



See money differently

Quarterly Report: **Nedgroup Investments** **XS Guarded Fund of Funds**

as at 31 December 2023

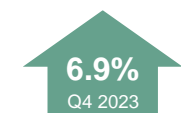
Quarterly report: Nedgroup Investments



Domestic asset class returns (ZAR)



SA Equity



9.3% 1 year

13.5% 3 years

12.3% LT average

SA equity market rallied in Q4 supported by global sentiment and prospects of lower interest rates.

SA Property



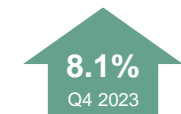
10.2% 1 year

14.9% 3 years

11.3% LT average

SA property rebounded as the market became more confident that the rate hiking cycle is over.

SA Bond



9.7% 1 year

7.4% 3 years

7.0% LT average

Positive global and domestic factors led to a healthy rally in SA bonds.

SA Cash



7.3% 1 year

5.4% 3 years

5.9% LT average

MPC unanimously kept the repo rate unchanged at 8.25% in November – the third consecutive meeting with no change.



Global asset class returns (USD)



Global Equity



22.8% 1 year

6.2% 3 years

8.6% LT average

US equities (+11.8%) was the top performer helped by the strong performance of technology stocks.

Global Property



10.9% 1 year

2.2% 3 years

6.3% LT average

Global real estate (+15.6%) reflected their sensitivity to falling interest rate expectations.

Global Bond



5.7% 1 year

-5.5% 3 years

4.3% LT average

Government bonds (+5.3%) did well but lagged riskier areas as the strong rally in equities tightened spreads.

US Cash



5.3% 1 year

2.7% 3 years

3.7% LT average

US Federal Reserve language seemed to change from 'higher for longer' to 'higher for not much longer'.



Exchange rates (Rand spot rate and quarterly change)



US Dollar R18.29



The rand had a strong start relative to the US dollar this quarter as the US Fed maintained rates for a second time and Jerome Powell indicated another hike this year is unlikely. The rand remains under pressure given the state of the SA economy, with resumption of severe power cuts and persistent logistical constraints the major concerns.



British Pound R23.31



UK inflation moderated more than expected over the period with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealing that the consumer prices index had dropped to 3.9% in November. This contributed to hopes that the Bank of England may have finished its series of interest rate hikes.



Euro R20.20



Higher interest rates have weighed on the eurozone economy. Eurozone GDP fell by 0.1% quarter-on-quarter in Q3, Eurostat data showed. The HCOB flash eurozone purchasing managers' index (PMI) fell to 47.0 in December. This suggests that the region's economy is likely to have contracted in Q4 as well.

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Domestic performance drivers



Highlights

- After a nail-biting Rugby World Cup tournament, the Springboks brought home the Webb Ellis Cup. Resilience, hard work and perseverance gave moments of joy and hope to our nation.
- Noteworthy developments in the energy landscape included cabinet's approval of the draft Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2023, which outlined the intended mix of energy generation for the upcoming years. After some delay, the seventh Bid Window for an additional 5000MW of renewable energy was announced in December.
- SA inflation eased back to 5.5% in November after peaking at 5.9% in October.



Low points

- After two consecutive quarters of growth, South African real gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 0.2% in the third quarter. The agriculture industry declined by 9.6%, driven lower mainly by field crops, animal products and horticulture products. The industry encountered several headwinds in the third quarter, including the outbreak of avian flu and the floods in Western Cape.
- The Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) highlighted weaker fiscal metrics, a result of reduced revenues given lower commodity prices and weak economic growth, in addition to expenditure pressures.



Global performance drivers



Highlights

- Continuing signs of falling inflation coming from the US, Eurozone and even the UK, reduced near term concerns surrounding the potential stickiness of inflation (due to tight labour markets).
- Declining oil prices helped the broader falling inflation picture, and the 'soft landing' growth outlook as high energy prices are a tax on activity.
- Geopolitical risk eased. The Israel - Gaza conflict looked like being contained with both sides agreeing to a temporary truce combined with a release of hostages towards the end of November. Signs of easing US - China tensions were also witnessed in November with a meeting between US President Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping in San Francisco.



Low points

- High levels of government spending growth in 2023 will likely detract from US GDP growth going forward. Falling job openings increases the risk of the unemployment rate rising from current low levels which will be negative for consumption.
- China stood out as the underperforming economy and market in 2023 and continues to face significant structural challenges. The Chinese consumer remains depressed and saved more in the first 10 months of 2023, despite the economy opening.

