

## Performance and positioning

The global equity rally in October and November based on slower than expected US inflation and lower interest rates came to an end in December as US policy makers indicated peak rates were far above market expectations and a rate cut was unlikely in 2023. This would be the first year that US stocks and bonds are both down more than 10% in 150 years. Moreover, the Bank of Japan reversed course and raised its ceiling on rates to 0.5% from 0.25%. A major reversal in the zero-Covid policy in China took investors by surprise, prompting significant outperformance of China/HK and Asian markets, as well as China-related names in other markets.

**Country/Currency:** The US dollar extended its decline against developed market currencies (DXY), particularly against the yen which improved from over 150 to the dollar to 131 over the past couple of months. All non-dollar currencies are not equal, however, and we had some concerns about sterling given the recession outlook and the pressure to limit rate rises given the impact on mortgage payments. Overall, the weaker dollar continued to benefit the fund on a relative basis and appeared to have bottomed against a broad range of currencies. In terms of country allocation, the relatively large weightings both in Europe and Asia remained a positive and should continue into the new year. There was an indiscriminate sell-off of UK domestic assets rather than anything stock-specific. Another general point was that our remaining core cyclical exposure – namely TSMC, Samsung and Denso – underperformed (-17 to -20%, partly due to currency depreciation) but remained attractive in our view on a recovery basis as well as typically being early-cycle stocks.

**Sectors:** The best performing sectors on a global basis were energy, materials, and industrials while notable underperformers were consumer discretionary and IT, where Mega caps in the US continued to underperform, along with communication services (Alphabet, another Mega cap, returned -7.76%). Allocation was a positive, particularly the overweight utilities and underweight communication services positioning, but overweight positions in financials and healthcare also contributed.

**Stocks:** The top positive contributors to performance were Amundi (+34.4%), Novo Nordisk (+34.2%) and TotalEnergies (+34.1%). They are all European stocks and benefited from a recovery in European markets and the euro, particularly Amundi, a fund manager. Novo Nordisk, a 'growth' pharmaceutical company, positive news on authorisation of its blockbuster obesity drug in the US.

The most negative performers were Broadridge (-6.7%), Crown Castle (-5.4%) and Medtronic (-3.1%). Crown Castle sold off as a bond proxy in the face of rapidly rising US interest rates. Medtronic's results disappointed, not so much the Forex headwinds and rising inflationary pressures which were expected, but the lower recovery expected for 2023.

**Significant Changes:** The fund tactically added Legal and General, a UK insurance company to the portfolio in November, taking advantage of both weak sterling and the extremely high yield on offer, above 8% at that time. Weightings in banks were also increased on further inflows.

### US Dollar Index (DXY)



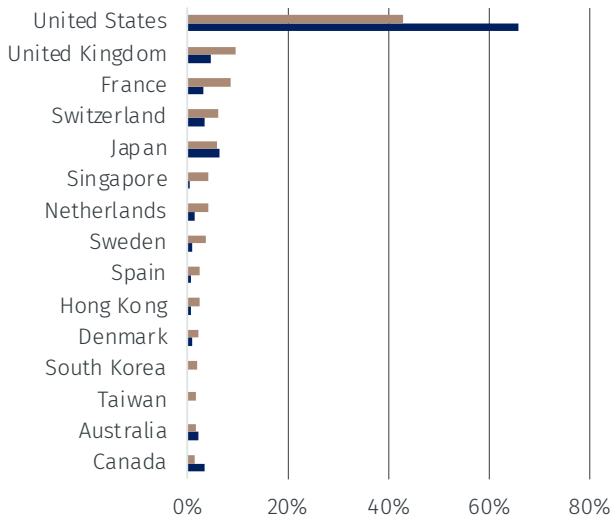
Source: Bloomberg, as at 31 December 2022.

# New Capital Global Equity Income Fund

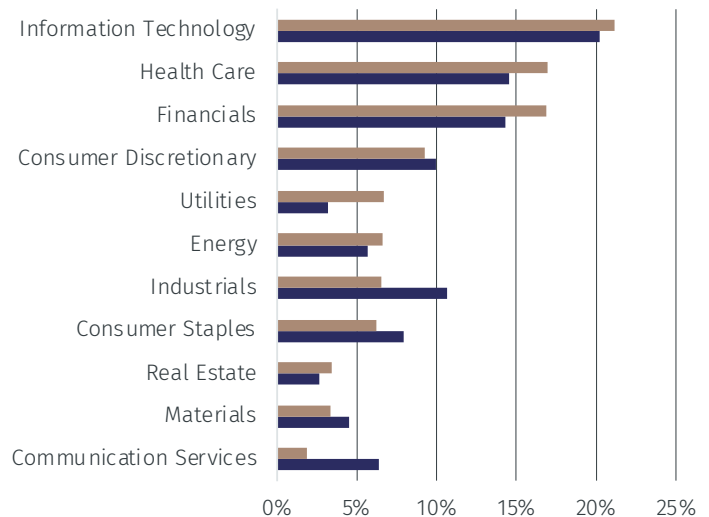
Quarterly Review | As of 31 December 2022



