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Royal London Multi Asset Defensive Fund (IRL)

Quarterly Investment Report

31 December 2024



Quarterly Report

The fund as at 31 December 2024

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Royal London Multi Asset Defensive Fund (IRL). The report has been produced by Royal London Asset Management. The report starts with a summary dashboard showing key information about the fund. A glossary is located at the end of the report covering the description of some of the more technical terms used within the report. All data is as at the report date unless otherwise stated.

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The fund

Fund performance objective and benchmark

The Fund's investment objective is to aim to generate growth over the long term (5 years or more) through a combination of income and capital growth by primarily investing in other funds, known as collective investment schemes ("CIS"). The Fund is part of the Royal London Multi Asset Funds (IRL) ("MAF") range, which offers four funds with different combinations of expected investment risk and return.

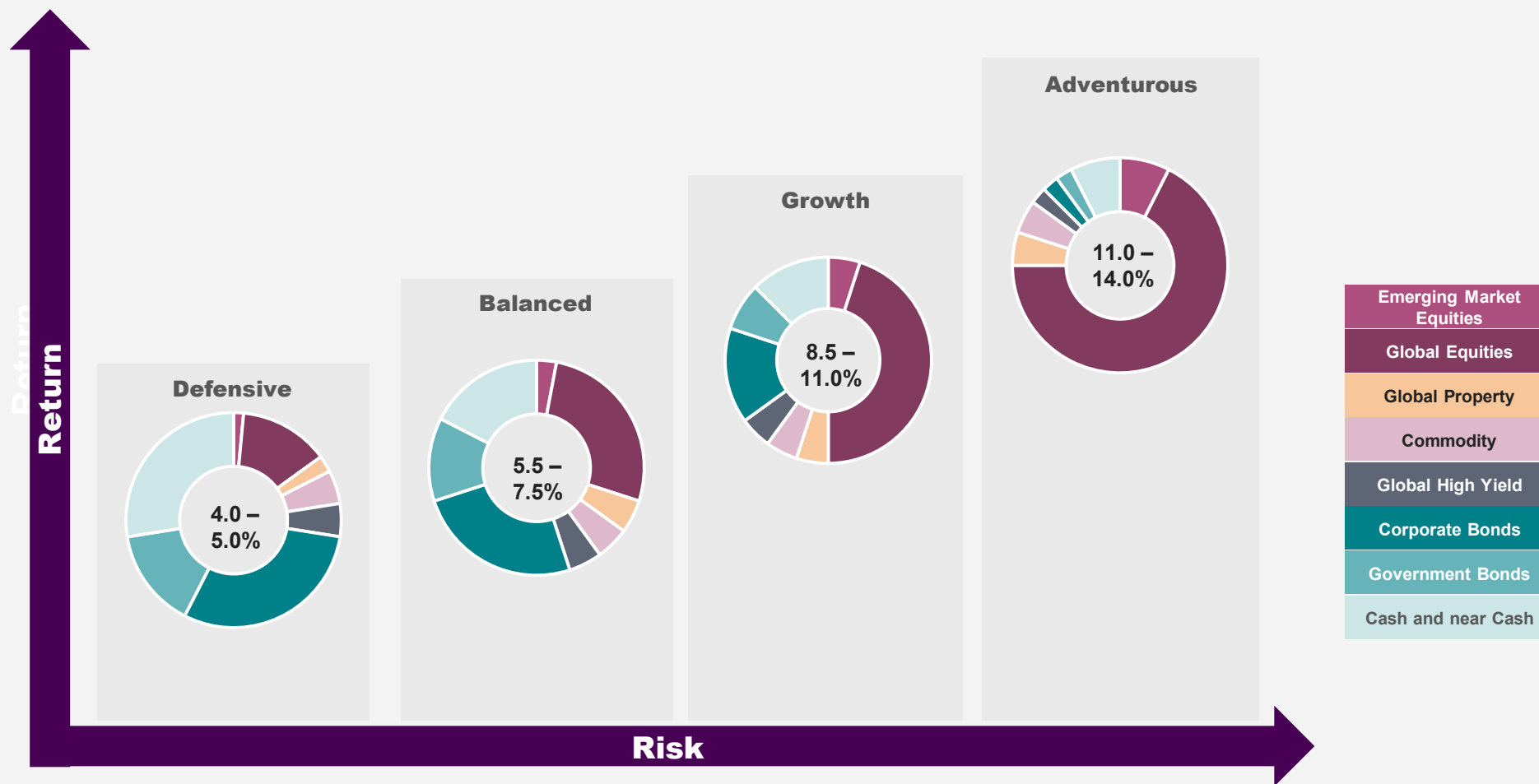
Benchmark: Multi Asset Defensive Fund (IRL) Composite Benchmark. The benchmark has been designed with the aim of maximising long run return in excess of inflation for a given level of risk.

