

Fund description and summary of investment policy

The Fund invests in a focused portfolio of African securities that are selected for their expected risk and return profile. The Fund may invest a substantial portion of the assets in a single country or region rather than a diversified portfolio of assets.

Classification: Africa – Interest Bearing

Fund objective and benchmark

The Fund seeks to achieve the maximum US dollar total return while minimising the risk of loss within the context of an African bond fund. The benchmark is the FTSE 3 Month US T Bill + 4% Index.

African security markets

There are numerous risks involved in investing in African security markets. These risks may be significantly higher than in more developed markets and may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Individual countries may impose capital controls preventing the repatriation of foreign currency
- Returns are expected to be more volatile, and the average drawdown may be higher, than in more developed markets
- Low liquidity whereby subscriptions into the Fund may have to be phased in, and redemptions from the Fund may be limited per dealing day
- Market prices may not accurately reflect the fair value of a Fund asset and fair value pricing may be used

There is no assurance that the investment approach of the Fund will be successful or that the Fund will achieve its investment objective.

See the “Important information for investors” section for more information.

How we aim to achieve the Fund’s objective

We assess an asset’s intrinsic value based on long-term fundamentals and invest where our assessment of intrinsic value exceeds the price by a margin of safety. This approach allows us to identify assets that may be out of favour with the market because of poor near-term prospects, but offer good value over the long term.

Suitable for those investors who

- Seek exposure to African interest-bearing assets
- Are comfortable with above-average market and currency fluctuations
- Are prepared to take on the risk of capital loss
- Have a minimum investment horizon of five years

Fund information on 31 January 2024

Fund currency	US\$
Fund size	US\$309m
Number of shares	1 769 316
Price (net asset value per share)	US\$167.08
Number of issuers	16
Dealing day	Weekly (Thursday)
Class	C
Class inception date	14 May 2020

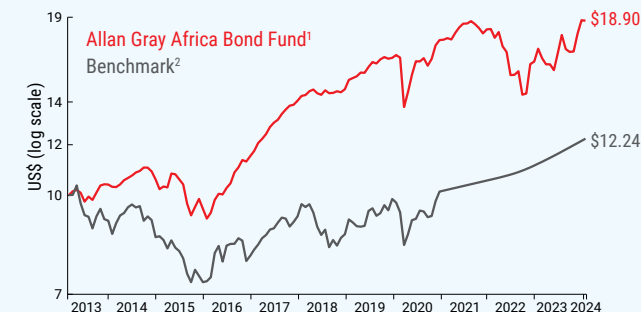
Minimum investment amounts

Minimum initial investment	US\$100 000
Minimum subsequent investment	US\$1 000

- Prior to the inception of this class of the Fund, the performance and risk measures are calculated using the A class performance of the Fund. The net of fee return is calculated as the gross of fee return reduced by an investment management fee of 0.7% per annum, which is accrued monthly in arrears.
- The current benchmark is the FTSE 3 Month US T Bill + 4% Index. From inception to 31 December 2020 the benchmark was the J.P. Morgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index. Performance as calculated by Allan Gray as at 31 January 2024. Calculation based on the latest available data as supplied by third parties.
- Maximum percentage decline over any period calculated from monthly returns. The maximum drawdown occurred from August 2021 to September 2022 and maximum benchmark drawdown occurred from April 2013 to December 2015. Drawdown is calculated on the total return of the Fund/benchmark (i.e. including income).
- The percentage of calendar months in which the Fund produced a positive monthly return since inception.
- The standard deviation of the Fund’s monthly return. This is a measure of how much an investment’s return varies from its average over time.
- This is the highest or lowest rolling 12-month return the Fund has experienced since inception. The Fund’s highest annual return occurred during the 12 months ended 28 February 2017 and the benchmark’s occurred during the 12 months ended 31 March 2021. The Fund’s lowest annual return occurred during the 12 months ended 30 September 2022 and the benchmark’s occurred during the 12 months ended 31 August 2015. All rolling 12-month figures for the Fund and the benchmark are available from the Allan Gray Service Team on request.

Performance in US\$ net of all fees and expenses

Value of US\$10 invested at inception with all distributions reinvested



% Returns	Fund ¹	Benchmark ²
Cumulative:		
Since inception (27 March 2013)	89.0	22.4
Annualised:		
Since inception (27 March 2013)	6.0	1.9
Latest 10 years	6.2	3.5
Latest 5 years	4.6	6.0
Latest 3 years	2.6	6.4
Latest 2 years	1.8	7.6
Latest 1 year	10.8	9.4
Year-to-date (not annualised)	-0.1	0.8
Risk measures (since inception, based on month-end prices)		
Maximum drawdown ³	-22.8	-29.3
Percentage positive months ⁴	64.9	68.7
Annualised monthly volatility ⁵	10.7	9.9
Highest annual return ⁶	28.4	22.3
Lowest annual return ⁶	-22.0	-21.5

Meeting the Fund objective

The Fund seeks to achieve the maximum US dollar return while minimising the risk of loss within the context of an African bond fund. The Fund experiences periods of underperformance in pursuit of this objective. Since inception, the Fund has outperformed its benchmark and delivered positive absolute returns in US dollars.

