Affin Hwang World Series - Strategic Bond Fund

Quarterly Report
30 April 2022

Out **think.** Out **perform.**

AFFIN HWANG
CAPITAL

MANAGER
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AFFIN HWANG WORLD SERIES – STRATEGIC BOND FUND

Quarterly Report and Financial Statements
As at 30 April 2022

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QUARTERLY REPORT

FUND INFORMATION

Fund Name	Affin Hwang World Series – Strategic Bond Fund
Fund Type	Growth
Fund Category	Feeder (wholesale)
Investment Objective	The Fund seeks to achieve capital appreciation over long term period.
Benchmark	Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate (USD hedged)
Distribution Policy	The Fund is not expected to make distribution. However, incidental distribution may be declared whenever is appropriate.

FUND PERFORMANCE DATA

USD Class

Category	As at 30 Apr 2022	As at 31 Jan 2022
Total NAV (USD'million)	0.004	0.005
NAV per Unit (USD)	0.4271	0.4573
Unit in Circulation (million)	0.010	0.010

MYR Hedged-class

Category	As at 30 Apr 2022	As at 31 Jan 2022
Total NAV (RM'million)	0.686	0.739
NAV per Unit (RM)	0.4457	0.4805
Unit in Circulation (million)	1.538	1.538

SGD Hedged-class

Category	As at 30 Apr 2022	As at 31 Jan 2022
Total NAV (SGD'million)	0.004	0.005
NAV per Unit (SGD)	0.4247	0.4595
Unit in Circulation (million)	0.010	0.010

AUD Hedged-class

Category	As at 30 Apr 2022	As at 31 Jan 2022
Total NAV (AUD'million)	0.004	0.005
NAV per Unit (AUD)	0.4167	0.4727
Unit in Circulation (million)	0.010	0.010