- MSCI All Countries World Net Total Return Index EUR 13.5%
- MSCI Emerging Markets ESG Leaders Net Return Index (expressed in EUR) 1.5%
- FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed Index (expressed in EUR) 2.5%
- Bloomberg Commodity Total Return Index (expressed in EUR) 5%
- BoAML BB-B Global Non-Financial High Yield Constrained Index (EUR Hedged) 5%
- Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate - Corporate Index (Euro Hedged) 17.5%
- ICE BofAML Euro Corporate & Pfandbrief Total Return EUR 12.5%
- Bloomberg Barclays Euro Treasury Bond Index 15%
- ESTER (Euro Short-Term Rate, €STER) 27.5%

Fund value

	Total €m
31 December 2024	51.24
Fund launch date	17 August 2021

Multi Asset (IRL) range



Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results.

For illustrative purposes – reflects Strategic Asset Allocation weightings, may vary in accordance with tactical asset allocation.

Our fund range is designed to span the risk return spectrum, with each fund aiming to maximise the long-term real return for its given level of risk through a broadly diversified portfolio of investments

Performance and activity

Performance

	Fund (%)
Quarter	0.91
1 Year	6.91
3 Years (p.a.)	1.21
Since inception (p.a.)	1.25

Past performance is not a guide to future performance. Please refer to the Glossary for the basis of calculation and impact of fees. Performance and since inception date based on M Acc EUR. Source: Royal London Asset Management; Gross performance; Since inception date of the share class is 17 August 2021.

Performance commentary

Global equities continued to rise for most of the period but gave back some recent gains into year-end, finishing around 3% below all-time highs.

Bond yields took a sharp turn higher over the period, as US recession fears abated, and markets priced out previously anticipated rate cuts from the Fed on the back of stronger data. Expectation of potentially inflationary policies from the incoming Trump administration also had an impact.

Relief rally in US stocks after election uncertainty subsided helped the region outperform over the period. Emerging markets led losses on fears of hefty tariffs to Chinese exports to the US from the incoming Trump administration.

Performance of US equity sectors over the quarter was largely driven by Trump's victory in US elections. Sectors poised to benefit from expected deregulatory agenda: financials and consumer discretionary shares, outperformed over the quarter. Healthcare stocks underperformed after a big-pharma critic Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was nominated as the next health secretary. Energy and materials also struggled as commodity prices fell.

Performance and activity

Top 10 holdings

	Weighting (%)
RLAM Global Sustainable Credit Fun	16.78
ISHARES GOVT BOND CLIMATE UCITS	14.26
ROYAL LONDON EURP SUST CRDT R EUR	11.92
RLAM Global Diversified Equity Fun	10.59
Royal London Glb Hi Yld Bd Fd C R	6.43
SPAIN (KINGDOM OF) 0 10 Jan 2025	4.60
SPAIN (KINGDOM OF) 0 07 Feb 2025	4.41
FRANCE (REPUBLIC OF) 0 05 Mar 2025	4.29
FRANCE (REPUBLIC OF) 0 08 Jan 2025	3.19
FRANCE (REPUBLIC OF) 0 05 Feb 2025	2.81
Total	79.28

Fund activity

We bought the dip in global equities around the US elections, noting the extreme pessimism in the markets, while the fundamental picture remained intact with our Investment Clock in Recovery. We benefitted from the post-election melt-up but ended up giving back our gains as volatility spiked around the December Fed meeting.

