerable in the medium term, other developed market currencies do not offer compelling advantages at the moment. Negative growth dynamics in Europe and China are undermining the attractiveness of their currencies and those of other emerging markets. The most undervalued currency continues to be the Japanese yen, but given the slow-moving nature of Japanese monetary policy and still exceptionally high hedging costs, it will be difficult for the yen to rally until Japanese rates move higher or U.S. rates begin to fall. We have moved to a more neutral stance on the dollar versus both developed and emerging market currencies as the differentiated economic

performances in the U.S. and China undermine the ability of emerging market currencies to strengthen. Likewise, we have downgraded our views and exposures in emerging markets local rates. Longer term, many emerging market bond markets look attractive, but for now the pincer of stronger U.S. growth, weaker Chinese growth and a stronger U.S. dollar undermines their case. Rising commodity prices, including oil, could also prevent emerging market countries from following through on rate cuts, or at least inhibit the countries' ability to cut from a position of strength.

For further information, please contact your Morgan Stanley Investment Management representative.

Fund Facts

Launch date	01 November 1989
Base currency	U.S. dollars
Benchmark	Custom- Blended Benchmark

Calendar Year Returns (%)

Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.

	YTD	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Class I Shares	0.58	-16.73	-5.10	10.48	8.79	-2.63	9.57	2.37	-4.52	2.05	-2.01
Blended Benchmark	0.74	-16.25	-4.71	9.20	6.84	-1.20	7.39	2.09	-3.15	0.59	-2.60

All performance data is calculated NAV to NAV, net of fees, and does not take account of commissions and costs incurred on the issue and redemption of units. The sources for all performance and Index data is Morgan Stanley Investment Management. **Please visit our website www.morganstanley.com/im to see the latest performance returns for the fund's other share classes.**

Share Class I Risk and Reward Profile

The risk and reward category shown is based on historic data.

- Historic figures are only a guide and may not be a reliable indicator of what may happen in the future.
- As such this category may change in the future.
- The higher the category, the greater the potential reward, but also the greater the risk of losing the investment. Category 1 does not indicate a risk free investment.
- The fund is in this category because it invests in fixed income securities and the fund's simulated and/or realised return has experienced medium rises and falls historically.
- The fund may be impacted by movements in the exchange rates between the fund's currency and the currencies of the fund's investments.

This rating does not take into account other risk factors which should be considered before investing, these include:

- The value of bonds are likely to decrease if interest rates rise and vice versa.
- The value of financial derivative instruments are highly sensitive and may result in losses in excess of the amount invested by the Sub-Fund.
- Issuers may not be able to repay their debts, if this happens the value of your investment will decrease. This risk is higher where the fund invests in a bond with a lower credit rating.
- The fund relies on other parties to fulfill certain services, investments or transactions. If these parties become insolvent, it may expose the fund to financial loss.

- Sustainability factors can pose risks to investments, for example: impact asset values, increased operational costs.
- There may be an insufficient number of buyers or sellers which may affect the funds ability to buy or sell securities.
- Investment in Fixed Income Securities via the China Interbank Bond Market may also entail additional risks, such as counterparty and liquidity risk.
- There are increased risks of investing in emerging markets as political, legal and operational systems may be less developed than in developed markets.
- Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results. Returns may increase or decrease as a result of currency fluctuations. The value of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up and investors may lose all or a substantial portion of his or her investment.
- The value of the investments and the income from them will vary and there can be no assurance that the Fund will achieve its investment objectives.
- Investments may be in a variety of currencies and therefore changes in rates of exchange between currencies may cause the value of investments to decrease or increase. Furthermore, the value of investments may be adversely affected by fluctuations in exchange rates between the investor's reference currency and the base currency of the investments.

Please refer to the Prospectus for full risk disclosures. All data as of 31 August 2023 and subject to change daily.

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Information in relation to sustainability aspects of the Fund

and the summary of investor rights is available at the aforementioned website.

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March 2004, the **FTSE WGBI Index** to 31 January 2010 and the **Bloomberg Global Aggregate Bond Index** thereafter.

The **Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index**: provides a broad-based measure of the global investment grade fixed-rate debt markets. Total Returns shown is unhedged USD. The index is unmanaged and does not include any expenses, fees or sales charges. It is not possible to invest directly in an index.

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The **FTSE WGBI Index**: measures the performance of fixed-rate, local currency, and investment grade sovereign bonds. The WGBI provides a broad benchmark for the global sovereign fixed income market.

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