Quarterly report:

Nedgroup Investments XS Guarded Fund of Funds



Fund overview

Max equity

40%

Time frame

Min **3** years

Benchmark

Inflation
+3%

Peer group

**SA Multi-
Asset Low
Equity**

Regulation 28

Compliant

Risk profile



Fund costs (C – clean class)

Management fee* (Excl. VAT)

1.15%

Total expense ratio

1.18%

Transaction charges

0.08%

Total investment charges

1.26%



Benefits of the XS Fund of Funds range

Competitive pricing



Diversified across
Asset classes



Investment experts



Passive and active underlying
investments



Tax
Efficient



Ongoing
Due diligence



as at 31 December 2023

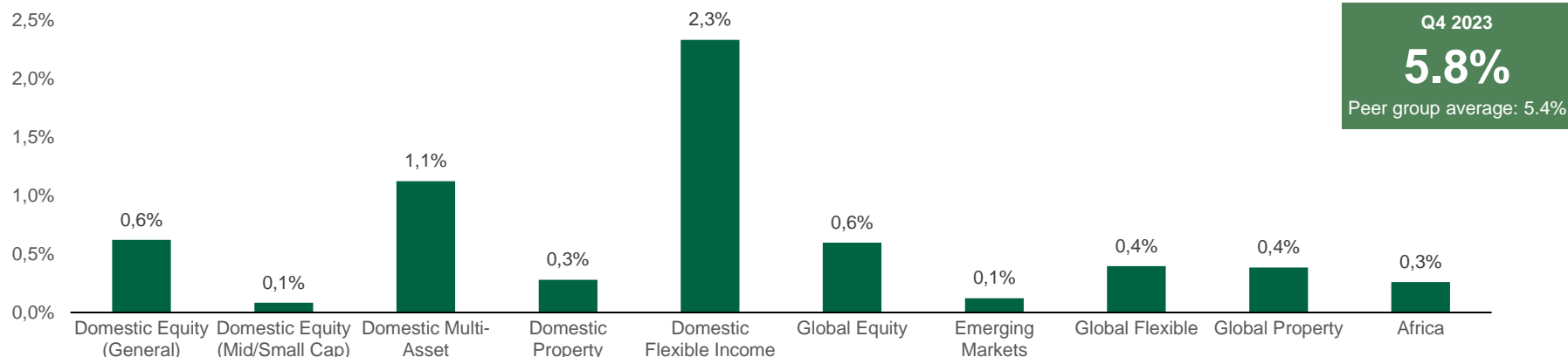
**Includes BOTH multi-manager and underlying fund fees. Both the Total Expense Ratio (TER) and Transaction Costs (TC) of the Fund are calculated on an annualised basis, beginning 1st October 2020 to 30 September 2023.

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XS Fund of Funds performance contribution – Q4 2023



Contributors this quarter

Domestic Flexible Income:

- The XS Guarded FoF has a close to 40% allocation to the domestic flexible income basket, as a result the Nedgroup Investments Flexible Income was a top contributor to performance in the final quarter, as the fund returned 3.6% vs its cash benchmark at 2.0%. The fund maintained an exposure to offshore bonds and money market instruments at 20.8% where an attractive yield pickup over domestic assets is available when hedged back to rands while maintaining a high degree of credit quality and diversification.

Domestic Multi -Asset:

- Passive multi-asset fund range benefited from an above average direct offshore exposure throughout the year and outperformed peers.



Detractors this quarter

Emerging markets:

- While posting positive return for the year, the Nedgroup Investments Global Emerging Markets FF (NS Partners), still underperformed peers and other global equity managers. This was consistent with emerging markets having underperformed developed markets in 2023.

Domestic Equity:

- Within the domestic equity carve out, the Nedgroup Investments SA Equity fund (Laurium) had a poor year. Stock selection that detracted include locally listed platinum exposure and Pick 'n Pay.
- Exposure to the platinum sector detracted as the PGM basket price came under pressure during the year, and counters such as Anglo American Platinum and Impala Platinum underperformed.

