Sanlam

Sanlam Corporate: Investments

Sanlam Wealth Creation Lifestage Strategy

Investment Report

Quarter 4 2024

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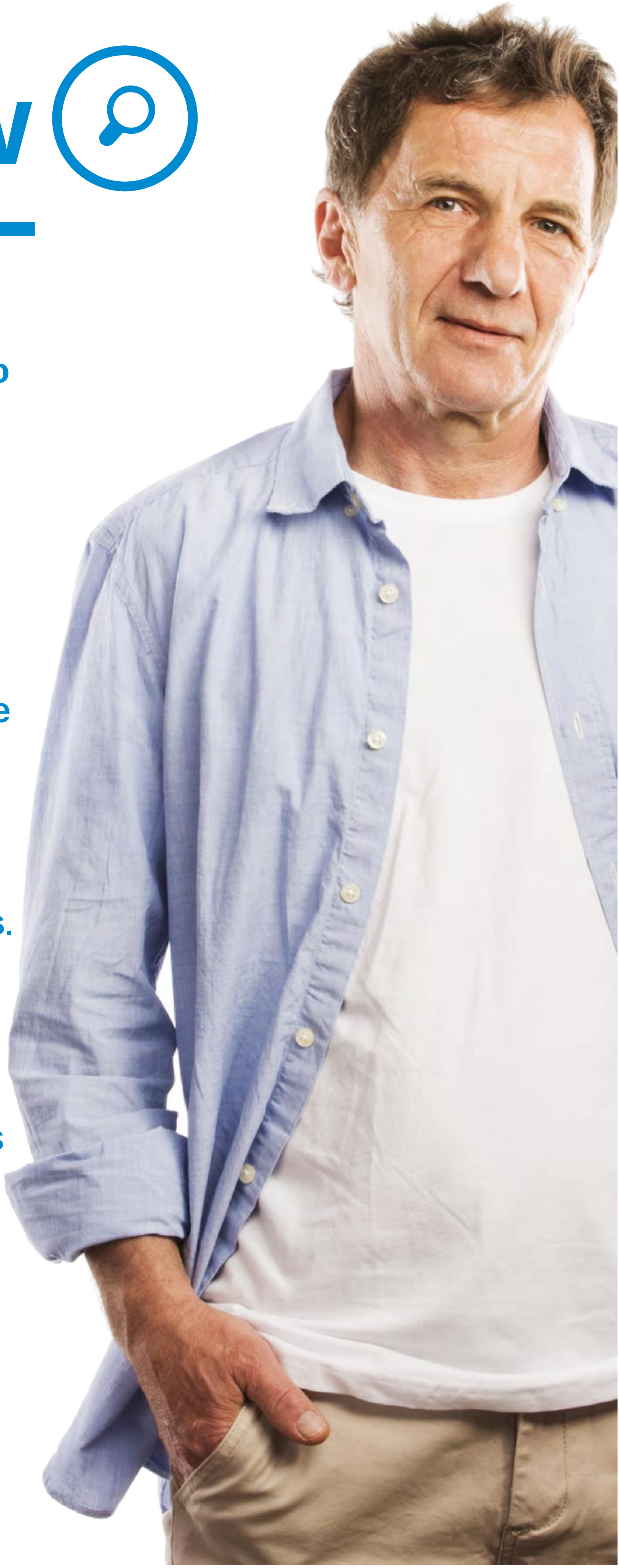
Overview

The **Sanlam Wealth Creation Portfolio** which is the **Accumulation Phase Portfolio** for this strategy aims to deliver **superior real returns** over the long term. This **balanced portfolio** is managed in a multi manage basis and includes **foreign exposure**. Each manager has been selected based on **rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis**. The portfolio construction includes both **domestic balanced mandates**, **passive exposure** as well as **specialist mandates**.

A **lifestage strategy** aims to meet each member's savings requirement by working towards a target date, which would be the Normal Retirement Age or the Planned Retirement Age (if different).



In the Lifestage approach, a member's savings are initially invested in a portfolio that emphasizes long-term capital growth with some tolerance for short-term market volatility.

As retirement approaches, this target date strategy invests in an investment portfolio matching the member's post-retirement needs or plans, but in the years prior to this greater emphasis is placed on achieving capital growth.

Sanlam Wealth Creation Lifestage Strategy

6 YEARS FROM RETIREMENT AGE

Accumulation phase

All members with **more than 6 years** from Retirement Age

GROWTH

The Accumulation Phase Portfolio aims to provide market-related capital growth to members who need to grow their retirement savings and have more than six years from retirement.

