



# Artisan Emerging Markets Local Opportunities Strategy

QUARTERLY  
Commentary

As of 30 June 2024

For Institutional Investors—Not for Onward Distribution

## Investment Process

We employ in-depth fundamental research and robust operational capabilities across a broad opportunity set to uncover knowledge gaps that can lead to idiosyncratic opportunities with compelling risk-adjusted return potential.

## Organizational Structure

We have a flat and collaborative organization where portfolio managers and analysts communicate daily and share the responsibility of idea generation. Portfolio managers and analysts determine their own focus areas and pursue them from an idea generation perspective. Trading and implementation is embedded within the investment team, as trading capabilities and infrastructure are considered important components of our investment process.

## Idea Generation Through Broad Investment Universe

Our team covers a broad spectrum of global markets comprising investable assets across more than 100 countries. We constantly perform fundamental country research and monitor financial markets in order to understand each countries' policy environments and how important policy moments may alter their investment environment. Our corporate analysis includes decomposing yields and examining corporate liquidity and solvency risks. We integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) analysis at the country and corporate levels.

## Portfolio Implementation

We analyze investment opportunities from a risk factor perspective—the forces that drive securities and instruments prices. The investment team and trading and implementation team work together to consider which instruments may provide optimal risk-adjusted returns. The trading and implementation team expands our investment universe by understanding and overcoming investment barriers.

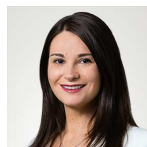
## Team Overview

We are a seasoned investment team with strong continuity across decision makers. Our group's core has been together for more than 10 years prior to its evolution at Artisan Partners, and our group's leadership has been investing in emerging markets since 2005. Our coverage areas are generally defined geographically, with some PM/Analysts and research associates focused on corporates.

## Portfolio Management



Michael A. Cirami, CFA  
Portfolio Manager



Sarah C. Orvin, CFA  
Portfolio Manager

## Investment Results (% USD)

As of 30 June 2024	Average Annual Total Returns						
	QTD	YTD	1 Yr	3 Yr	5 Yr	10 Yr	Inception <sup>1</sup>
<b>Composite—Gross</b>	-2.07	-2.49	1.01	—	—	—	8.76
<b>Composite—Net</b>	-2.24	-2.83	0.31	—	—	—	8.01
J.P. Morgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index (USD)	-1.63	-3.71	0.67	—	—	—	5.99

Annual Returns (% USD) Trailing 12 months ended 30 June	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Composite — Net</b>	—	—	—	—	0.31

Source: Artisan Partners/J.P. Morgan. Returns for periods less than one year are not annualized. <sup>1</sup>Composite inception: 1 August 2022.

Past performance does not guarantee and is not a reliable indicator of future results. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance shown. Composite performance has been presented in both gross and net of investment management fees.

**Investment Risks:** Investments will rise and fall with market fluctuations and investor capital is at risk. Investors investing in strategies denominated in non-local currency should be aware of the risk of currency exchange fluctuations that may cause a loss of principal. These risks, among others, are further described near the back of this document, which should be read in conjunction with this material.



### Performance Discussion

The portfolio trended lower for the quarter and trailed the J.P. Morgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index for the period, yet the portfolio remains ahead of the index year to date. Emerging markets currencies were broadly weaker throughout the quarter as the US dollar strengthened, serving as a headwind to emerging markets local debt.

### Investing Environment

As emerging and developed countries continue to grapple with ongoing inflation and challenges to growth, differentiation in the market and variations in performance are becoming more pronounced. Corporates outperformed all other emerging markets debt (EMD) sectors in Q2 as corporate credit spreads tightened on the back of stable fundamentals and supportive technicals. Local currency bonds were the worst performing EMD sector for the period as emerging markets currencies continued to weaken against a stronger US dollar. Hard currency sovereigns were flat for the quarter as spreads widened moderately.

Lingering inflationary pressures across the globe have led to stalls in the disinflation process in some countries and regions. As policy makers continue to evaluate financial conditions, central banks are finding themselves at varying stages of the monetary policy cycle. Countries such as Hungary, Mexico and Brazil have seen the disinflation process slow and inflation reaccelerate. Many of these countries were early movers in 2021 to raise rates, but now their central banks are being forced to pause or slow the pace of rate cuts. Meanwhile, countries that have remained prudent and held rates steady for longer continue to see robust disinflation, such as Serbia, which just began cutting rates in June.

Developed markets have remained in sync through this cycle, but they are now beginning to diverge from one another. The Fed and BOE kept rates unchanged during Q2 while the ECB cut rates by 25bps in June, its first interest rate cut in almost five years and a notable divergence from peers. The ECB stopped short of indicating future rate cuts are expected, and it even raised its inflation forecasts for 2024 and 2025. The Fed continues to assess fluctuating signals from both inflation and the labor market and revised its rate cut forecast down to only one cut for this year. US inflation topped forecasts at the beginning of Q2 but has since slowed to its lowest pace in three years. Conversely, the labor market showed signs of cooling at the beginning of the quarter but demonstrated resilience toward the end of the period. After the BOJ ended its era of negative interest rates in Q1, the interest rate differential between Japan and its developed market peers continued to widen as the BOJ left rates unchanged throughout the quarter.

Emerging markets issuance slowed in Q2 relative to Q1 but has remained robust, reaching 85% of the 2023 total by the end of the first half. Corporate issuance ticked up slightly in Q2 while sovereign issuance declined but remains well above its average quarterly issuance seen in the past five years. Several countries took advantage of the healthy new issue market to issue for the first time in a long time, such as El Salvador. El Salvador's unique issuance included a conventional amortizing bond as well as a warrant that will pay an

adjusted payout to investors if the country agrees to a deal with the International Monetary Fund or it receives a credit rating upgrade.