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Fund performance (clean class)

Q4'23 return

+5.8%

Peer group average: 5.4%

Ytd return

+12.0%

Peer group average: +11.0%

1yr annualised return

+12.0%

Peer group average: +11.0%

3yr annualised return

+9.0%

Peer group average: +8.5%

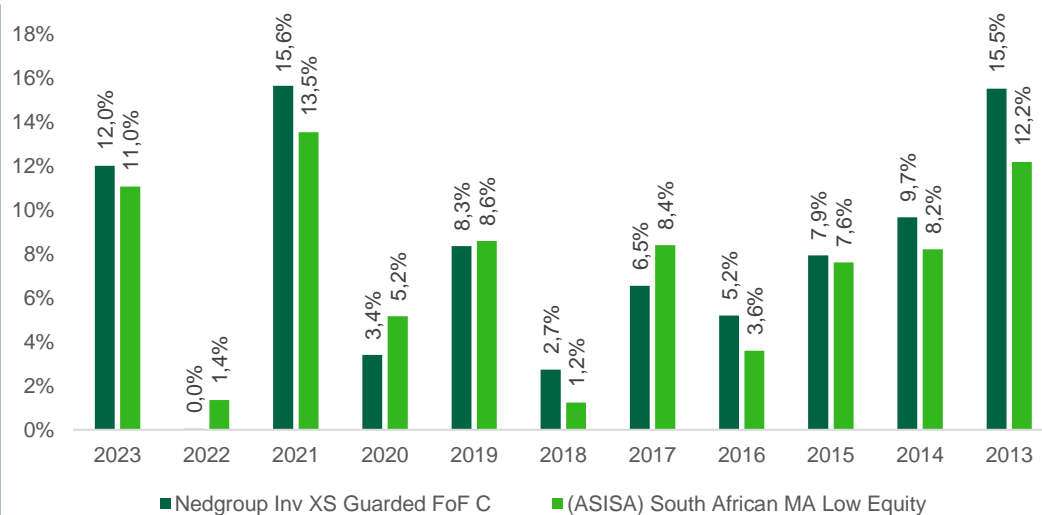
5yr annualised return

+7.7%

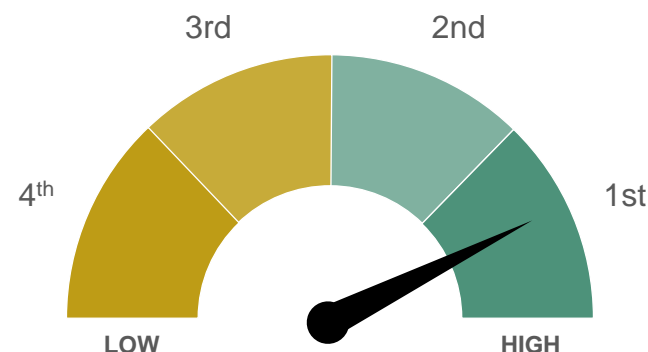
Peer group average: +7.9%



Calendar year performance



Peer group quartile ranking: 1yr



as at 31 December 2023

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Risk measures since inception