Sanlam Wealth Creation Portfolio

While each lifestage strategy utilises a different accumulation phase portfolio, all of the Trustee-approved lifestage strategies utilises the Sanlam Capital Protection Portfolio in the preservation phase.

The phasing from the accumulation phase portfolio to the preservation phase portfolio is calculated and implemented monthly based on members' actual age, with no cost to the member. The first phasing switch disinvests 1/50th of exposure in the accumulation phase portfolio and re-invests the proceeds in the preservation phase portfolio. The second monthly phasing switches a further portion of the exposure in the accumulation phase portfolio and invests the proceeds in the preservation phase portfolio.

The third monthly phasing switches a similar portion of the exposure in accumulation phase portfolio and invests the proceeds in the preservation phase portfolio. The monthly phasing switches are repeated until, after 50 switches, the exposure to the accumulation phase portfolio is zero and the member is fully invested in the preservation phase portfolio 22 months prior to retirement.

The Fund's communication strategy makes provision for the distribution of communication to members 7 years, 6.5 years and 1 year before retirement date.

22 MONTHS FROM RETIREMENT AGE

RETIREMENT AGE

Systematic automated monthly transition

All members with less than **6 years but more than 22 months** from Retirement Age

Preservation phase

All members with **22 months and less remaining** from Retirement Age

50 MONTHLY

Transition from the accumulation phase to the preservation phase takes place by means of **50 monthly switches**

PROTECTION

A preservation phase portfolio protects a member against the specific risks inherent in the purchase of an annuity

Sanlam Capital Protection Portfolio

This portfolio was selected as the preservation strategy given its objective to protect the invested capital by guaranteeing the net contributions invested.

solution

Investment Portfolios

offered in the Sanlam Wealth Creation Lifestage Strategy

Sanlam Wealth Creation

Lifestage

The portfolio's objective is to deliver superior real returns over the long term. This balanced portfolio is managed in a multi-manager basis and includes international exposure.

Each manager has been selected on the basis of rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis. The underlying managers of the portfolio have been selected, mandated, monitored and reviewed by a Joint Investment Committee.

Lifestage Preservation Portfolio

Sanlam Capital Protection Portfolio

This portfolio was selected as the preservation strategy given its objective to protect the invested capital by guaranteeing the net contributions invested.

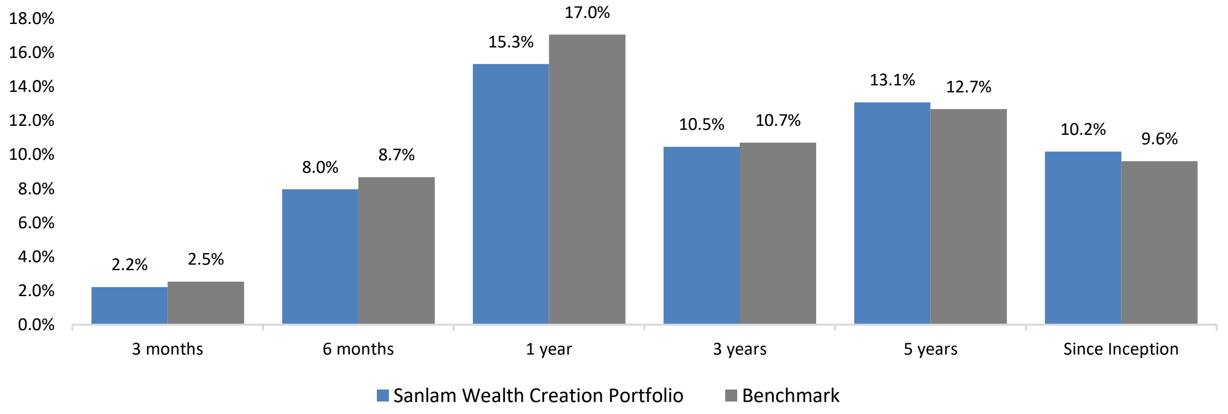
The portfolio invests in the Sanlam Stable Bonus Portfolio. The Stable Bonus Portfolio provides investors with exposure to the financial markets, which provides investors with exposure to equity markets, but also protects them against adverse market movements. This is achieved by smoothing the returns over time and guaranteeing the net contributions invested together with the vested bonuses in case of resignation, retirement, death, retrenchment or disability..