## Country allocation (Absolute)



## Sector allocation (Absolute)



■ New Capital Global Equity Income ■ MSCI World Net Total Return USD Index

Source: Bloomberg, as at 31 December 2022.

## Outlook

We believe the weakness in the dollar is significant in terms of indicating a global recovery will perhaps be earlier than expected, especially for Asia which usually leads global markets out of recession. We remain cautious however, as forward yield curves and other macro data do not indicate any signs of a recovery while earnings forecasts, at least in the US, appear to need further downgrades when considering the impact of rate rises on consumer spending and investment. In addition, a slowdown in inflation does not warrant rate cuts from major central banks in the coming year, so valuations in the US remain expensive in our view. Given our assumption that the US dollar has made an important bottom, our strategy now is to allocate more to Asia/Japan which are less expensive in our view and now have the tailwind of China reopening. At this stage domestic stocks seem preferable given the outlook for sluggish overseas demand, with Japanese financials looking attractive in our view as rate increases benefit banks and insurers along with recovering loan growth and transaction volume.

Financials as a whole remain undervalued in an environment of higher rates and more than adequate provisioning for loan losses, which were enforced upon them by governments in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. Furthermore, reserves have been built up over the Covid period as regulators insisted that dividends be withheld allowing for further improvements in reserves. We remain overweight and the sector remains our preferred cyclical sector both short term and structurally, despite fintech possibilities.

Technology remains the largest sector in the fund despite concerns over excess supply of memory chips and a slowdown in end demand including PCs, smartphones and servers. We believe structural growth drivers such as 5G, auto, Cloud and artificial intelligence will reassert themselves earlier than expected and will add growth names on any weakness. In the meantime, stocks in the fund remain relatively inexpensive, certainly on a recovery basis.

Risks in the short term are earnings revision downgrades, which markets appear to be ignoring, and on a macro level, a more difficult reopening in China due to covid variations or healthcare issues, as well as any escalation in the Ukraine/Russia war. These issues we think mean an emphasis on inexpensive names since these could be a good option despite the possibility of lower rates allowing for multiple expansion in the typically expensive growth names. The fund's style, with an emphasis on high dividend yield, net buyback yield and free-cash-flow, is naturally defensive and has typically outperformed during past periods when leading indicators were predicting a recession and also outperformed when interest rates were rising or flat. Finally, a reminder that we like high equity yield from a strategic perspective given that we are now most likely in an era of structurally higher inflation and interest rates and since dividend growth should do well in this environment rather than just high yield.

# New Capital Global Equity Income Fund

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## Performance

	Fund	Benchmark	Difference
<b>1 Month</b>	-1.48%	-4.25%	2.77%
<b>3 Months</b>	14.39%	9.77%	4.62%
<b>6 Months</b>	4.30%	2.97%	1.33%
<b>YTD</b>	-10.24%	-18.14%	7.90%
<b>1 Year</b>	-10.24%	-18.14%	7.90%
<b>Since Inception Annualised</b>	6.48%	6.30%	0.18%
<b>Since Inception</b>	15.35%	14.89%	0.46%

**Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The value of your investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise as a result of market as well as currency fluctuations and you may not get back the full amount invested.**

Fund performance is net of fees and representative of the USD I Inc Share Class.

Benchmark: MSCI World Net Total Return USD Index. Benchmark is for comparison purposes only.

Inception date: 22 September 2020

Source: EFG, Bloomberg as at 31 December 2022

## Marketing communication

**For professional clients, qualified investors and accredited investors only. The value of investments and the income derived from them can fall as well as rise, your capital is at risk. Note: Past performance is not a guide to the future. Returns may increase or decrease as a result of currency fluctuations.**

Performance contribution is gross of fees, all other performance shown is net of fees and expenses. Please refer to the Prospectus for further information on this Fund and prior to any subscription. All data sourced New Capital, EFGAM, Bloomberg, as at title date, unless otherwise stated.

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Country of origin of the collective investment scheme: Ireland

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