

Portfolio objective and benchmark

The objective of the Portfolio is to outperform the MSCI World Index at no greater-than-average risk of loss. The benchmark is the MSCI World Index, with net dividends reinvested.

Product profile

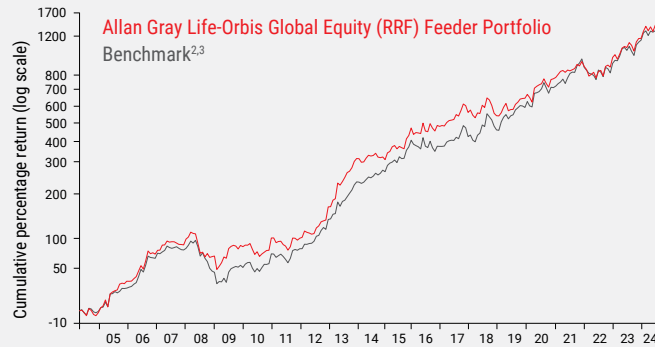
- This is a feeder portfolio, investing in the Orbis Institutional Global Equity Fund which is actively managed by Orbis.

Investment specifics

- This Portfolio is available as a linked policy issued by Allan Gray Life Limited available only to retirement funds.
- Minimum investment: R20m.
- The Base Refundable Reserve Fee is levied in the underlying Orbis Institutional Global Equity Fund.

Performance net of fees¹

Cumulative performance since inception



% Returns ^{1,4}	Portfolio		Benchmark ^{2,3}	
	ZAR	US\$	ZAR	US\$
Since inception	14.7	9.4	14.4	9.1
Latest 10 years	13.5	7.8	15.2	9.5
Latest 5 years	16.6	13.0	16.7	13.1
Latest 3 years	15.4	7.8	14.4	6.9
Latest 2 years	24.4	21.9	22.4	19.9
Latest 1 year	18.1	25.9	16.7	24.4
Latest 3 months	1.3	7.3	0.6	6.6

Asset allocation on 31 August 2024

This portfolio invests solely into the Orbis Institutional Global Equity Fund

	Total ⁶	United States	UK	Europe ex-UK ⁵	Japan	Other ⁵	Emerging markets
Net equities	97.8	52.3	15.0	9.0	3.7	2.5	15.3
Property	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Money market and cash	2.2	2.2	0.0	-0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2
Total (%)⁶	100.0	54.6	15.0	8.8	3.7	2.5	15.4
Currency exposure	100.0	48.4	10.5	13.0	13.3	7.7	7.0
Benchmark	100.0	71.6	3.8	12.8	5.8	6.0	0.0

Portfolio information on 31 August 2024

Assets under management	R1 057m
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- The returns prior to 1 April 2015 are those of the Allan Gray Life-Orbis Global Equity Portfolio since its inception on 18 May 2004. The Investor Class Fee was levied in the underlying Orbis Global Equity Fund.
- The benchmark prior to 1 April 2015 was that of the Allan Gray Life-Orbis Global Equity Portfolio which was the FTSE World Index, including income.
- MSCI World Index, with net dividends reinvested.
- Investment returns are annualised (unless stated otherwise), except for periods less than one year. Performance as calculated by Allan Gray as at 31 August 2024.
- Refers to developed markets only.
- There may be slight discrepancies in the totals due to rounding.

Top 10 share holdings on 30 June 2024 (updated quarterly)

Company	% of portfolio
UnitedHealth Group	4.9
Corpay (was FLEETCOR)	4.8
Interactive Brokers Group	3.9
Alphabet	3.4
Shell	3.1
GXO Logistics	3.0
British American Tobacco	3.0
Global Payments	2.8
BAE Systems	2.7
KB Financial Group	2.6
Total (%)⁶	34.0

Recent market returns have been narrow, propelled by the magnificent seven technology shares in the US – Microsoft, Apple, Alphabet, Nvidia, Amazon, Meta and Tesla. For the most part, we haven't owned them. But in the middle of the Portfolio's top 10 holdings, one of the seven does stick out: Alphabet.

The Portfolio first owned Alphabet (then called Google) in late 2008 and has held it cumulatively for over a decade on and off since. We have also held Microsoft, Apple, Amazon and Meta before. But while several of the seven are now regarded as unassailably successful, sentiment has been less rosy for Alphabet. For us, that is part of the appeal.

The key fear on Alphabet is that Microsoft and its partner Open AI have eaten Google's lunch on artificial intelligence (AI), which will become the key capability for all technology businesses including internet search.