Non-vested bonuses are also declared over and above the vested bonuses. These can be removed in very extreme circumstances though this has never yet occurred since the portfolio's commencement in 1986.

The underlying portfolio has a diversified exposure to domestic equity, bonds, property and alternative investments as well as international assets. The portfolio has a conservative risk profile.

Accumulation phase portfolio
Sanlam Wealth Creation Portfolio

Gross Returns as at 31 December 2024



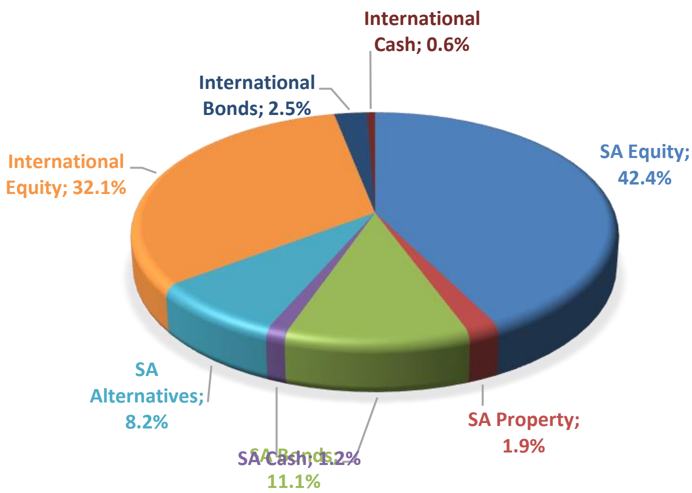
The Sanlam Wealth Creation Portfolio has underperformed the benchmark over the quarter and year ended 31 December 2024 by 0.63% and 2.08% respectively.

Within manager selection, SA Cash and International Bonds remained neutral. Manager selection to Domestic Large Managers added to performance (0.19%). SA Bonds, International Equity and International Cash detracted from performance (-0.33%). The total manager selection effect was -0.14%.

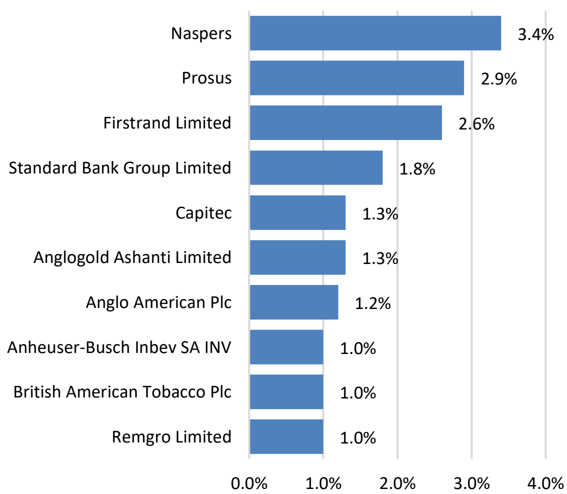
On the asset allocation side, allocation to SA Bonds and SA Cash added to performance (0.13%). Domestic Large Managers, International Equity, International Bonds and International Cash detracted from performance (-0.62%). The total asset allocation effect was -0.49%.

*Returns prior to 1 August 2022 are reflective of the Sanlam Wealth Creation portfolio structured on the AlexForbes life license.

