

Portfolio description and summary of investment policy

The Portfolio invests in a mix of shares, bonds, property, commodities and cash. The Portfolio can invest a maximum of 45% offshore. The Portfolio typically invests the bulk of its foreign allowance in a mix of funds managed by Orbis Investments, our offshore investment partner. The maximum net equity exposure of the Portfolio is 75%. The Portfolio's net equity exposure may be reduced from time to time using exchange-traded derivative contracts on stock market indices. The Portfolio is managed to comply with the investment limits governing retirement funds. Returns are likely to be less volatile than those of an equity-only portfolio. The Portfolio is a pooled portfolio offered by Allan Gray Life and is only available to members of the Allan Gray Umbrella Retirement Fund.

Portfolio objective and benchmark

The Portfolio aims to create long-term wealth for investors within the constraints governing retirement funds. It aims to outperform the benchmark without assuming any more risk. The Portfolio's benchmark is a composite benchmark that comprises indices that reflect the Portfolio's mandate.

How we aim to achieve the Portfolio's objective

We seek to buy shares at a discount to their intrinsic value. We thoroughly research companies to assess their intrinsic value from a long-term perspective. This long-term perspective enables us to buy shares which are shunned by the stock market because of their unexciting or poor short-term prospects, but which are relatively attractively priced if one looks to the long term. If the stock market offers few attractive shares we may increase the Portfolio's weighting to alternative assets such as bonds, property, commodities and cash, or we may partially hedge the Portfolio's stock market exposure. By varying the Portfolio's exposure to these different asset classes over time, we seek to enhance the Portfolio's long-term returns and to manage its risk. The Portfolio's bond and money market investments are actively managed.

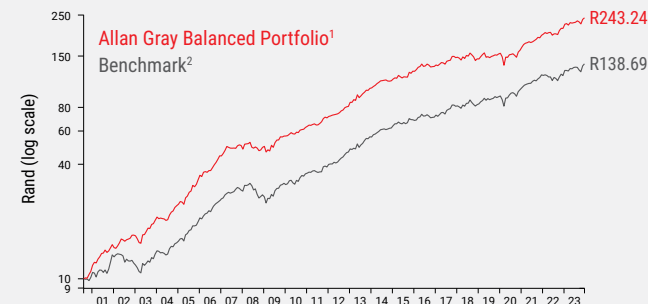
Portfolio history

The Portfolio is managed in the same way as the Allan Gray Life Global Balanced (RRF) Portfolio. When assessing the Portfolio's performance and risk measures over time, including for periods before its inception (5 April 2017), the returns of the Allan Gray Life Global Balanced (RRF) Portfolio and the Allan Gray Life Global Balanced Portfolio can be used. When this data is combined, investors can get a view of the performance and risk measures of the strategy over the long term.

*The blended returns are calculated by Allan Gray Proprietary Limited using end of day index level values licensed from MSCI ("MSCI Data"). For the avoidance of doubt, MSCI is not the benchmark "administrator" for, or a "contributor", "submitter" or "supervised contributor" to, the blended returns, and the MSCI Data is not considered a "contribution" or "submission" in relation to the blended returns, as those terms may be defined in any rules, laws, regulations, legislation or international standards. MSCI Data is provided "AS IS" without warranty or liability and no copying or distribution is permitted. MSCI does not make any representation regarding the advisability of any investment or strategy and does not sponsor, promote, issue, sell or otherwise recommend or endorse any investment or strategy, including any financial products or strategies based on, tracking or otherwise utilizing any MSCI Data, models, analytics or other materials or information.