Rolling 3yr return

87%

Hit rate: outperforming
peer group average

Volatility

5.3%

SA equity market: 15.3%

Max drawdown

-10.6%

SA equity market: -40.4%

Sharpe ratio

0.3

SA equity market: 0.4

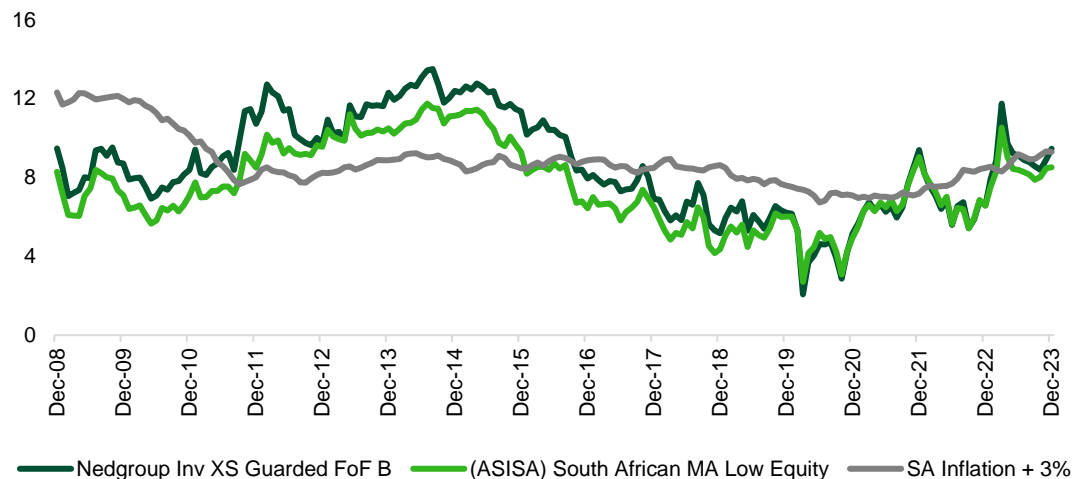
% Positive months

71%

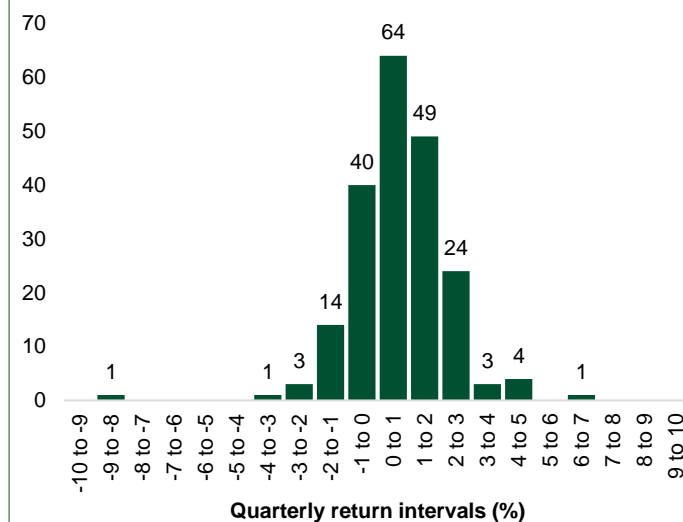
SA equity market: 65%



Rolling 3-year annualised return



Quarterly return distribution



Quarterly report:

Nedgroup Investments XS Guarded Fund of Funds



Performance across classes

	A Class (all in)	B Class (lisp)	C Class (clean)	Peer group	SA inflation
Quarter	5.5%	5.9%	5,8%	5.4%	1.4%
1 year	10.7%	12.4%	12.0%	11.0%	5.5%
3 year	7.8%	9.5%	9.0%	8.5%	6.1%
5 year	6.5%	8.1%	7.7%	7.9%	5.0%



Costs across classes

	Management fee (excl. Vat)	financial planner	total expense ratio	transaction charges	total investment charges
A Class (all-in)	2.15%	1.00%	2.33%	0.08%	2.41%
B Class (LISP)	0.85%	N/A	0.84%	0.08%	0.92%
C Class (clean)	1.15%	NA	1.18%	0.08%	1.26%

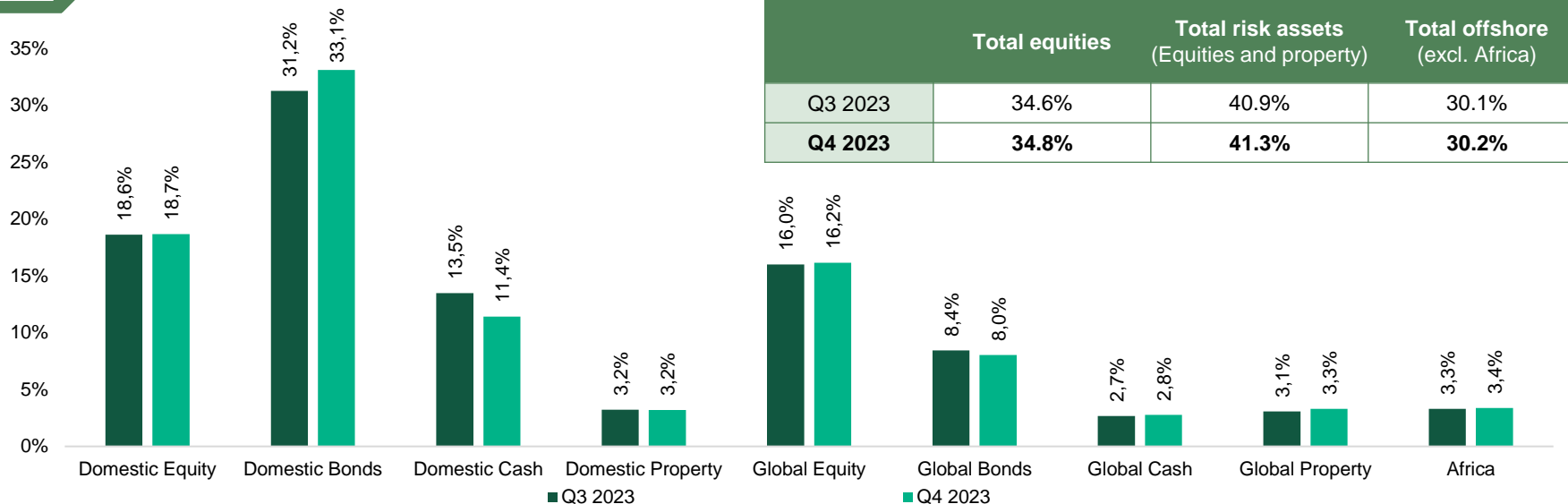
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Asset allocation changes



Summary of recent changes

- Maintained a healthy allocation to domestic cash, prioritising capital preservation whilst ensuring that we had sufficient dry power to take advantage of opportunities.
- Retained the overweight position to domestic bonds as we viewed returns in this asset class as attractive, notwithstanding the fiscal risks that prevailed.
- Further increased exposure to global bonds at what we believe to have been one of the first attractive entry points for global bonds in more than a decade.