Emerging markets currencies were broadly weaker as the US dollar appreciated, driven by market expectations of prolonged higher interest rates in the US. Political events spurred fluctuations in local currency markets.

For example, after the presidential elections in Mexico, where Claudia Sheinbaum and the ruling Morena party secured a congressional majority, the Mexican peso plummeted by more than 7%, local interest rates surged, and credit spreads widened. The South African rand and bonds rallied following the nation's elections in May where the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party lost its majority for the first time since independence and was forced to form a "Government of National Unity" with other parties, including the Democratic Alliance (DA).

While emerging markets debt remains at the mercy of an increasingly uncertain global macroeconomic backdrop, local events across the globe continue to shape idiosyncratic returns. In Bolivia, the top military commander led military units that stormed the government palace in a failed coup attempt, sending sovereign bonds weaker. Argentina bonds rallied after Congress approved President Milei's omnibus bill that includes proposals to slash state spending and reforms expected to attract foreign investments, ease labor laws and facilitate privatization. Zambia's multiyear default concluded after the government successfully secured a deal with bondholders, boosting dollar bond returns. Georgian sovereign bonds declined after the government reintroduced and passed a Russian-style Transparency Law, resulting in large protests.

### Portfolio Positioning

In our view, the portfolio remains conservatively positioned as geopolitical uncertainty persists. The team reduced the portfolio's sovereign credit exposure during Q2 as valuations have become less attractive. However, the team took advantage of certain credit opportunities in countries with improving fundamental stories that remain attractive despite the tight spread levels, specifically in Latin America and Africa. Portfolio duration moderately increased during Q2, ending the quarter slightly overweight duration relative to the J.P. Morgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index. The portfolio remains overweight rates in Latin America where the disinflation process remains robust and moderately underweight rates in all other regions. The team reduced the portfolio's currency exposure during Q2 as inflationary and geopolitical uncertainties grew, especially in Eastern Europe and Latin America, but remains overweight relative to the index.

The EMsights Capital Group continues to search for countries with improving storylines where market prices are not fully reflecting fundamentals. Overall, valuations in EMD are fuller, warranting a more conservative approach for now. We continue to seek out idiosyncratic events in the corporate and sovereign space that shape the market landscape and drive divergence between the regions and countries. The global economy continues to face challenges, many of which are serving as tailwinds that keep the emerging markets debt outlook strong. With one of the busiest election cycles on record,

growing geopolitical tensions and fiscal consolidation continue to present exploitable volatility events.

**Exhibit 1: Q2 2024 Attribution—Relative to the J.P. Morgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index**

<b>Contributors</b>
Overweight to Egyptian pound
Overweight to Turkish lira
Underweight to Colombian peso

<b>Detractors</b>
Overweight to Brazilian real and local rates
Underweight to South African rand and local rates
Overweight to Nigerian naira

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**Investment Risks:** The value of portfolio securities selected by the investment team may rise or fall in response to company, market, economic, political, regulatory or other news, at times greater than the market or benchmark index. Non-diversified portfolios may invest larger portions of assets in securities of a smaller number of issuers and performance of a single issuer may have a greater impact to the portfolio's returns. International investments involve special risks, including currency fluctuation, lower liquidity, different accounting methods and economic and political systems, and higher transaction costs. These risks typically are greater in emerging and less developed markets, including frontier markets, and include new and rapidly changing political and economic structures, which may cause instability; underdeveloped securities markets; and higher likelihood of high levels of inflation, deflation or currency devaluations. Fixed income securities carry interest rate risk and credit risk for both the issuer and counterparty and investors may lose principal value. In general, when interest rates rise, fixed income values fall. High yield securities (junk bonds) are speculative, experience greater price volatility and have a higher degree of credit and liquidity risk than bonds with a higher credit rating. Use of derivatives may create investment leverage and increase the likelihood of volatility and risk of loss in excess of the amount invested. These risks, among others, are further described in Artisan Partners Form ADV, which is available upon request.

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Attribution is used to evaluate the investment management decisions which affected the portfolio's performance when compared to a benchmark index. Attribution is not exact, but should be considered an approximation of the relative contribution of each of the factors considered.

Net-of-fees composite returns were calculated using the highest model investment advisory fees applicable to portfolios within the composite. Fees may be higher for certain pooled vehicles and the composite may include accounts with performance-based fees. All performance results are net of commissions and transaction costs, and have been presented gross and net of investment advisory fees. Dividend income is recorded net of foreign withholding taxes on ex-dividend date or as soon after the ex-dividend date as the information becomes available to Artisan Partners. Interest income is recorded on the accrual basis. Performance results for the Index include reinvested dividends and are presented net of foreign withholding taxes but, unlike the portfolio's returns, do not reflect the payment of sales commissions or other expenses incurred in the purchase or sale of the securities included in the indices.

J.P. Morgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index is an index of local-currency bonds with maturities of more than one year issued by EM governments. The index(es) are unmanaged; include net reinvested dividends; do not reflect fees or expenses; and are not available for direct investment.

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This summary represents the views of the portfolio manager as of 30 Jun 2024. Those views and portfolio holdings are subject to change and Artisan Partners disclaims any obligation to advise investors of such changes. The discussion of portfolio holdings does not constitute a recommendation of any individual security.

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