



Global X Active Global Fixed Income (HAF)

Market Overview

The third quarter (Q3) of 2024 experienced a solid rally on the rates side as inflation moved in the right direction and rate cut expectations built up among market participants. Weaker U.S. economic numbers such as a lower revision on the employment front and some leading indicators suggested a contraction in the manufacturing sector helped fuel a bond market rally and led the U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) to begin a monetary easing cycle. U.S. 10-year yields moved from 4.40% at the end of June to 3.77% at the end of Q3.

The Fed decided to lower its target range for the federal funds rate by 50 basis points (bps) at its September meeting, highlighting the progress on the inflation front but also the slowdown on the employment side. In Europe, the European Central Bank went with a 60 bps rate cut in September, as inflationary pressure eased and the economic environment showed signs of softness. The Bank of England decided to be more prudent and cut by 25 bps due to slightly higher inflation. In Asia, Japan decided to keep the status quo while China decided to cut rates and push for fiscal stimulus. On the emerging market front, central banks in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Chile, and South Africa cut rates, while the central bank of Brazil hiked them.

On the credit front, the market has experienced some volatility, especially in August following the Nikkei event where credit spreads widened. That event was short-lived and ended up being a buying opportunity. Early September was busy with many corporate new issuances.

Quarter in Review

Fiera Capital Corporation's (the Sub-Advisor) active approach to duration, sector allocation, and security selection supported performance during Q3.

During the quarter, our long duration in U.S. dollars (USD), euros (EUR) and Mexican pesos (MXN) proved to be positive contributors. HAF trimmed duration in USD and MXN before the Fed's rate decision as the market was already pricing-in significant cuts. The fund increased duration in British pounds (GBP) duration as the Sub-Advisor thinks the Bank of England will switch gears in Q4 and potentially be more dovish.

The Sub-Advisor continues to be selective on credit, seeking value as it considers the market is pricing a "perfect" soft landing scenario too aggressively. The Sub-Advisor prefers to remain more defensive on credit and be ready to take advantage of future opportunities while still maintaining a strong carry.

Sector-wise, on the investment grade front, the Sub-Advisor favours the industrial sector and sees good value in the securitization front within the Datacenter and Fiber sector. The Sub-Advisor remains selective with high-yield issuers and sector exposure is concentrated in Communication, Industrial, Energy, and Financials in specific issuers where the Sub-Advisor sees good value. HAF has continued to gradually reduce its exposure to Additional Tier 1 bonds (AT1) to be slightly more defensive.

On the emerging market front, HAF remains overweight in Latin America considering the Sub-Advisor's expectation of the continuation of the easing cycle for central banks combined with attractive positive real interest rates. The Sub-Advisor also favours Central & Eastern Europe on the hard currency front.

Outlook and Positioning

Global bond markets offer a lot of opportunities, and the asset class is attractive considering higher rates globally. The Sub-Advisor expects economic softness in the coming quarter and prefers duration risk rather than credit risk. The Sub-Advisor also prefers to keep some dry powder to deploy when credit spreads are wider. Starting in Q4, HAF is well positioned to encounter various market environments considering its strong yield carry protection provided by an overall investment grade profile and a diversified source of income. The strategy currently generates a yield of 6.09% combined with a duration of 6.34 years with an overall credit rating of A-.

Source: Fiera Capital Corporation as at September 30, 2024.



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