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Nedgroup Investments XS Guarded Fund of Funds



Asset allocation

Domestic Equity



18.7%

Domestic Property



3.2%

Domestic Fixed Interest



44.5%

Foreign Equity



16.2%

Foreign Property



3.3%

Foreign Fixed Interest



10.8%

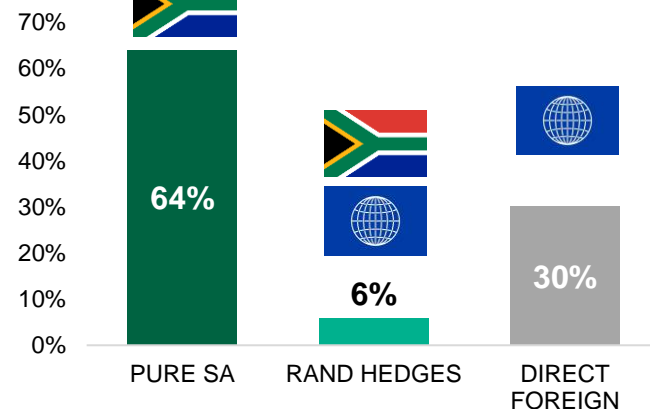
Africa



3.4%



Regional exposure



Top ten holdings (as a % of fund)



1.2%



NASPERS

1.1%



Standard Bank

1.0%



BRITISH AMERICAN
TOBACCO

0.8%



ANGLO
AMERICAN

0.8%



NEDBANK

0.8%



0.7%



0.7%

ABInBev

0.6%

SASOL
reaching new frontiers



0.6%

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Domestic asset class positioning



Domestic Equity

Under weight

18.7%

- Reduced exposure is appropriate due to the multitude of headwinds that clouds the investment case to add to equities and risk assets more broadly.
- It is acknowledged that upside surprises (from China recovery amongst other things) may mean that markets continue to be strong for longer. In addition, other idiosyncratic factors may be the catalyst.

Domestic Property

Under weight

3.2%

- Maintained an underweight position
- Higher inflation would be a supportive factor, however lower economic growth could put expansion plans on hold, coupled with high costs. escalations, leases etc.
- Not yet the right time to enter as we remain cautiously positioned

Domestic Bond

Over weight

33.1%

- Maintain overweight position
- Global monetary policy expected to move from headwind to tailwind
- SA fiscal position is expected to remain constrained for some time. In addition, national elections in 2024 to be watched closely.
- SA has excellent track record of honouring its debt

Domestic Cash

Over weight

11.4%

- With the focus on capital preservation, cash also provided us with liquidity and the means to take advantage of opportunities that may arise in the current volatile conditions.



Global asset class positioning



Global Equity

Under weight

16.2%

- Slowing economic growth will drag on near term corporate earnings, declining inflation combined with the prospect of cuts in central bank policy rates towards the latter part of the period will support equities and risk assets in general.
- EM will swing back in to favour later in the period, especially once interest rates peak and there is a weaker outlook for the US dollar.

Global Property

Neutral

3.3%

- Selective commercial property segments and the broader infrastructure sectors will benefit from the continued reflation of economies as well as broader structural tailwinds.

Global Bond

Under weight

8.0%

- The case for fixed income has improved over the last 6 months, although starting yields are at low levels, they have shifted upwards towards longer term averages
- Constructive on developed government debt as well as investment grade corporate credit. With a more challenging economic environment default rates could come under pressure for the sub-investment grade segment of the market.

Global Cash

Under weight

2.8%

- Cash positions remain as underlying managers look for compelling idiosyncratic opportunities.

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Domestic: fund manager exposures

Equity General: 13.8%



Small/Mid Cap Equity: 1.6%



Passive Multi-Asset: 18.5%



Property: 2.0%



Flexible Income: 37.5%



Offshore and Africa: fund manager exposures

Equity: 8.5%



EM Equity: 1.8%



Multi-Asset: 10.0%



Property: 2.8%



Africa: 3.4%



As at 31 December 2023
The residual balance (out of 100%) is held as domestic cash to provide liquidity

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