Actual Asset Allocation

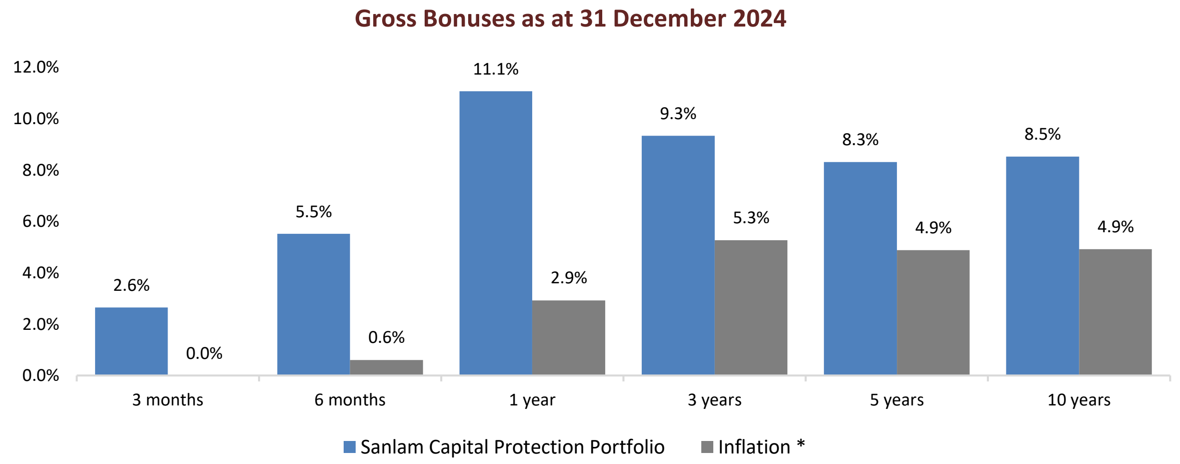


Top 10 Equity as % Fund



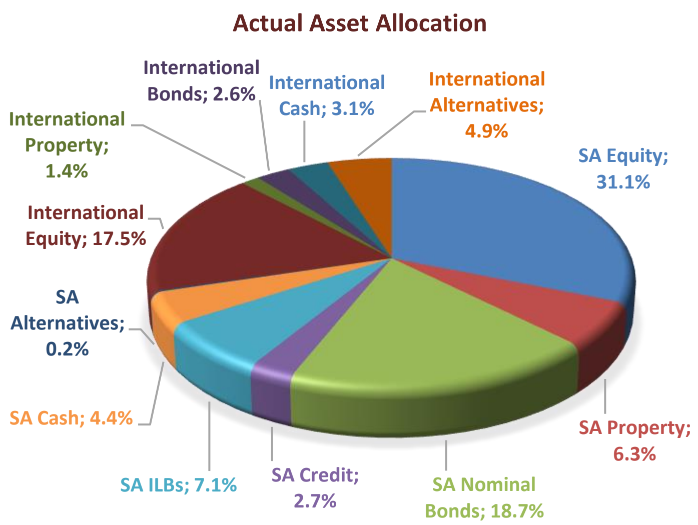
As at 31 December 2024, the portfolio had overweight positions in Domestic Large Managers, SA Cash and International Cash. The portfolio is relatively underweight to the benchmark in SA Bonds, International Equity and International Bonds.

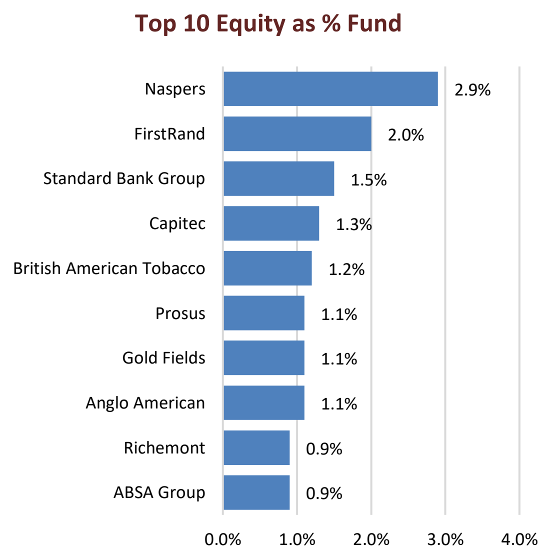
Preservation phase portfolio
Sanlam Capital Protection Portfolio