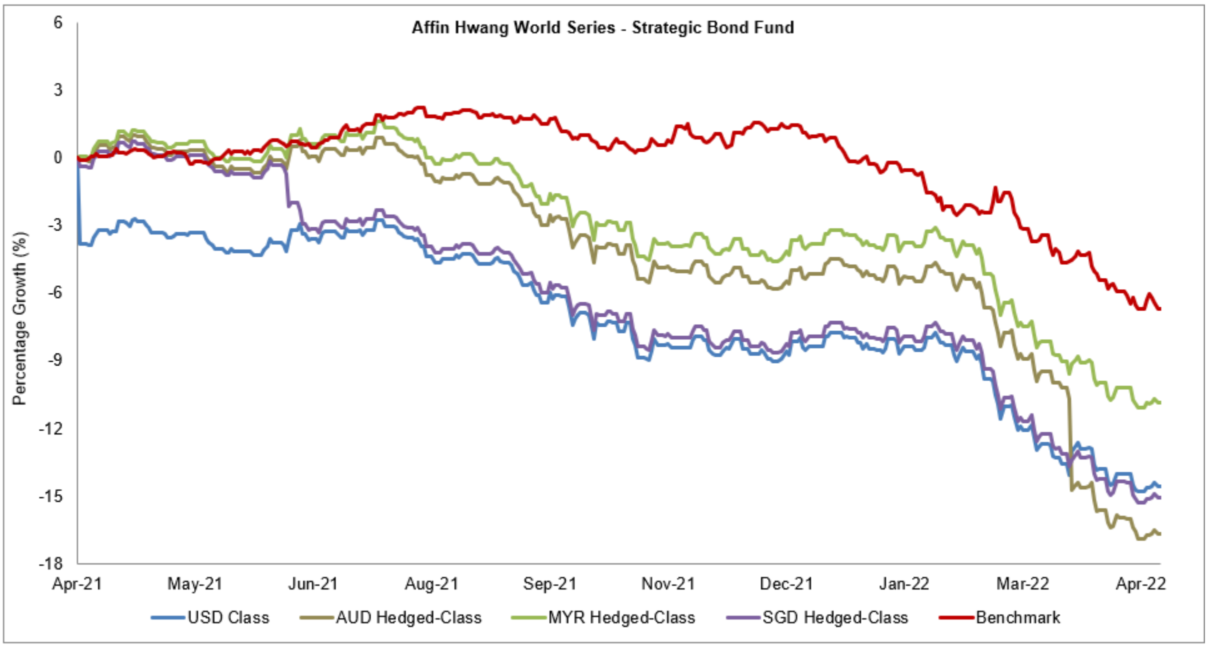
Fund Performance

Table 1: Performance as at 30 April 2022

	3 Months (1/2/22 - 30/4/22)	6 Months (1/11/21 - 30/4/22)	1 Year (1/5/21 - 30/4/22)	Since Commencement (2/4/21 - 30/4/22)
Benchmark	**(6.05%)**	**(7.25%)**	**(6.75%)**	**(6.69%)**
USD Class	**(6.60%)**	**(6.85%)**	**(11.65%)**	**(14.58%)**
Outperformance	**(0.55%)**	**0.40%**	**(4.90%)**	**(7.89%)**
AUD Hedged-Class	**(11.85%)**	**(12.42%)**	**(16.99%)**	**(16.66%)**
Outperformance	**(5.80%)**	**(5.17%)**	**(10.24%)**	**(9.97%)**
MYR Hedged-Class	**(7.24%)**	**(7.32%)**	**(11.46%)**	**(10.86%)**
Outperformance	**(1.19%)**	**(0.07%)**	**(4.71%)**	**(4.17%)**
SGD Hedged-Class	**(7.57%)**	**(7.81%)**	**(15.16%)**	**(15.06%)**
Outperformance	**(1.52%)**	**(0.56%)**	**(8.41%)**	**(8.37%)**

Source of Benchmark: Bloomberg

Figure 1: Movement of the Fund versus the Benchmark



"This information is prepared by Affin Hwang Asset Management Berhad (AFFINHWANGAM) for information purposes only. Past earnings or the fund's distribution record is not a guarantee or reflection of the fund's future earnings/future distributions. Investors are advised that unit prices, distributions payable and investment returns may go down as well as up. Source of Benchmark is from Bloomberg."
Benchmark: Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate (USD hedged)

Past performance is not necessarily indicative of future performance and that Unit prices and investment returns may go down, as well as up.

Asset Allocation

Fund's asset mix during the period under review:

	30 April 2022 (%)
Unit Trust	97.48
Derivative	-1.07
Cash & money market	3.59
Total	**100.00**

Strategies Employed

We do not believe markets are discounting the risk of recession, and we therefore want to be positioned defensively. We expect the portfolio to perform well if the global economy deteriorates further and risk assets come under pressure.

The Fund focuses on the four main areas – rates, credit, inflation, and foreign exchange for generating returns and managing risk explained below.

The Fund is now overweight headline duration versus its benchmark by half of its risk budget. In practice, the portfolio is longer of rate duration than the headline duration number suggests, because the government bond overweight positions in the Fund (eg, emerging markets) are generally higher beta than those in the benchmark whilst the underweights are lower beta (eg, Japan and eurozone).

Emerging Markets (EM) remains the only attractive area within risky assets for us. EM risk premia are very elevated with real rates differentials versus the US, sitting at or very close to historical highs after many EM central banks have tightened policy aggressively. We remain long Latin American (LatAm) local currency government bonds whilst we are underweight China.

Rising rates and steeper curves across the globe weighed on the Fund's performance last month, due to our overweight duration positioning – both in core markets and in local currency EM sovereign bonds.

Although risk assets have wobbled a little recently, we still believe they have further to go, and we continue to expect additional credit spread widening. Markets have not yet realised that as long as headline inflation rates remain very elevated, the "Fed put" that everyone has been conditioned to believe exists is no longer there. We maintain our bearish credit positioning, where the portfolio is 19% short of EUR and USD high yield credit and 1.4 years outright short in semi-core and peripheral euro-zone government bond futures.

Our credit positioning was the largest positive contributor in April, offsetting losses from the rates segment. Rising yields supported our short positions in peripheral eurozone sovereign bond futures, together with wider spreads in EUR and USD high yield credit, where we are also short (via buying protection on credit default swap indices).

Market implied inflation is exceptionally high, but we have less conviction this will move sharply lower imminently, given geopolitical uncertainty. We increased our long positions in EUR and USD breakevens in February and March, converting the largest part our overall inflation exposure into a relative trade versus our short GBP position.

Our inflation positioning was slightly positive again last month, as gains from our longs in EUR and USD breakevens more than covered the drag from the short UK inflation position.

FX had been our main source of "risk on" positions previously, but we moved more defensive here in March, in particular with a large long USD position, mainly versus Chinese renminbi and European currencies. We retained a few small long FX positions in LatAm, still owing to very cheap valuations.

Within FX, our long USD position contributed positively, appreciating against all major currencies in April.

Market Review

Uncertainty has been an ongoing theme in economies and markets. While global equities started on a strong note at the start of 2021 due to policy easing and optimism surrounding vaccination rollout, global recovery was uneven as developed markets reported stronger gains compared to emerging markets. Developed countries managed to administer the vaccine at a quicker pace which led to a corresponding increase in mobility and hence a more optimistic market outlook. For the most of 2H 2021, expensive valuations in both fixed income and equities loomed over investors. However, the challenging market conditions in the first quarter of 2022 addressed some of these concerns as Chinese equities both onshore and offshore traded below their 15-year average and the S&P plummeted 8.7% in April 2022.