Subscription and redemption charge

Investors may be charged 0.5% when subscribing for Fund shares. Investors may be charged 0.5% when redeeming Fund shares in the case of significant redemptions. These charges are paid into the Fund to offset the costs associated with the transactions that are borne by the Fund. Allan Gray Bermuda Limited (the "Investment Manager") may waive these charges if transactions substantially offset one another.

Annual management fee

The management fee consists of a fixed fee of 0.70% p.a.

Total expense ratio (TER) and transaction costs⁷

The annual management fee charged is included in the TER. The TER is a measure of the actual expenses incurred by the Fund over a one- and three-year period (annualised). Since Fund returns are quoted after deduction of these expenses, the TER should not be deducted from the published returns (refer to page 4 for further information). Transaction costs are disclosed separately.

TER and transaction costs breakdown for the 1- and 3-year period ending 31 December 2023	1yr %	3yr %
Total expense ratio	0.78	0.80
Management fee	0.70	0.70
Custody fees	0.06	0.07
Other costs excluding transaction costs	0.02	0.03
Transaction costs	0.00	0.00
Total investment charge	0.78	0.80

7. Prior to the inception of this class of the Fund, the TER and transaction costs data is that of the A Class of the Fund, reduced by 0.3% p.a.

Fund positioning on 31 January 2024⁸

	Local currency	Foreign currency	% of portfolio
Governments¹⁰	19.4	50.0	69.4
Ivory Coast	0.0	14.1	14.1
Egypt	2.4	9.7	12.1
Senegal	0.0	12.0	12.0
Uganda	9.4	0.0	9.4
South Africa	7.6	0.0	7.6
Ghana	0.0	6.2	6.2
Benin	0.0	4.2	4.2
United States	0.0	2.4	2.4
Zambia	0.0	1.4	1.4
Nigeria	0.0	0.0	0.0
Corporates¹⁰	0.0	26.7	26.7
Nigeria	0.0	14.4	14.4
South Africa	0.0	6.9	6.9
Ghana	0.0	3.8	3.9
United States	0.0	1.6	1.6
Cash⁹	0.2	3.6	3.9
Total (%)¹⁰	19.7	80.3	100.0

Weighted average yield on 31 January 2024

	Weighted average yield (%)	% of portfolio
Local currency	14.1	19.4
Other ¹¹	8.6	28.4
US\$	15.8	48.3
Cash	0.0	3.9
Total	12.8	100.0

Asset allocation on 31 January 2024

Asset Class	Total
Net equity	0.0
Hedged equity	0.0
Property	0.0
Commodity-linked	0.0
Bonds	91.5
Money market, bank deposits and currency hedges	8.5
Total (%)¹⁰	100.0

8. The total Nigerian exposure includes accruals for naira-settled currency forwards, valued at the Nigerian Autonomous Foreign Exchange Rate (NAFEX), that are shown under cash.

9. Cash is held in multiple currencies and includes USD treasury bills.

10. There may be slight discrepancies in the totals due to rounding.

11. Represents all non-cash holdings not denominated in local African currency or US\$ (eg. EUR)

Five years ago, we wrote the following in the Fund's December 2018 commentary:

"Looking forward, there are concerns that African countries have taken on excessive amounts of hard currency debt. A rapid rise in debt is risky, particularly when the debt is denominated in a stronger and more stable currency than that of the issuer. History suggests that similar situations periodically result in defaults, and it is probable that recent excesses in Africa could have sobering consequences over the coming years."

Little did we know how sobering the subsequent five years would be.

The saying goes that Africa is not for the faint of heart. This has been especially true for African fixed income investors in recent years.

The shock of COVID-19 combined with questionable fiscal decisions crippled many African economies. Debt levels approached or breached sustainable levels, leaving governments with fewer, harder choices. Previously sound countries defaulted, most notably Zambia and Ghana. Others progressed down a potentially similar path, including important economies such as Nigeria and Egypt. Debt concerns scared away foreign capital, putting pressure on local currencies. The Nigerian naira, Egyptian pound, Ghanaian cedi and Zambian kwacha have all lost about half their value relative to the US dollar over the last five years, with worrying consequences for everyday cost of living and their governments' ability to service their debt.