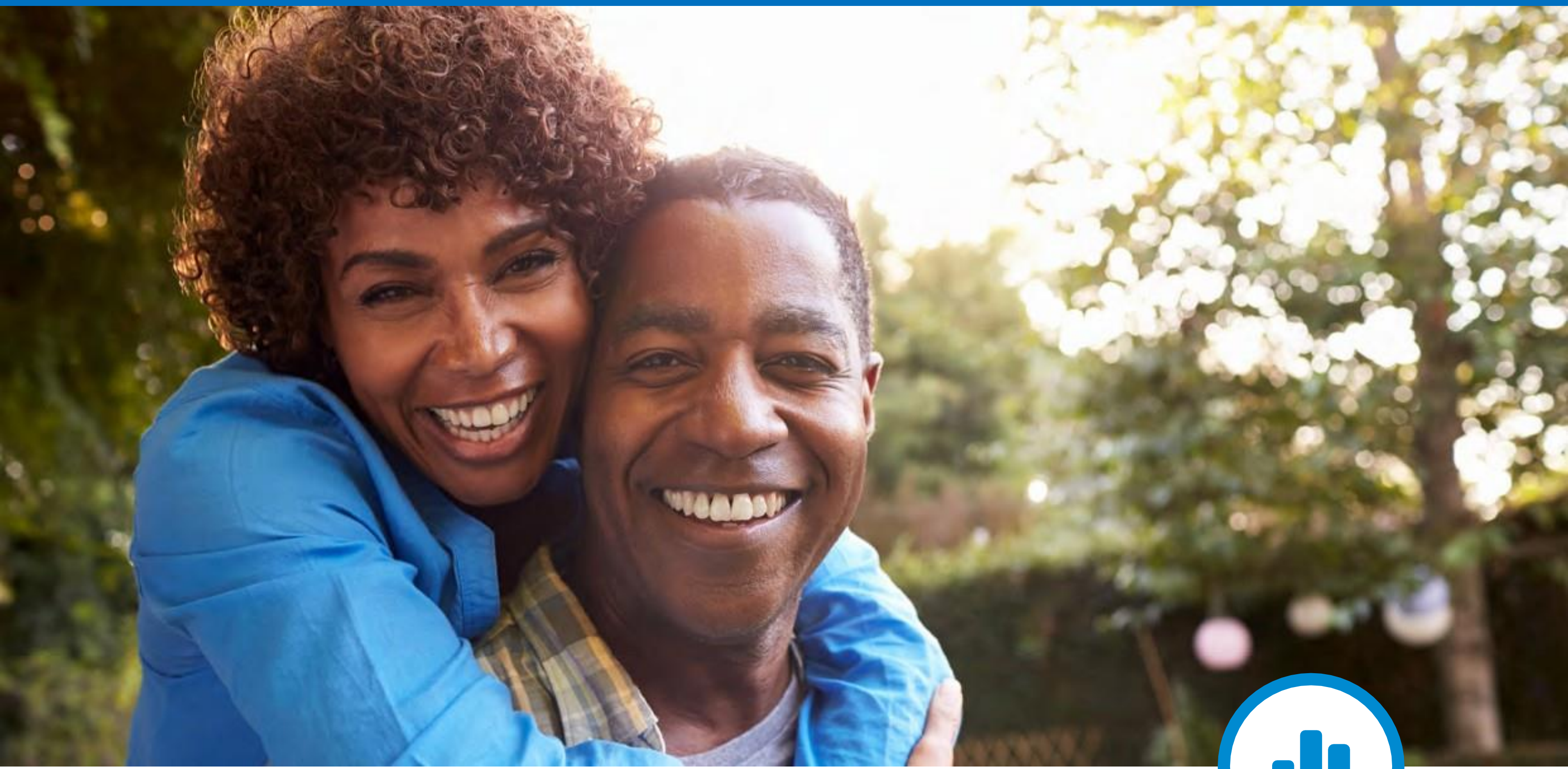
The preservation phase portfolio of the strategy continues to deliver stable, dependable positive returns for investors. Over the fourth quarter of 2024, the Sanlam Capital Protection Portfolio gave investors a return of 2.6% and a return of 11.1% for the year. Over the long term, the portfolio posted strong inflation beating returns. This portfolio is especially important for members closer to retirement, as it offers protection over their accumulated capital but retaining the benefit form the market upside.

*** Inflation is lagged by one month, Bonuses net of guarantee charge**





Looking at the current composition of the portfolio, the overweight positions are SA ILBs. International Cash, SA Nominal Bonds, SA Equity, and International Bonds. The underweight positions in the portfolio are International Bonds, International Equity, SA Alternatives, SA Credit, International Property, SA Property, International Alternatives and SA Cash.



Performance summary

31 December 2024	3 months	YTD	1 year	3 years	5 years	7 years
Accumulation Phase						
Sanlam Wealth Creation						
Sanlam Wealth Creation Portfolio*	***2.2%***	***8.0%***	***15.3%***	***10.5%***	***13.1%***	***10.5%***
Benchmark	*2.5%*	*8.7%*	*17.0%*	*10.7%*	*12.7%*	*10.1%*
Preservation Phase						
Capital Protection Portfolio**	***2.6%***	***5.5%***	***11.1%***	***9.3%***	***8.3%***	***8.0%***
CPI***	*0.0%*	*0.6%*	*2.9%*	*5.3%*	*4.9%*	*4.7%*

**Returns prior to 1 August 2022 are reflective of the Sanlam Wealth Creation portfolio structured on the AlexForbes life license*
*** The Capital Protection Portfolio does not have an explicit benchmark. Bonuses are declared net of Capital Charge*
****CPI figures are lagged by one month*

