# <u>United Sustainable Series – Global Credits Fund</u>

As at 30 November 2022

## **Performance Update**

For the month of November, the Fund MYRH class registered a return of 4.23%.

The fund outperformed the index in November, benefitting from the overweight beta positioning as credit spreads tightened over the month. The long euro swap spread position also contributed positively as euro swap spreads also tightened further. The overweight in euro credit markets contributed positively as euro investment grade bonds outperformed US dollar bonds over the month. Our overweight financials detracted as subordinated bank spreads lagged the index in the market rally. Our holdings in Société Générale, Cellnex Telecom and Ashtead were among the largest contributors. Also not owning Credit Suisse, due to its negative SDG score, contributed positively, as the name is part of the index and spreads of Credit Suisse bonds widened following some negative headlines in November.

The holdings in Raiffeisen Bank, Celanese and Banco de Sabadell were among the largest detractors.

#### **Market Outlook**

#### Several areas of credit market offer attractive valuations

The age of confusion has started. Inflection points in the business cycle, the monetary cycle as well as some secular cycles around demographics and geopolitics make the current period confusing to analyze. For now, we believe that the business cycle has to unwind a little further, there is a risk that central banks will overreact and the market, in general, is not yet priced for a full-blown recession.

Looking at valuations, we are very constructive on European swap spreads. Cross-sectional relative value shows that this is the cheapest part of the market on a risk-adjusted basis compared to its history. Driven by Bund scarcity and very tight repo markets, which in turn is one of the many side effects of QE. A reversal of Bund scarcity could be triggered by some kind of QT program by the ECB. We prefer European credit spreads over US credit spreads. More severe fundamental risks are impacting the European continent, whether it is political risk, behind-the-curve central bank policy, or the Russia-Ukraine war. These are all known risks. US investment grade spreads are not there yet in terms of widening. In Europe, spreads have widened a bit further due to the swap spread.

## **Portfolio Positioning**

#### Maintain modest beta overweight

The fund continues to have a modest beta overweight which includes the long euro swap spread position. It is still overweight in the banking, agencies, basic industry and technology sectors. We have overweight positions in European banks since we believe the banks are far better capitalized and therefore more resilient than a decade ago.

The insurance sector is relatively cheap compared to banking and its rating peers. In addition, regulatory treatment of subordinated debt in the sector is more favorable. Our overweight in basic industry is in companies with favorable supply-demand dynamics and low positions on their cost curves. Most reported chemical names trade



wide for the fund's history due to a combination of higher input, energy costs, and reduction in demand. We believe this to be priced in.

Our overweight in technology is driven by corporates in semiconductors like WDC and TSMC. Our overweight in agencies is due to a 20-year green bond issue from Tennet. We have underweight positions in consumer non-cyclical, energy, and utilities. Either because the sectors are relatively expensive or the result of negative SDG scores.

Throughout the month we added some exposure in Asia by investing in China tech company Lenovo and Indian telecom company Bharti Airtel. However, we remain very cautious on the Chinese real estate sector.

We also bought Intesa senior bonds in US dollar and sold our holding in the Intesa AT1 CoCo as the latter offered little additional spread versus the new senior bond. We also participated in new issues from Volkswagen, Iberdrola, Credit Agricole and Allied Irish Bank while taking profit on our bonds in Italian toll operator Autostrada whose bonds have performed well following the upgrade to investment grade. We also reduced our exposures in German automotive part supplier ZF Friedrichshafen and healthcare real estate operator MPT.

The largest active risk positions in the fund currently consist mostly of financials and include names like Raiffeisen Bank, Banco de Sabadell and Banco Santander.

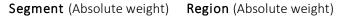
#### **Bond Commentary**

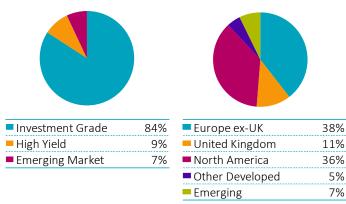
| Bond                | Country | Sector         | Remarks  |  |  |  |
|---------------------|---------|----------------|--|--|--|--|
| Société<br>Générale | France  | Financials     | <ul> <li>Societe Generale SA attracts deposits and offers commercial, retail, investment, and private banking services.</li> <li>The Bank offers consumer credit, vehicle lease financing, information technology equipment leasing, life and non-life insurance, custodian services, trade and project financing, currency exchange, treasury services, and financial and commodities futures brokerage services.</li> </ul>                      |  |  |  |
| Cellnex<br>Telecom  | Spain   | Communications | <ul> <li>Cellnex is a Spanish based European telecom infrastructure company that owns and manages wireless towers (pro forma ~75% of revenues) and broadcast towers (~20% of revenues). The remainder (~5% of revenues) are other network services.</li> <li>Cellnex focuses on the provision of services to mobile network operators, broadcasters and other public and private companies acting as a neutral infrastructure provider.</li> </ul> |  |  |  |

#### **Fund Classes**

| Fund Classes |       |            |            |            |            |  |  |  |  |
|--------------|-------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|--|--|--|
| MYR Hedged   | USD   | AUD Hedged | SGD Hedged | RMB Hedged | GBP Hedged |  |  |  |  |
| Class        | Class | Class      | Class      | Class      | Class      |  |  |  |  |





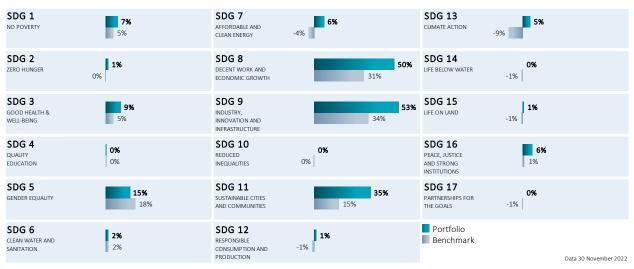


Source: Robeco. RobecoSAM Global SDG Credits. Data end of November 2022.

## Sustainability

### Contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The portfolio has a high contribution to SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 8 (decent work & economic growth), SDG 9 (industry, innovation & infrastructure) and SDG 11 (sustainable cities & communities). Our holdings in the banking and insurance sector and in emerging markets contribute the most to these SDGs. But our holdings in the telecom and technology sectors also contribute positively to SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure).



Source: Robeco. Net figures for individual SDGs.

 $Portfolio: RobecoSAM\ Global\ SDG\ Credits.\ Benchmark:\ Bloomberg\ Global\ Aggregate\ Corporate.$ 

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