Performance net of all fees and expenses

Value of R10 invested at alignment



- The returns prior to 5 April 2017 are those of the Allan Gray Life Global Balanced (RRF) Portfolio since its inception on 1 August 2015. The returns prior to 1 August 2015 are those of the Allan Gray Life Global Balanced Portfolio since its alignment on 1 September 2000. The returns shown are net of the fees that would have been incurred had the current fee been applied since alignment.
- 41% FTSE/JSE Capped Shareholder Weighted All Share Index including income, 10% FTSE/JSE All Bond Index, 9% 3-month STeFI, 24% MSCI All Country World Index including income and 16% J.P. Morgan GBI Global Index. From 01 July 2018 to 31 July 2022 the benchmark was 47% FTSE/JSE Capped Shareholder Weighted All Share Index including income, 14% FTSE/JSE All Bond Index, 9% 3-month STeFI, 18% MSCI All Country World Index including income and 12% J.P. Morgan GBI Global Index. From inception to 30 June 2018 the benchmark was 50% FTSE/JSE All Share Index, 15% FTSE/JSE All Bond Index, 10% Alexander Forbes 3-month Deposit Index, 15% MSCI All Country World Index and 10% J.P. Morgan GBI Global Index. Source: IRESS, Bloomberg, performance as calculated by Allan Gray as at 31 December 2023.*
- This is based on the latest numbers published by IRESS as at 30 November 2023.
- Maximum percentage decline over any period. The maximum drawdown occurred from 17 January 2020 to 23 March 2020 and maximum benchmark drawdown occurred from 19 May 2008 to 20 November 2008. Drawdown is calculated on the total return of the Portfolio/benchmark (i.e. including income).
- The percentage of calendar months in which the Portfolio produced a positive monthly return since inception.
- The standard deviation of the Portfolio's monthly return. This is a measure of how much an investment's return varies from its average over time.
- These are the highest or lowest consecutive 12-month returns since alignment. This is a measure of how much the Portfolio and the benchmark returns have varied per rolling 12-month period. The Portfolio's highest annual return occurred during the 12 months ended 30 April 2006 and the benchmark's occurred during the 12 months ended 30 April 2006. The Portfolio's lowest annual return occurred during the 12 months ended 31 March 2020 and the benchmark's occurred during the 12 months ended 30 April 2003. All rolling 12-month figures for the Portfolio and the benchmark are available from our Client Service Centre on request.

% Returns	Portfolio ¹	Benchmark ²	CPI inflation ³
Cumulative:			
Since alignment (1 September 2000)	2332.4	1286.9	247.8
Annualised:			
Since alignment (1 September 2000)	14.7	11.9	5.5
Latest 10 years	9.0	9.3	5.2
Latest 5 years	10.6	10.5	5.0
Latest 3 years	14.1	11.1	6.1
Latest 2 years	11.3	7.0	6.5
Latest 1 year	13.8	15.4	5.5
Year-to-date (not annualised)	13.8	15.4	5.5
Risk measures (since alignment)			
Maximum drawdown ⁴	-23.5	-24.8	n/a
Percentage positive months ⁵	68.6	64.3	n/a
Annualised monthly volatility ⁶	9.2	10.0	n/a
Highest annual return ⁷	49.0	39.3	n/a
Lowest annual return ⁷	-12.2	-20.3	n/a

Suitable for those investors who

- Seek steady long-term capital growth
- Are comfortable with taking on some risk of market fluctuation and potential capital loss but typically less than that of an equity fund
- Wish to invest in a portfolio that complies with retirement fund investment limits
- Typically have an investment horizon of at least three years

Annual management fee

Allan Gray charges a fee based on the net asset value of the Portfolio excluding the portion invested in Orbis funds. The fee rate is calculated daily by comparing the Portfolio's total performance for the day, to that of the benchmark. This fee is presently exempt from VAT.

Fee for performance equal to the Portfolio's benchmark: 0.50% p.a.

For each percentage of daily performance above or below the benchmark we add or deduct 0.2%, subject to the following limits:

Maximum fee: 2.00% p.a. excl. VAT

Minimum fee: 0.50% p.a. excl. VAT

To the extent that the fee calculated exceeds the maximum fee or falls short of the minimum fee, the monetary excess or shortfall will be carried forward to the next day. Any excess or shortfall carried forward from previous day(s) will be added or subtracted to determine the fee payable.

A portion of the Portfolio may be invested in Orbis funds which are levied performance-based fees by Orbis. Orbis pays a marketing and distribution fee to Allan Gray.