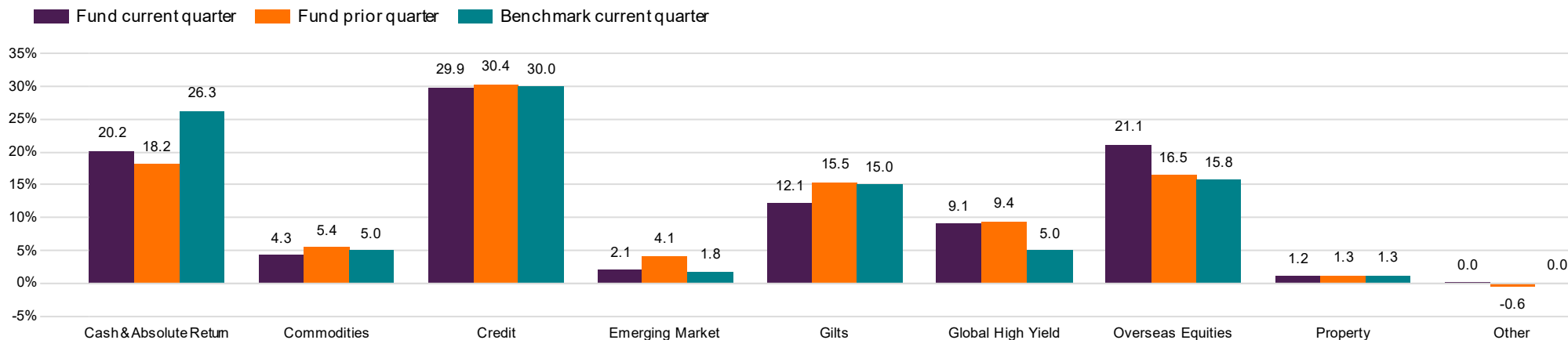
We remained underweight bonds over the period, having reduced our positioning from overweight to neutral earlier; this added value over the quarter.

We lost some value from our regional positioning as US stocks fell into year-end on the back of a 'hawkish cut' from the Federal Reserve.

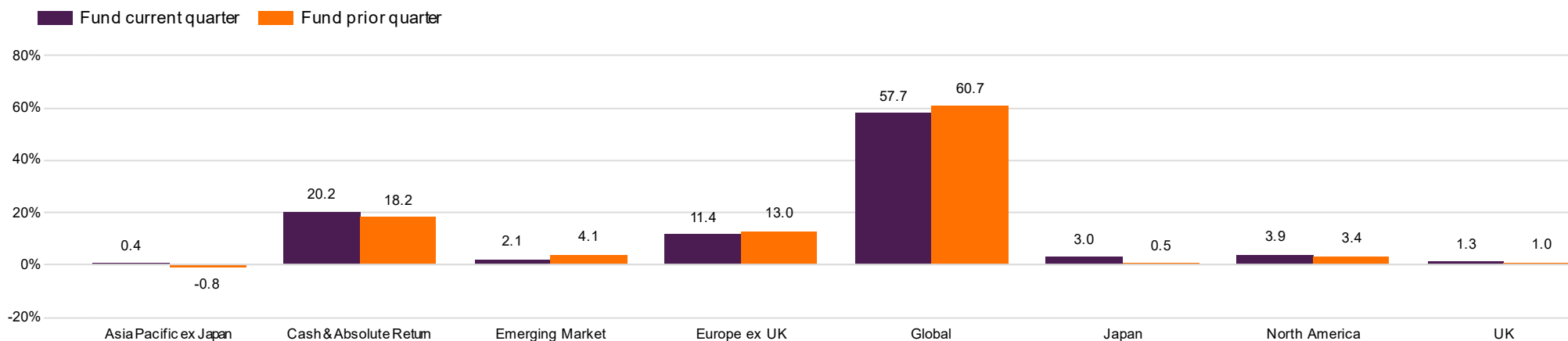
We benefitted from the market reaction following Trump's election win and risk-on moves that followed on hopes of deregulation and increased business activity through our overweight in growth sectors, funded by underweights in energy and defensives.