It has been a difficult environment for investing in African bonds. Despite this, Fund returns of 5.3% per annum over the last five years are acceptable in absolute terms and good relative to alternatives. This is similarly true since inception. US\$100 invested in the Fund in March 2013 would be worth about US\$190 today. That same US\$100 would be worth US\$110 if one had invested it in the FTSE/JSE All Bond Index (the South African bond index), US\$120 in the J.P. Morgan Global Government Bond Index (a global bond index) and US\$140 in the supposedly higher return FTSE/JSE All Share Index (the South African equity index).

The saying goes that the windscreen is bigger than the rearview mirror. While it is pleasing to look back at the Fund's performance, it is more important to look forward. We cannot predict the future, but we believe the Fund's outlook is particularly attractive today. The exuberance of cheap and easy money in the early 2010s has been replaced by realism. Capital is scarce. Global investors remain scarred by recent events – with most remaining unwilling to engage with African borrowers. African bond prices reflect this indifference. This is an ideal setup for long-term active investors such as ourselves.

The Fund's holdings highlight the opportunities. Ivory Coast, Senegal, Uganda and South Africa are among the Fund's largest exposures. None appear in imminent distress yet offer high single-digit yields in US dollars and low double-digit yields in local currencies. These are combined with US dollar bonds issued by defaulting sovereigns such as Zambia and Ghana. These price in what we regard as punitive haircuts with attractive potential returns as restructuring outcomes are finalised. Egypt is similarly priced with added upside if it can avoid default – an outcome that is increasingly possible as its strategic role in the Middle East is reinforced by recent events.

Approximately a quarter of the Fund is invested in corporate bonds. These are arguably the most attractive opportunities in Africa today but are increasingly rare, as borrowers balk at the high cost of capital. Seplat Energy's 2026 bonds, the Fund's largest single issue exposure, offer low double-digit US dollar yield with low duration and credit risk. Seplat continues to execute well in the difficult Nigerian oil environment and should generate sufficient internal cash flow to repay the bonds before they mature.

During the quarter, we entered a maiden position in Kosmos Energy, a deepwater independent oil and gas exploration and production company. The company's key production assets sit offshore from Ghana, Equatorial Guinea and the US Gulf of Mexico. Their key growth asset pertains to liquefied natural gas projects off the coast of Mauritania and Senegal where they are partnered with BP. We switched our Tullow Oil bond holdings from unsecured debt into debt that is secured by assets. We also switched our Ghanaian and Egyptian sovereign bonds into bonds of the same issuer that should fare better in a restructure scenario. We trimmed our Ugandan and Sasol bond holdings, sold out of our Nigerian bond holdings, and added to Benin, Absa Bank and two-year US Treasury notes.

In summary, we are optimistic about future returns as African bond markets enter a period of rebuilding. We are competing in an uncrowded market with prices reflecting low expectations, which suits our investment philosophy and process. We are therefore hopeful that the Fund will continue to generate attractive and differentiated returns for our clients.

Thank you for your continued support.

Commentary contributed by Mark Dunley-Owen

**Investment team
quarterly commentary
as at 31 December 2023**

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Performance

Collective investment schemes (unit trusts or mutual funds) are generally medium- to long-term investments. Where annualised performance is mentioned, this refers to the average return per year over the period. The value of shares or the investment may go down as well as up and past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Movements in exchange rates may cause the value of underlying international investments to go up or down. Neither the Investment Manager, the Fund, nor the Representative provides any guarantee regarding the capital or the performance of the Fund. Performance figures are provided by the Investment Manager and are for lump sum investments with income distributions reinvested. The performance graph is for illustrative purposes only. Actual investor performance may differ as a result of the investment date, the date of reinvestment and applicable taxes. The yield is current, calculated as at month-end.

J.P. Morgan Index

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FTSE Russell Index

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Share price

Share prices are calculated on a net asset value basis, which is the total market value of all assets in the Fund, including any income accruals, less any permissible deductions from the Fund, divided by the number of shares in issue. Forward pricing is used. The weekly price of the Fund is normally calculated each Friday. Purchase requests must be received by the Registrar of the Fund by 17:00 South African time on that dealing day to receive that week's price. Redemption requests must be received by the Registrar by 17:00 South African time on the dealing day on which shares are to be redeemed to receive that week's price. Share prices are available on www.allangray.co.za.

Fees and charges

Permissible deductions from the Fund may include management fees, brokerage, securities transfer tax, auditor's fees, bank charges and custody fees. A schedule of fees, charges and maximum commissions is available on request from the Representative.