In general, government policies to encourage demand throughout one of the largest economic contractions produced one of the fastest recoveries. Developed market output reached its pre-pandemic peak in the third quarter of 2021.

Real GDP growth for US in 1Q 2022 was weaker than expected, falling 1.4% on an annualized basis. The weakness can be largely attributed to a decline in the real trade deficit, lower government spending and a decrease in fiscal stimulus that was initiated to improve spending during the pandemic. Economic data showed sign of weakening while inflationary pressures continued to prompt the Federal Reserve into a more aggressive stance on interest rate hikes. However, domestic demand continues to be resilient, with personal consumption expenditures up 2.7% on an annualized basis.

In the Eurozone, equities continue to decline as the conflict between Ukraine and Russia persist, further placing upward pressure on inflation – annual eurozone inflation reached 7.5% in April, an increase from 7.4% in March. The sectors that performed best included energy due to continued strong demand and communication services given their defensive profile. Information technology, consumer discretionary and industrials fared weaker as these sectors tend to be affected by supply chain disruptions and concerns over consumer confidence the most.

In China, although 1Q 2022 GDP has shown that the Chinese economy began to rebound in January and February, the impact the pandemic had on consumption, investment and production overshadowed the growth as Covid-19 continued to put downward pressure on the Chinese economy. The tightened credit conditions that persisted until early 2022 and regulatory policies in place as a result of the government's common prosperity initiative have slowed growth. A decline in new Covid infection numbers could be the first step in restoring market confidence, however, with parts of China in lockdown since April 2022 resulting in a decrease in both the manufacturing and services sector, investor confidence remained cautious. The Chinese Yuan also experienced some sharp depreciation during the quarter as the 2-year US Treasury yield rose above its Chinese equivalent.

Asia equities were lower in April as China fought hard to contain its worst outbreak of Covid-19, implementing measures that affected the market adversely. Expectations of higher interest rates and the still ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine also weakened investor sentiment. Taiwan performed worst in terms of index market as major electronics manufacturers and chip slumped due to supply chain disruptions brought upon by lockdowns in Shanghai and neighbouring cities.

Bond yields continued to rise in April 2022, resulting in further negative returns in an environment of continued high inflation and expectations of significant interest rate hikes. US consumer price inflation accelerated to 8.5% year on year in March though the core personal consumption expenditure index fell slightly to an annualised 5.2% from 5.3%. Corporate bonds garnered negative total returns and underperformed government bonds in general.

The S&P GSCI Index reported a positive return in April 2022. Higher prices in agricultural and energy components supported weaker prices for livestock, industrial and precious metals. Energy was the top performing component of the index as the global economy normalises after the Covid-19 pandemic and supplies are disrupted due to geopolitical unrest.

On the domestic front, March exports jumped 25.4% year on year, exceeding consensus estimates. The growth was largely attributed to electrical & electronic and commodities-based products such as palm oil. In the local bond market, Malaysia's sovereign bonds' trading volume declined to RM55.3b in April 2022, a 25% reduction since March 2022. A decline in trading volume of corporate bonds from RM9.1b in March to RM5.7b in April was also recorded.

Investment Outlook

2022 is set to be a year of transition for markets as investors continue to contend with normalization of growth rates and monetary policy tightening. Both equities and bonds are down year-to-date as uncertain policy outlooks, an energy shock and weak growth outlook in China continue to stir markets. With the most impactful effects of the pandemic likely behind us, peak policy support and with it peak GDP growth during the pandemic era also likely realized in 2021. We expect to see a lot of crosswinds and periods of transition especially with regards to policy.

The Russia-Ukraine tension is also weighing on sentiments. With continued disruptions to supply chains, the conflict is contributing to inflationary pressures and it is no surprise that commodities are on track to outperform equities for the second consecutive year. However, history suggest that market impact from geopolitical events tend to be short. We expect markets to shift the focus back to tighter monetary conditions and slowing growth moving forward.

The inversion of the US yield curve and whether it is an accurate predicter of a recession has been widely discussed as of late. Whilst a recession is not inevitable in our view, we are increasingly of the opinion that economic growth will likely slow materially in the coming months as consumers adjust to rapidly rising costs. Although the default response to decelerating growth in recent years by central banks is to increase liquidity, this is much less likely this time as battling inflation is seen as a more pressing matter.

Back home, we believe that it will be a stock picker's market for local investors as Bursa languishes behind other regional peers. With foreign shareholding at an all-time low, much of the exuberance have faded especially on the back of a strong US dollar environment which makes emerging markets like Malaysia unattractive. Though, we view that domestic market will not be susceptible to sudden foreign outflows and that the direction of the market will be influenced more by local players that have grown massively in size and are looking for opportunities to deploy.