Macroeconomic commentary

Highlights

Global

- Hawkish Fed cuts rates 25 basis points but revises dot-plot higher on Trump policies
- US headline and core PCE inflation beat the street
- US-China trade relations deteriorate further on new export restrictions
- China unveils RMB 10 trillion local government debt swap programme

Local

- President Ramaphosa signs into law a 150% tax incentive for electric and hydrogen-powered vehicle manufacturers
- SA's headline and core inflation print lower than expected
- South African Q3 GDP misses estimate on agriculture
- S&P Global Ratings upgrades SA's outlook to "positive" from "stable"

Executive summary

Risk assets sold off in the fourth quarter of the year after stellar gains the previous quarter. The catalysts included sticky US inflation and above-trend economic growth that caused the US Federal Reserve (US Fed) to revise its dot-plot higher. The Fed's revised dot-plot signalled only two 25-basis point rate cuts in 2025, down from four cuts previously expected. The minutes of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting (released in January) showed the shift in sentiment had much to do with the election of Donald Trump as US president. Uncertainty about the policy direction of the new administration and whether it would add to inflationary pressures are at the core of the Fed's concerns. While tax cuts, deregulation and increased government expenditure are expected to be positive for growth and earnings, the forced repatriation of illegal immigrants, coupled with tariff increases, is likely to be inflationary. The bond market agrees.

Bond yields have pushed higher over the quarter, risking an equity market derating as the gap between the US 10-year TIPS yield and the S&P 500's price-to-earnings ratio widens. Even better-than-expected US Personal Consumption Expenditure (PCE) inflation was unable to prevent the equity market sell-off. The rise in bond yields weighed heavily on the global listed property sector as the spectre of higher interest rates caused the sector to derate further on a price-to-book basis.

South African asset classes were also lower in US dollars as contagion spread across markets. Factors that weighed on the domestic equity market included China's failure to announce a major fiscal stimulus, which negatively impacted the resources sector, and the prospect of fewer rate cuts, which weighed on interest rate sensitive stocks.

Global economics

Global Equities

Global equities reversed some gains in the fourth quarter, with the MSCI World Index declining by 0.2% in US dollars, driven by persistent US inflation and above-trend economic growth that led the US Federal Reserve to revise its rate projections higher. Emerging markets were hardest hit, falling 7.8% in US dollars, though rand depreciation softened the blow, resulting in a 0.9% return in rands. In China, the People's Bank of China announced a RMB 10 trillion debt package aimed at repairing municipal balance sheets as a long-term solution rather than injecting immediate liquidity into the economy, disappointing investors and contributing to declines of 5.8% and 5.0% in the CSI 300 and Hang Seng Index, respectively.

The Fed signaled fewer rate cuts in 2025 and slower inflation moderation, with core PCE inflation expected to reach 2% only by 2027. Sentiment was further influenced by the inclusion of "placeholder assumptions" in Federal Reserve forecasts related to Donald Trump's re-election, with potential implications for trade, immigration, and government spending policies. Inflation risks, trade uncertainties, and higher yields, such as the 61-basis point rise in the US 10-year TIPS yield to 2.24%, further weighed on equity markets.

Valuations of developed equity markets are stretched, but real economy indicators suggest that earnings growth is becoming more broad-based and could re-accelerate, particularly in the US. Emerging markets, in turn, will be vulnerable to a strong US dollar but could receive a material boost from a large Chinese fiscal stimulus, expected in March. China's Politburo, ahead of the annual Central Economic Work Conference, announced that China would adopt an "appropriately loose" monetary policy this year, alongside a more proactive fiscal policy, to spur economic growth. But headwinds remain, informing the quantum of emerging market exposure. These include the deterioration in US-China trade relations following fresh export controls on US-made semiconductors and semiconductor-making equipment, with China retaliating through export bans on gallium, germanium, antimony and other "super hard" materials used in the production of semiconductors and electric vehicle batteries.

Global Bonds

The shift in market expectations towards above-trend US growth and sticky core PCE inflation – supporting a shallower rate cutting cycle – weighed on the bond market in the fourth quarter of the year. The yield on the Bloomberg Capital Aggregate Global Bond Index increased by 35 basis points to 3.68%, dragging returns down by 5.1% in US dollars (+3.9% in rands). The yield on the US 10-year bond jumped by an even bigger 74 basis points to 4.57%, while the 10-year TIPS yield increased by 61 basis points to 2.24%. Unsurprisingly, the yield on the Bloomberg Capital Global Government Inflation Linked Bond Index increased by 43 basis points to 1.76%, dragging returns down by 6.3% in US dollars. In contrast, emerging market bonds outperformed their developed market counterparts, yielding -1.5% in US dollars (+7.9% in rands) even as spreads narrowed from 247 to 220 basis points and the emerging market currency basket depreciated by 7.4% against the US dollar.