Fund breakdown

Asset split



Geographical breakdown



Market commentary

Market Overview

The fourth quarter was dominated by the outperformance of the US stock market following the election of Donald Trump on a platform of low taxes and de-regulation, which are viewed as pro-business. In addition, Q3 corporate results highlighted weaknesses in manufacturing activities but continued strength in the technology and financial sector. Overall, the best performing sectors were consumer discretionary, technology and communication services all driven by the mega-cap stocks such as Tesla, Nvidia and Alphabet. On the downside, healthcare and interest rate-sensitive sectors such as utilities and real estate underperformed. Healthcare stocks lagged due to concerns about political reforms under the new Trump administration.

Alongside political events, attention remained on the Federal Reserve, European Central Bank and Bank of England to see if expected rate cuts would materialise. However, with inflation remaining higher than central bankers would like, expectations for rate cuts in 2025 were revised down. The Federal Reserve cut rates 50bps over the quarter to a 4.25% - 4.5% target range. However, they signalled fewer cuts for 2025 than previously indicated, indicating only 50bps cuts for 2025 (100bps previously). This had a negative effect on investor sentiment. Elsewhere, the European Central Bank's final decision of the year was for another 25bps rate cut, taking with the deposit rate to 3.00%. France and Germany have been affected by political/policy uncertainty.

During the fourth quarter, the MSCI All Country World Index posted a gain of 1.26% in local currency terms.

Government yields rose over the quarter, as central banks continue to struggle to bring inflation back to target levels and amid ongoing political volatility with elections across Europe and the US. In the US, 10-year treasury yields rose to 4.57% from 3.78%, while German 10-year bunds similarly saw yields rise to 2.36% from 2.06%. Benchmark 10-year gilt yields increased to 4.57% from 4.01%.

The price of WTI crude oil rose 5.21% over the quarter to \$71.72 a barrel, while copper futures lost 11.34% in US dollar terms.

Outlook

The geopolitical outlook is uncertain with Donald Trump heading back to the White House and wars continuing across Europe and the Middle East. However, the economic fundamentals are positive. The Investment Clock is in equity-friendly Recovery, central banks are cutting rates,

and we expect fiscal stimulus in the US and China. We are overweight stocks versus bonds, preferring the UK to Europe and Japan to China.

The pandemic ushered in a regime of "spikeflation" characterised by periodic price level shocks and shorter boom-bust cycles. Strong US growth, tariffs or an interruption of crude oil supplies could challenge the low inflation consensus and create further losses for government bonds. It is not impossible that the Federal Reserve actually hikes rates this year rather than cuts, and we continue to see commodity exposure as a useful hedge.

Further Information

Please click on the links below for further information:



Find out more

In an uncertain geopolitical and economic environment, we recognise the importance of keeping our clients updated on our current investment thinking.

Articles, videos, podcasts and webinars giving the latest views of our investment experts can be found in the Our Views section of www.rlam.com, including regular updates from our Fixed Income, Global Equity, Sustainable and Multi Asset teams.

Disclaimers

Important information

For professional clients only, not suitable for retail clients.

This is a financial promotion and is not investment advice.

Telephone calls may be recorded. For further information please see the Privacy Policy at www.rlam.com.

Issued in January 2025 by Royal London Asset Management Limited, 80 Fenchurch Street, London EC3M 4BY. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, firm reference number 141665. A subsidiary of The Royal London Mutual Insurance Society Limited.

The Fund is a sub-fund of Royal London Asset Management Funds plc, an open-ended investment company with variable capital (ICVC), with segregated liability between sub-funds.

Incorporated with limited liability under the laws of Ireland and authorised by the Central Bank of Ireland as a UCITS Fund. It is a recognised scheme under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

The Management Company is FundRock Management Company SA, Registered office: Airport Center Building, 5 Heienhaff, L-1736 Senningerberg, Luxembourg and is authorised and regulated by the Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier (CSSF).

The Investment Manager is Royal London Asset Management Limited.

The Prospectus and Key Investor Information Document (KIID) are available in English via the relevant Fund Information page on www.rlam.com. A summary of investor rights is also available in English, and can be accessed at www.rlam.com/uk/policies-and-regulatory

RLAM may terminate the arrangements made for marketing of the fund pursuant to Article 93a of Directive 2009/65/EC.

For more information on the Fund or the risks of investing, please refer to the Prospectus or Key Investor Information Document (KIID), available via the relevant Fund Information page on www.rlam.com.

Most of the protections provided by the UK regulatory system, and the compensation under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, will not be available.