Total expense ratio (TER) and transaction costs

The annual management fees charged by both Allan Gray and Orbis are included in the TER. The TER is a measure of the actual expenses incurred by the Portfolio over a one-year and three-year period (annualised). Since Portfolio returns are quoted after deduction of these expenses, the TER should not be deducted from the published returns. Transaction costs are disclosed separately.

Top 10 share holdings on 31 December 2023 (SA and Foreign) (updated quarterly)⁸

Company	% of portfolio
British American Tobacco	4.3
AB InBev	3.9
Glencore	2.7
Naspers & Prosus	2.4
Mondi	2.2
Woolworths	2.1
Nedbank	1.9
Standard Bank	1.9
Remgro	1.7
Sasol	1.4
Total (%)	24.3

8. Underlying holdings of foreign funds are included on a look-through basis.

Since inception, the Portfolio's month-end net equity exposure has varied as follows:

Minimum	(February 2020) 59.8%
Average	63.7%
Maximum	(July 2021) 67.9%

Asset allocation on 31 December 2023⁸

Asset class	Total	South Africa	Foreign
Net equities	64.8	40.2	24.6
Hedged equities	13.8	2.6	11.2
Property	0.9	0.5	0.4
Commodity-linked	2.6	2.6	0.0
Bonds	11.3	8.1	3.2
Money market and bank deposits ⁹	6.6	4.3	2.3
Total (%)	100.0	58.4	41.6¹⁰

9. Including currency hedges.

10. The Portfolio can invest a maximum of 45% offshore. Market movements may periodically cause the Fund to move beyond these limits. This must be corrected within 12 months.

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

Total expense ratio (TER) and transaction costs (updated quarterly)

TER and transaction costs breakdown for the 1- and 3-year period ending 31 December 2023	1yr %	3yr %
Total expense ratio¹¹	0.68	0.91
Fee for benchmark performance	0.53	0.53
Performance fees	0.11	0.34
Other costs excluding transaction costs	0.04	0.04
Transaction costs (including VAT)¹²	0.06	0.08
Total investment charge	0.74	0.99

11. A higher TER does not necessarily imply a poor return, nor does a low TER imply a good return. The current TER may not necessarily be an accurate indication of future TERs.

12. Transaction costs are a necessary cost in administering the Portfolio and impacts Portfolio returns. It should not be considered in isolation as returns may be impacted by many other factors over time including market returns, the type of financial product, the investment decisions of the investment manager and the TER.

2023 was another year full of surprising and unpredictable events. Most notably, in our opinion, global markets continue to be dominated by the announcements and actions of central banks, and expectations around those actions, rather than fundamentals. In 2022, as global inflation spiked and central banks responded by hiking interest rates, we saw a considerable sell-off in speculative, long-duration and leveraged assets, as the era of “easy money” appeared to be over. As inflation tapered during the course of 2023, and central banks have begun to signal an end to rate hiking and possible rate cuts, many of these assets have rebounded sharply:

- After selling off in 2022, global equity markets rebounded and were once again dominated by US stocks, and in particular large-cap US technology stocks. For the year ending 31 December 2023, the MSCI World Index was up 24%, the S&P 500 up 26% and the Nasdaq up 45% – in US dollars. The largest US stocks (Apple, Alphabet, Meta, Microsoft, Tesla, Nvidia and Amazon) have come to be known as the “magnificent seven”, and in 2023, magnificent they were. The “worst” performing of the group was Apple, up 49%, while the best, Nvidia, buoyed by the excitement around artificial intelligence and the related demand for their chips, was up over 200%. In absolute terms, the market value of Nvidia increased by over US\$800bn.
- Cryptocurrencies have also seen a resurgence. After being down over 64% in 2022, Bitcoin has bounced more than 160% to end the year at US\$42 085. Remarkably, that is still below where it began in 2022. This mathematical fact highlights how important avoiding large losses is to successful long-term investing. If you buy something that subsequently halves in value, you need it to increase by 100% to get your money back. In this particular case, Bitcoin speculators who bought on 31 December 2021 need to see a price recovery of 178% from 31 December 2022 to get their money back in nominal terms.
- One asset class that hasn’t seen as strong a recovery is the bond market. At the end of 2020, at the peak of the “easy money” era, there were roughly US\$18tn of negative-yielding bonds. That is to say, at that point in the market cycle, there was US\$18tn of debt where lenders were paying borrowers to borrow money from them! As interest rates began increasing in 2021 and increased further through 2022, bondholders began to suffer. The J.P. Morgan Global Government Bond Index fell by 6.5% in 2021 and a further 17.2% in 2022. It has failed to recover meaningfully in 2023, returning 4.0%. Those who held long-duration “safe-haven” developed market bonds have fared much worse. In 2022, investors in US and UK 30-year bonds lost a third and half of their investments, respectively – only to see further declines in prices during the course of 2023, with a marginal recovery by year end.