Against a volatile backdrop, we are cautiously positioned for 2022. On inflection points, we see retreating inflation and an easing of Russia-Ukraine tension as potential turnarounds for the market to improve.

UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE FINANCIAL PERIOD ENDED 30 APRIL 2022

	Financial period ended 30.4.2022 USD	Financial period ended 30.4.2021 USD
INVESTMENT (LOSS)/INCOME		
Interest income from financial assets at amortised cost	212	212
Net loss on foreign currency exchange	(1,613)	(3,454)
Net (loss)/gain on forward foreign currency contracts at fair value through profit or loss	(8,339)	3,097
Net (loss)/gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(27,069)	1,214
	(36,809)	1,069
EXPENSES		
Management fee	(2,658)	(354)
Trustee fee	(105)	(14)
Other expenses	(1,289)	(143)
	(4,052)	(511)
NET (LOSS)/PROFIT BEFORE TAXATION	(40,861)	558
Taxation	-	-
(DECREASE)/INCREASE IN NET ASSETS ATTRIBUTABLE TO UNITHOLDERS	(40,861)	558
(Decrease)/increase of net asset attributable to unitholders is made up of the following:		
Realised amount	(16,010)	(3,694)
Unrealised amount	(24,851)	4,252
	(40,861)	558

AFFIN HWANG WORLD SERIES – STRATEGIC BOND FUND

UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 APRIL 2022

	2022 USD	2021 USD
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,063	7,018
Amount due from Manager		
- creation of units	-	23,958
- management fee rebate receivable	119	126
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	163,615	224,087
Forward foreign currency contracts at fair value through profit or loss	-	3,097
TOTAL ASSETS	169,797	258,286
LIABILITIES		
Forward foreign currency contracts at fair value through profit or loss	1,804	-
Amount due to broker	-	5,000
Amount due to Manager		
- management fee	142	354
Amount due to Trustee	5	14
TOTAL LIABILITIES (EXCLUDING NET ASSET ATTRIBUTABLE TO UNITHOLDERS)	1,951	5,368
NET ASSET VALUE OF THE FUND	167,846	252,918
NET ASSETS ATTRIBUTABLE TO UNITHOLDERS	167,846	252,918

UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 APRIL 2022 (CONTINUED)

	2022 USD	2021 USD
REPRESENTED BY:		
FAIR VALUE OF OUTSTANDING UNITS		
- AUD Hedged-class	2,983	3,908
- MYR Hedged-class	157,518	232,839
- SGD Hedged-class	3,074	11,337
- USD Class	4,271	4,834
	167,846	252,918
NUMBER OF UNITS IN CIRCULATION		
- AUD Hedged-class	10,000	10,000
- MYR Hedged-class	1,538,000	1,890,000
- SGD Hedged-class	10,000	30,000
- USD Class	10,000	10,000
	1,568,000	1,940,000
NET ASSET VALUE PER UNIT (USD)		
- AUD Hedged-class	0.2983	0.3908
- MYR Hedged-class	0.1024	0.1232
- SGD Hedged-class	0.3073	0.3779
- USD Class	0.4271	0.4834
NET ASSET VALUE PER UNIT IN RESPECTIVE CURRENCIES		
- AUD Hedged-class	AUD0.4167	AUD0.5020
- MYR Hedged-class	RM0.4457	RM0.5034
- SGD Hedged-class	SGD0.4247	SGD0.5006
- USD Class	USD0.4271	USD0.4834

UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS ATTRIBUTABLE TO UNITHOLDER FOR THE FINANCIAL PERIOD ENDED 30 APRIL 2022

	Financial period ended 30.4.2022 USD	Financial period ended 30.4.2021 USD
NET ASSETS ATTRIBUTABLE TO UNITHOLDERS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FINANCIAL PERIOD/ DATE OF LAUNCH	-	-
Movement due to units created and cancelled during the financial period		
Creation of units arising from applications	381,090	252,360
- AUD Hedged-class	3,896	3,896
- MYR Hedged-class	338,568	232,265
- SGD Hedged-class	18,626	11,199
- USD Class	20,000	5,000
Cancellation of units	(172,383)	-
- AUD Hedged-class	-	-
- MYR Hedged-class	(142,466)	-
- SGD Hedged-class	(14,917)	-
- USD Class	(15,000)	-
Net (decrease)/increase in net assets attributable to unitholders during the financial period	(40,861)	558
- AUD Hedged-class	(913)	12
- MYR Hedged-class	(38,584)	574
- SGD Hedged-class	(635)	138
- USD Class	(729)	(166)
NET ASSETS ATTRIBUTABLE TO UNITHOLDERS AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL PERIOD	167,846	252,918

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