While fed funds futures were pricing in some 44 basis points of rate cuts at quarter-end, at the time of writing, they were pricing in only 30 basis points of rate cuts this year, after the release of November's US job openings data (JOLTS) and December's US non-farm payroll data (both released in early January).

Global Listed Property

The rise in bond yields weighed heavily on the global listed property sector, as the spectre of higher interest rates caused the sector to derate further in December. The FTSE EPRA Nareit Developed Markets Property Index yielded -9.5% in US dollars (-0.9% in rands) as the price-to-book ratio declined from 1.58X to 1.39X, below the 1.46X mean.

In terms of sector performances, all of the broad sub-sectors – barring data centres (8.1%), regional malls (3.7%) and shopping centres (1.4%) – yielded negative returns. Self-storage (-17.1%), industrial space (-16.7%) and free-standing rentals (-12.8%) brought up the rear. With rate cuts being pared back and long bond yields rising ahead of Trump's 20 January inauguration, the sector could still face some headwinds over the medium term.

Local economics

Local Equities

South African equities also came under selling pressure in the fourth quarter of the year, lagging the returns of their emerging market counterparts. The FTSE/JSE All Share Index declined by 2.1% in rands and 10.6% in US dollars, weighed down by a 9.0% decline in resource stocks. Both precious metals (-9.5%) and industrial metals (-8.0%) stocks detracted from returns following declines in nickel (-11.2%), copper (-10.9%), palladium (-8.9%), platinum (-7.7%), aluminium (-3.6%) and gold (-0.7%). The biggest losers included Kumba Iron Ore (-18.6%), African Rainbow Minerals (-16.9%) and Sibanye-Stillwater (-16.1%). While a reduced number of interest rate cuts weighed on precious metals counters, investor disappointment at China's failure to announce a major fiscal stimulus was another factor weighing on the resources sector. Healthcare (-9.4%) stocks also came under intense selling pressure, with Aspen (-15.5%) and Adcock Ingram (-4.5%) weighing on returns.

Industrials (-5.5%) sold off, led by Bidvest Group (-9.9%), KAP Industrial Holdings (-9.7%) and Reunert (-7.4%), reflecting weak domestic economic growth. Interest rate sensitive sectors yielded negative returns, with financials down 1.2%, led by Ninety One Ltd (-12.3%), Ninety One PLC (-12.2%), HCI (-9.6%) and Standard Bank (-8.5%). Telecom (-0.1%) stocks were dragged lower by Vodacom (-4.8%) and Multichoice Group (-0.9%), while technology (-0.02%) was marginally lower, led by Bytes Technology Group (-16.7%), Prosus (-0.7%) and Naspers (-0.2%). Defensive sectors such as consumer staples (0.8%) yielded positive returns with Premier Group Ltd (30.8%), Tiger Brands (24.0%) and Pick 'n Pay (18.8%) leading the charge. The consumer discretionary (5.1%) sector was the best performing of the broad sectors, benefitting from rallies in WeBuyCars (46.6%), Cashbuild (31.4%) and Pepkor Holdings (20.2%).

Third-quarter GDP fell -0.3% quarter/quarter, missing the 0.4% estimate due to a 28.8% decline in agriculture, forestry and fishing from drought. Since agriculture dragged GDP down by 0.7% quarter/quarter, if it is stripped out of the estimate, GDP growth would have been in line with estimates at 0.4% quarter/quarter. Public-private partnerships are expected to drive infrastructural investment under the Government of National Unity (GNU), accompanied by necessary structural reforms and a new credit guarantee vehicle backed by the World Bank to de-risk private sector projects. This could result in growth exceeding the South African Reserve Bank (SARB)'s 1.7% estimate for this year and 1.8% estimate for 2026, helping to underpin both growth and earnings. In late December, President Ramaphosa signed a 150% tax incentive into law for electric and hydrogen-powered vehicle manufacturers, effective from 1 March 2026 to 1 March 2036, allowing manufacturers to deduct 150% of the cost of buildings and equipment used in production, with conditions for use over five years.