Total expense ratio (TER) and transaction costs

The TER is the annualised percentage of the Fund's average assets under management that has been used to pay the Fund's actual expenses over the past one- and three-year periods. The TER includes the annual management fees that have been charged (both the fee at benchmark and any performance component charged) and other expenses like audit fees. Transaction costs (including brokerage, securities transfer tax and investor protection levies where applicable) are shown separately. There are no explicit brokerage charges in global bond markets. The broker rather takes an undisclosed spread between the purchase and sale price. The spread (charge) can vary from negligible to substantial depending on the asset and market circumstances. The disclosed transaction charge is therefore zero but in reality, there are transaction costs which reflect in the Fund's returns. We aim to minimise costs by keeping our trading activity to a minimum and always seeking out the most favourable price when buying and selling assets. Transaction costs are necessary costs in administering the Fund and impact Fund returns. They should not be considered in isolation as returns may be impacted by many other factors over time, including market returns, the type of fund, the investment decisions of the Investment Manager and the TER. Since Fund returns are quoted after the deduction of these expenses, the TER and transaction costs should not be deducted from published returns. As collective investment scheme expenses vary, the current TER cannot be used as an indication of future TERs. A higher TER does not necessarily imply a poor return, nor does a low TER imply a good return. Instead, when investing, the investment objective of the Fund should be aligned with the investor's objective and compared against the performance of the Fund. The TER and other funds' TERs should then be used to evaluate whether the Fund performance offers value for money. The sum of the TER and transaction costs is shown as the total investment charge (TIC).

African markets

There are significant risks involved in investing in securities listed in the Fund's universe of emerging and developing countries, including liquidity risks, sometimes aggravated by rapid and large outflows of "hot money" and capital flight, concentration risk, currency risks, political and social instability, the possibility of expropriation, confiscatory taxation or nationalisation of assets and the establishment of foreign exchange controls which may include the suspension of the ability to transfer currency from a given country. African countries have varying laws and regulations and, in some, foreign investment is controlled or restricted in varying degrees.

Capacity

The Fund currently has limited capacity. The Investment Manager may, at its discretion, refuse a subscription or phase a subscription into the Fund over a number of dealing days. Total investor redemptions may be limited to US\$5m or 2.5% of the Fund (whichever is less) per dealing day. The Investment Manager retains the right to distribute all or part of any redemption proceeds in specie (in kind).

Fair value pricing

The board of directors of the Fund (the "Board") may fair value the Fund's assets in accordance with the Board's fair value pricing policies if: 1) the closing market quotations or official closing prices are not readily available or do not accurately reflect the fair value of a Fund asset; or 2) the value of a Fund asset has been materially affected by events occurring before the Fund's pricing time but after the close of the exchange or market on which the asset is principally traded. The Board delegates the responsibility for fair value pricing decisions to a valuation committee of the Investment Manager.

Contractual risk

The Fund can use derivatives to manage its exposure to currencies and/or interest rates and this exposes the Fund to contractual risk. Contractual risk includes the risk that a counterparty will not settle a transaction according to its terms and conditions because of a dispute over the terms of the contract (whether or not bona fide) or because of a credit or liquidity problem, causing the Fund to suffer a loss. Such contract counterparty risk is accentuated for contracts with longer maturities where events may intervene to prevent settlement, or where the Fund has concentrated its transactions with a single or small group of counterparties.

Derivatives

Borrowing, leveraging and trading securities on margin will result in interest charges and, depending on the amount of trading activity, such charges could be substantial. The low margin deposits normally required in futures and forward trading, which the Fund may utilise, permit a high degree of leverage. As a result, a relatively small price movement in a futures or forward contract may result in immediate and substantial losses to the investor. Price movements of forward contracts and other derivative contracts in which the assets of the Fund may be invested are highly volatile and are influenced by, among other things, interest rates, changing supply and demand relationships, trade, fiscal, monetary and exchange control programmes and policies of governments, and national and international political and economic events and policies. Forward contracts are not traded on exchanges and are not standardised; rather, banks and dealers act as principals in these markets, negotiating each transaction on an individual basis. Trading in forward contracts is substantially unregulated and there is no limitation on daily price movements.

FTSE/JSE All Share Index and FTSE/JSE All Bond Index

The FTSE/JSE All Share Index and FTSE/JSE All Bond Index are calculated by FTSE International Limited ("FTSE") in conjunction with the JSE Limited ("JSE") in accordance with standard criteria. The FTSE/JSE All Share Index and FTSE/JSE All Bond Index are the proprietary information of FTSE and the JSE. All copyright subsisting in the values and constituent lists of the FTSE/JSE All Share Index and FTSE/JSE All Bond Index vests in FTSE and the JSE jointly. All their rights are reserved.

Important information for investors

Need more information?

You can obtain additional information about the Fund, including copies of the prospectus, application forms and the annual report, free of charge, by contacting the Allan Gray service team, at **0860 000 654** or **+27 (0)21 415 2301** or by email at allangraybermuda@allangray.com.