The portfolio has no index as a comparison.

Risks and Warnings

Investment risk

The value of investments and any income from them may go down as well as up and is not guaranteed. Investors may not get back the amount invested.

Credit risk

Should the issuer of a fixed income security become unable to make income or capital payments, or their rating is downgraded, the value of that investment will fall. Fixed income securities that have a lower credit rating can pay a higher level of income and have an increased risk of default.

Derivative risk

This fund may undertake transactions in derivatives and forward transactions (both on exchange and over the counter (OTC)). These may include interest rate swaps and interest rate futures for the purposes of meeting the investment objective, protecting the risk to capital, duration and credit management, as well as for hedging. While the discerning use of derivatives can be beneficial, derivatives also involve specific risks. These risks relate specifically to market risk, management risk, credit risk, liquidity risk, the risk of mispricing or improper valuation of derivatives and the risk that derivatives may not correlate perfectly with underlying assets, interest rates and indices. The use of derivative instruments may from time to time alter the economic exposure of the fund causing it to deviate significantly from the performance of the market as a whole. The use of these derivatives will be within the parameters allowed for linked funds by the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority.

EPM techniques risk

The Fund may engage in EPM techniques including holdings of derivative instruments. Whilst intended to reduce risk, the use of these instruments may expose the Fund to increased price volatility.

Exchange rate risk

Changes in currency exchange rates may affect the value of your investment.

Interest rate risk

Fixed interest securities are particularly affected by trends in interest rates and inflation. If interest rates go up, the value of capital may fall, and vice versa. Inflation will also decrease the real value of capital. Unlike the income from a single fixed interest security, the level of income (yield) from a fund is not fixed and may go up and down. Bond yields (and as a consequence bond prices) are determined by market perception as to the appropriate level of yields given the economic background.

Counterparty risk

The insolvency of any institutions providing services such as safekeeping of assets or acting as counterparty to derivatives or other instruments, may expose the Fund to financial loss.

Fund investing in funds risk

The Fund is valued using the latest available price for each underlying investment, however it may not fully reflect changing stockmarket conditions and the Fund may apply a 'fair value price' to all or part of its portfolio to mitigate this risk. In extreme liquidity conditions, redemptions in the underlying investments, and/or the Fund itself, may be deferred or suspended.

Liquidity and dealing risk

The Fund invests indirectly in assets that may at times be difficult to value, harder to sell, or sell at a fair price. This means that there may be occasions when you experience a delay in being able to deal in the Fund, or receive less than may otherwise be expected when selling your investment.

Performance to 31 December 2024

Cumulative (%)

Annualised (%)

	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	3 Years	Since Inception	3 Years (p.a.)	Since Inception (p.a.)
Fund (gross)	0.91	3.39	6.91	3.69	4.29	1.21	1.25
Fund (net)	0.74	3.05	6.21	1.68	2.03	0.56	0.60

Year on year performance (%)

	31/12/2023 - 31/12/2024	31/12/2022 - 31/12/2023	31/12/2021 - 31/12/2022	31/12/2020 - 31/12/2021	31/12/2019 - 31/12/2020
Fund (gross)	6.91	7.35	(9.65)	-	-
Fund (net)	6.21	6.65	(10.24)	-	-

Past performance is not a guide to future performance. The impact of fees or other charges including tax, where applicable, can be material on the performance of your investment.

Source: RLAM as at 31 December 2024. All figures are mid-price to mid-price for the Royal London Multi Asset Defensive Fund (IRL) M Acc EUR share class. Since inception date 17 August 2021.

Glossary

Asset allocation

Based on RLAM's holistic approach to fixed income management and fund weights relative to their respective benchmarks. May not reflect tactical exposures.

Fund value

Total value of the fund as of the last business day of the calendar month. The fund value is as at close of business and on a mid-price basis.

Geographical breakdown

Breakdown of assets by geographical regions. 'Global' region includes global fixed income and overseas securities exposures, which are sterling hedged and commodity exposures.

Performance

Performance is calculated using the signed off NAV per share. The impact of fees or other charges including tax, where applicable, can be material on the performance of your investment. The impact of fees reduces the return.

Top 10 holdings

Top 10 assets held by market value, excluding derivatives and cash.