

# Schroder ISF\* Global Credit Income

Fund Managers: Julien Houdain & Martin Coucke | Fund update: December 2025

## Market overview

- Corporate bonds outperformed government bonds during December, with yields across government bond markets generally increasing while credit spreads contracted.  
Within investment grade credit, US dollar and euro denominated total returns were negative, but excess returns over government bonds were positive. Improved risk sentiment drove strong performance across high yield markets, which outperformed both investment grade credit and government bonds.
- In the US, the Federal Reserve (Fed) cut interest rates by a further 25 basis points as expected, taking the Fed Funds Rate to 3.5% - 3.75%. It also announced it would begin 'reserve management purchases' of Treasury Bills to manage market liquidity levels. The release of a better-than-expected third quarter GDP (Gross Domestic Product) survey contrasted with softer employment growth and rising unemployment. Recent labour market data suggested a moderation - but not a collapse - in labour demand, with the low hire, low fire trend continuing.
- The European Central Bank (ECB) kept interest rates on hold as expected, while upgrading their forecasts for growth and core inflation. The bond markets anticipated the next move by the ECB to be a rate hike following hawkish comments by board member Isabel Schnabel. German bund yields were driven higher by the announcement that issuance levels in 2026 are set to be substantially above forecast, €500bn as against consensus estimates for €300bn.
- In the UK, the rise in gilt yields was concentrated at the long end of the curve as yields at the front end fell. A 25-basis point interest rate cut was already widely anticipated by the market when the Bank of England met following a softer than expected inflation print for November.

## Drivers of fund performance

- The Fund delivered a positive return and outperformed the reference benchmark during December.

- Duration positioning was the main driver of active returns, with our underweight stance benefitting as global bond markets saw a slight sell off, particularly in Europe.
- Maintaining a preference for agency mortgage-backed securities (MBS) contributed positively as spreads continued to tighten.
- Exposure to subordinated financial issues was also additive, as this segment of the market performed well over the month.
- The impact from security selection and asset allocation was broadly flat.

## Portfolio activity

- There were no major changes to asset allocation over the month. The Fund remains defensively positioned as we await new opportunities in credit markets with issuance set to pick up in the New Year.
- We rotated US duration into European markets, reflecting the relative underperformance of German bunds versus US Treasuries and viewed this as an opportune time to increase exposure.
- We selectively participated in several new issues that offered attractive entry levels and were driven by idiosyncratic opportunities. In the real estate sector, we added an issue from one of the largest commercial mortgage REITs in the US, which was attractively priced in the primary market.
- In the financial services sector, we added an investment grade issue from a Canadian wealth management group, as well as a corporate hybrid issue in the energy sector on an attractive yield.
- On the disposals side, we took profits on our holding in a European REIT focused on the office sector.
- Our preference remains for MBS and covered bonds, while we are maintaining a caution stance on spread duration until more compelling opportunities arise.

## Outlook/Positioning

- From a cyclical standpoint, the economic environment remains benign. Fiscal stimulus continues in the US and interest rates are moving lower at a time when unemployment is still low. We are monitoring the US labour market closely for signs

of weakness but, for now, the low hire, low fire equilibrium persists and we continue to see a low risk of US recession.

- US bond markets currently offer little value in our view. Significant interest rate cuts are already priced into the front end of the yield curve and inflation expectations are very muted. This contrasts with other bond markets where typically central banks are reaching the end of their rate cutting cycle.
- We currently see little opportunity in US credit markets although we are more constructive on the outlook for European markets. Overall, credit spreads are tight with little margin for error. While the macroeconomic backdrop and technicals are broadly supportive, on a more cautionary note rising issuance linked to artificial intelligence-related capital expenditure and merger & acquisition activity may weaken technicals into 2026.
- Accordingly, we have maintained a defensive approach in credit markets looking for opportunities within individual bond selection to enhance returns.
- We believe that in this market environment, an agile approach to asset allocation, one that leverages issuer-specific opportunities, is the best way to optimise risk-adjusted returns.

Past performance does not predict future returns. The value of investments and the income from them may go down as well as up and investors may not get back the amount originally invested.

### Calendar year performance (%)\*

Year	A DisMF	I DisMF	BM1	BM2	BM3	BM4
2024	5.7	7.6	4.2	1.1	9.2	5.7
2023	9.5	11.0	9.7	9.6	14.0	10.5
2022	-12.7	-11.5	-14.1	-14.1	-12.7	-16.5
2021	0.9	2.3	-0.2	-2.9	1.0	-1.5
2020	6.6	8.0	7.9	10.4	7.0	5.9
2019	11.3	12.9	13.2	11.5	12.6	14.4
2018	-1.6	-0.3	-1.4	-3.6	-4.1	-4.6
2017	7.8	9.3	6.7	9.1	10.4	9.3
2016	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Schroders, NAV to NAV (bid to bid), net of fees (where applicable), USD, as at 31/12/2024. Comparator benchmarks: 1. Bloomberg (Bbg) Multiverse ex Treasury A+ to B- USD Hedged, 2. Bbg Global Aggregate Corp TR, 3. Bbg Global **High Yield TR USD**, 4. **JP Morgan EMBI Global TR**. **Comparator** benchmarks included for performance comparison purposes and do not have any bearing on how the manager invests the fund's assets.

### Risk considerations

- **ABS and MBS risk:** The fund may invest in mortgage or asset-backed securities. The underlying borrowers of these securities may not be able to pay back the full amount that they owe, which may result in losses to the fund.
- **Capital risk / distribution policy:** As the fund intends to pay dividends regardless of its performance, a dividend may represent a return of part of the amount you invested.
- **Contingent convertible bonds:** The fund may invest in contingent convertible bonds. A reduction in the financial strength of the issuer of such bonds may result in losses to the fund.
- **Counterparty risk:** The fund may have contractual agreements with counterparties. If a counterparty is unable to fulfil their obligations, the sum that they owe to the fund may be lost in part or in whole.
- **Credit risk:** A decline in the financial health of an issuer could cause the value of its bonds to fall or become worthless.
- **Currency risk:** The fund may lose value as a result of movements in foreign exchange rates.
- **Currency risk / hedged shareclass:** The hedging of the share class may not be fully effective and residual currency exposure may remain. The cost associated with hedging may impact performance and potential gains may be more limited than for unhedged share classes.
- **Derivatives risk:** Derivatives may be used to manage the portfolio efficiently. The fund may also materially invest in derivatives including using short selling and leverage techniques with the aim of making a return. A derivative may not perform as expected, may create losses greater than the cost of the derivative and may result in losses to the fund.
- **Emerging markets & frontier risk:** Emerging markets, and especially frontier markets, generally carry greater political, legal, counterparty, operational and liquidity risk than developed markets.
- **High yield bond risk:** High yield bonds (normally lower rated or unrated) generally carry greater market, credit and liquidity risk.
- **IBOR risk:** The transition of the financial markets away from the use of interbank offered rates (IBORs) to alternative reference rates may impact

the valuation of certain holdings and disrupt liquidity in certain instruments. This may impact the investment performance of the fund.

- **Interest rate risk:** The fund may lose value as a direct result of interest rate changes.
- **Liquidity risk:** In difficult market conditions, the fund may not be able to sell a security for full value or at all. This could affect performance and could cause the fund to defer or suspend redemptions of its shares.
- **Market risk:** The value of investments can go up and down and an investor may not get back the amount initially invested.
- **Operational risk:** Operational processes, including those related to the safekeeping of assets, may fail. This may result in losses to the fund.

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