Although hybrid vehicle investments were excluded, three Chinese automakers have already shown interest by signing non-disclosure agreements with the Automotive Business Council, signalling potential new investments. Despite slow growth, consensus earnings estimates rose to 16%, supporting double-digit returns and favourable equity valuations.

Local Bonds

South African bonds faced pressure amid a global bond market rout, with the All Bond Index (ALBI) yielding 0.4% in rands and -8.3% in US dollars over the quarter as yields rose 36 basis points to 10.44% despite inflation beating estimates. Inflation-linked bonds returned 0.8% in rands, with real yields rising from 4.79% to 4.88%, reflecting domestic disinflation. Headline and core inflation increased by 2.9% and 3.7%, below consensus estimates, but the SARB's optimistic forecasts for 2025 face risks from rising international food prices, higher electricity tariffs, and surging oil prices, which climbed from $74.64 to $81 per barrel amid new sanctions on Russia. Coupled with an 8% rand depreciation, these pressures could push food and headline inflation higher, with petrol prices expected to rise by 69c/l in February. Forward rate agreements (FRAs) initially priced in 49 basis points of rate cuts for the year but have since reduced expectations to 27 basis points, while ALBI yields rose to 10.71%.

Local Listed Property

South Africa's listed property sector yielded a negative rand return in the fourth quarter of the year, due to the rise in bond yields. In US dollars, SA listed property performed in line with its global counterpart, yielding -9.4%. The SAPY yielded -0.8% in rands as the sector derated slightly relative to bonds. Dividends per share were 0.8% higher quarter/quarter, while earnings per share were 5.1% higher, suggesting that the derating detracted from returns. The property-to-bond yield ratio eased from 0.53X to 0.54X, still well below the 0.83X mean. While the sector is very expensive relative to bonds, the earnings yield on the SAPY is at 7.1%, not too different from the 7.0% mean, suggesting the sector is largely fairly valued. With bond yields expected to trend lower – although on more subdued interest rate cuts – and inflation to settle at the midpoint of the SARB's target range, listed property stocks are expected to post further gains over the near term. The large gains in listed property stocks over the past year (+29.0%) were due to the geared bond effect following a 79-basis point decline in the yield on the ALBI. The best-performing stocks for the quarter included MAS Real Estate (27.7%), Fairvest Ltd (10.7%) and Attacq (10.1%). The laggards included Sirius Real Estate (-12.2%), Hammerson Plc (-9.2%) and Shaftesbury Capital (-7.4%).

Market performance summary (in ZAR) to 31 December 2024

		3 months	6 months	1 year	3 years	5 years	10 years
Local	Equities (All Share Index)	-2.1%	7.3%	13.4%	8.7%	12.2%	9.0%
	Equities (CAPI)	-2.1%	7.3%	13.4%	8.7%	12.5%	9.0%
	Property	-0.8%	17.7%	29.0%	12.6%	5.1%	3.1%
	Nominal Bonds	0.4%	11.0%	17.2%	10.3%	9.6%	8.7%
	Inflation Linked Bonds	0.8%	5.7%	7.7%	6.3%	7.6%	5.3%
	Cash	2.0%	4.1%	8.5%	7.2%	6.2%	6.7%
International	Equities (MSCI ACWI)	8.4%	9.1%	21.2%	11.5%	16.9%	14.7%
	Equities (MSCI EM)	0.7%	1.8%	6.2%	2.3%	7.1%	8.4%
	Equities (MSCI World)	9.3%	9.7%	22.5%	12.4%	18.0%	15.5%
	Bonds	3.9%	4.9%	1.4%	1.0%	4.1%	5.2%
	Property	-0.7%	8.7%	4.3%	-0.5%	5.0%	7.5%
	Rand vs US Dollar	9.5%	3.3%	3.2%	5.7%	6.2%	5.0%
Equity Sector	Financials	-1.1%	13.0%	23.1%	16.5%	10.5%	7.2%
	Resources	-9.0%	-10.4%	-8.6%	-4.4%	7.0%	7.6%
	Industrials	0.2%	11.9%	18.5%	10.0%	13.5%	8.4%
Size	Small Cap	7.1%	23.7%	35.6%	17.5%	20.8%	9.7%
	Medium Cap	-1.5%	9.2%	15.4%	8.8%	7.3%	6.4%
	Large Cap	-3.4%	4.9%	10.7%	7.9%	12.2%	9.1%

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