In November 2022, Open AI launched ChatGPT, and in February 2023, Microsoft announced it would incorporate ChatGPT into its Bing search engine. The next day, Google previewed its own AI bot, called Bard, which flopped spectacularly.

That paints a scary picture, but it is easy to overstate Google's challenges.

Most importantly, chat apps do not produce better results for all searches. We see this in the numbers, where both ChatGPT and Bing have lower weekly retention rates than Google Search. While ChatGPT's app and website have raced ahead of other AI competitors, they have added just 20 million daily users over the past year, bringing the total to 50 million. That sounds big, but Google has 800 million daily users on its mobile app and 1.6 billion on its Chrome web browser. Comparing search against search, you have to squint to see Bing's inroads. On mobile, Bing has less than one daily user for every thousand Google users, and on desktop, Bing's share of daily searches is just 4% – up a grand total of 0.4 percentage points from the pre-ChatGPT days.

In its latest earnings report, Google laid some of these demons to rest, materially increasing our conviction in its fundamentals. After embedding AI into its own "search generative experience", Google's search engagement is up (because users are getting better answers), its search profit margins are up (because advertisers are following users), and its cost to serve AI queries is down (by 80% since their initial introduction). We took this as encouraging evidence that Google is not just surviving in an AI world but thriving. The market agreed, sending the shares up roughly 15% since that earnings report.

That does not mean Google can coast. In a few areas, it clearly needs to improve, including in its AI products. The company has already fixed the most glaring problems with Gemini (the new Bard), explaining that the model was improperly calibrated. That may be true, but it is hard to dismiss the idea that Gemini's output has been skewed by the political priorities of Google's outspoken staff.

Still, we believe Google will continue to improve. Proficiency in AI boils down to engineering talent, access to cutting-edge computer chips and large data sets on which to train the AI models. Google has all three.

From a valuation perspective, we look at the math the following way. Alphabet earned US\$74bn last year, but that is weighed down by severance expenses and losses in the "other bets" segment focused on nascent opportunities. Excluding those losses, we see the company trading at 22 times trailing core earnings, to say nothing of the US\$79bn of net cash on its balance sheet. That valuation is only a hair above the multiple of the broader S&P 500, and in relative terms, it is unusually low for Alphabet. In our view, Alphabet deserves more of the premium it usually has. This is a business with returns on equity and net profit margins of over 20%, both well above the market average, with above-average growth prospects to boot. If the valuation stays where it is and the company can grow at even 10% per annum, growth and free cash flow alone should drive a near-15% per annum, long-term return.

That growth potential is supported by Alphabet's commanding positions in several big businesses. Its core search business is unique, and its YouTube unit is unique in the West. Alongside OpenAI, Alphabet is one of two leaders in AI services; alongside Nvidia, it is one of two in AI accelerator chips; alongside Apple, Android is one of two mobile operating systems; and behind Amazon and Microsoft, Google is one of three hyperscale cloud services operators. Each of these businesses is valuable and has extraordinary potential – but that is often lost as investors focus excessively on threats to the search business.

The company does have its risks, however. AI could prove more disruptive than we expect. Advertising spending is cyclical, so if the US economy slows or crashes, Alphabet won't be immune. But weighing up the risks against the price and the quality of the business, Alphabet looks reasonable to us, and it also brings diversification to the Portfolio, as its share price behaves differently to many of our other holdings.

Alphabet's more magnificently valued brethren would also bring that diversification, but while we appreciate the fundamental quality of the others, we see less to like in their share prices. Microsoft, for example, has similar growth potential and returns on equity to US payments and fuel card business Corpay (formerly Fleetcor), yet trades at double the valuation. To sustain the 15% per annum growth rate markets expect on its US\$86bn profit base, Microsoft must add roughly another Coca-Cola worth of profits every year. On its US\$100bn profit base, Apple must add the equivalent of a Wells Fargo in profits this year to sustain its growth, and the climb gets harder from there.

Perhaps Microsoft and Apple can achieve those feats. They are great companies. But we would prefer to invest where expectations are lower: in shares like Corpay, US managed care organisations, quality industrial companies, banks in Korea and Europe – or even Alphabet.

Over the quarter, we increased the Portfolio's position in UnitedHealth Group, a US-based diversified healthcare company, into relative share price weakness. We also reinitiated a position in Rolls-Royce Holdings, a UK-based manufacturer of aircraft engines and power systems, as we believed it is likely to benefit from several structural tailwinds. In addition, we exited the Portfolio's position in Intel on reduced conviction.

Adapted from a commentary contributed by Ben Preston, Orbis Portfolio Management (Europe) LLP, London

Fund manager quarterly commentary as at 30 June 2024

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MSCI Index

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