Domestically, the economic environment remains challenging, dominated by poor sentiment and record levels of loadshedding. It is not surprising that we have not seen the same resurgence in asset prices:

- In rands, the FTSE/JSE Capped SWIX All Share Index generated a return of 7.9% in 2023, which equates to a decline of 1.1% in US dollars, given persistent rand weakness. Within that though, there has been a large divergence in individual sector and stock performance. By way of example, within the precious metals sector, Harmony Gold has returned 105% for the year, while Impala Platinum fell by 55%, including dividends.

- The FTSE/JSE All Bond Index has fared slightly better, generating a return of 9.7% in rands and 0.6% in US dollars. Somewhat surprisingly, given the economic landscape, growing government debt and fiscal deficits, the yield on 10-year bonds has strengthened marginally from 11.1% at the start of 2023 to 10.9% at the end of the year.

In this environment, the Portfolio returned 5.2% for the fourth quarter of 2023 and 13.8% for the 2023 calendar year. This compares with benchmark² returns of 7.7% for the quarter and 15.4% for the year. Over three years, the Portfolio has delivered an annualised return of 14.1%, compared with 11.1% for the benchmark and inflation of 6.1%.

As we look to 2024 and beyond, what should we expect of inflation, and how this may impact central banks’ behaviour, interest rates and market returns?

In short: We don’t know. Our only expectation is that events are likely to surprise us, and surprise us in how the market reacts. We navigate this uncertainty by being patient and disciplined, and striving to buy only those assets where the risk-to-reward opportunity is skewed heavily in our favour, with a large margin of safety and the knowledge that we won’t always get it right.

During the quarter, the Portfolio bought South32 and AB InBev and sold Glencore and Standard Bank.

One other notable event that occurred in the final quarter of 2023 was the passing of Charlie Munger, aged 99. Warren Buffett’s right-hand man, Charlie, was renowned for his investment acumen, common sense and “worldly wisdom”. A remarkable man, Charlie never shied from sharing his opinion on a variety of topics, often with biting bluntness. On the topics of inflation, forecasting and probabilities, we think Charlie said it best:

“I remember the US\$0.05 hamburger and a US\$0.40-per-hour minimum wage, so I’ve seen a tremendous amount of inflation in my lifetime. Did it ruin the investment climate? I think not.”

“People have always had this craving to have someone tell them the future. Long ago, kings would hire people to read sheep guts. There’s always been a market for people who pretend to know the future. Listening to today’s forecasters is just as crazy as when the king hired the guy to look at the sheep guts.”

“If you don’t get this elementary, but mildly unnatural, mathematics of elementary probability into your repertoire, then you go through a long life like a one-legged man in an *ss-kicking contest.”

The investment world is a little less wise without Charlie in it.

Adapted from a commentary contributed by Rory Kutisker-Jacobson

Portfolio manager quarterly commentary as at 31 December 2023

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This pooled portfolio is underwritten by Allan Gray Life Ltd, a registered insurer licensed to provide life insurance products as defined in the Insurance Act 18 of 2017. Allan Gray (Pty) Ltd is Allan Gray Life Ltd's appointed investment manager.

Past performance is not indicative of future performance.

FTSE/JSE All Share Index, FTSE/JSE Capped Shareholder Weighted All Share Index and FTSE/JSE All Bond Index

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MSCI Index

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J.P. Morgan Index

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